# Peacebuilding: the Shift towards a Hybrid Peace Approach

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper examines the transformation within the practice and concept of contemporary peacebuilding. Peacebuilding, practically and conceptually, has been dominated by the liberal peace paradigm. In this case, the institutionalising of its core ideas such as democratisation, human rights, the rule of law, and liberal market system to the post-conflict states and to a so-called 'fragile/failed states' aiming at bringing peace and security has failed to create a comprehensive and sustainable peace on the ground as exemplified in Nicaragua, Haiti, Bosnia, Afghanistan, and other post-war states. Scholars focused on the issue of peacebuilding have engaged to a new approach that challenge the domination of the liberal paradigm through the accommodation and appreciation upon the 'local' and thus create spaces for the interaction between the liberal and the 'local' within forms of 'hybrid peace' or 'hybrid peacebuilding'.

Key Words: Peacebuilding, Liberal Peace Paradigm, Hybrid Peace Approach

Makalah ini mengulas transformasi dalam praktik dan konsep Bina Damai Kontemporer (Contemporary Peacebuilding) yang selama ini didominasi oleh paradigma liberal. Usaha-usaha untuk menginstitusionalisasikan ide-ide pokok dari pendekatan perdamaian liberal seperti demokratisasi, hak asasi manusia, perangkat hukum, dan sistem pasar bebas/liberal, terhadap negara-negara pasca konflik atau negara-negara 'negara gagal') yang sejatinya bertujuan membawa keamanan dan perdamaian namun justru gagal menciptakan perdamaian yang berkelanjutan dan menyeluruh seperti yang terjadi di Nikaragua, Haiti, Bosnia, Afghanistan, dan lainnya. Sarjana-sarjana yang berfokus pada isu Bina Damai telah melakukan sebuah pendekatan baru, yaitu pendekatan yang menolak dominasi paradigma liberal melalui bentuk akomodasi dan apresiasi terhadap apa yang disebut sebagai 'lokal' sehingga dapat menciptakan ruang interaksi antara yang 'lokal' dan 'liberal' dalam bentuk 'perdamaian hibrida' (hybrid peace) atau 'Bina Damai hibrida' (hybrid peacebuilding).

**Kata-kata Kunci:** Bina Damai, Paradigma Perdamaian Liberal, Pendekatan Perdamaian Hibrida

As the idea of the liberal peacebuilding has come to be known through the discourse and practice brought by the Western-liberal-developed world, it is not surprising when most of the developing world that is trapped in the mid of social violent conflicts is regarded as illiberal regimes or/and weak/failed states; that is, undemocratic governments that have failed to advocate the human rights and the rule of law within their state boundaries (Tom 2013, 240). Hence, the international interventions through peacebuilding have been much concerned on attempts to establish liberal-democratic orders so that the root of conflicts and war can be solved and peace and security can be attained.

While the liberal paradigm within peacebuilding has been perceived as the only framework that may prevent post-war states for turning back into a circle of violent conflicts, a number of scholars has come to an agreement that the results of the liberal peacebuilding have been mixed and disappointing (Richmond 2008, in Tom 2013, 240). The debate over the outcomes of the liberal peacebuilding that may eventually determine its success and failure has diverged mainstream scholars such as Paris (2010) who strongly agreed that it has made better of the situation in post-conflict states and hence other outside alternatives unnecessary to be taken into account. Others, in contrast to Paris, have criticised the hegemonic practices of the liberal peacebuilding and as well as interrogated its legitimacy, sustainability, and appropriateness. For instances, David Chandler (2006) on his work investigating the international state-building missions in Bosnia found that the liberal peacebuilding has worked as an 'empire in denial' in which external actors 'colonise' non-Western state institutions. Michael Pugh (2008) has also criticised the liberal peacebuilding that it acts in a form of a larger 'hegemonic' in which its aim is solely to spread norms and values of the dominant 'power brokers'. Similarly, Belloni (2012) argues that the liberal peacebuilding project undertaken in war-torn states has largely failed. Its objectives to create a liberal and democratic political, economic, and social order have been proven to be counterproductive, that is, to the people of experiencing them, they are perceived illegitimate, coercing, and unsuccessful, and the social and political institutions they have made is superficially democratic, effective, and accountable (Belloni 2012, 21). These views reflect that the liberal peacebuilding, despite its relative successes, is now in a crisis and has reached its limit.

Amidst the mixed and disappointing outcome of the liberal peacebuilding, a new alternative and approach has been developed and engaged by some critical scholars in the field of international peacebuilding. This new distinctive approach of peacebuilding is known as 'hybrid peacebuilding' or 'hybrid peace approach'. These hybrid peace forms are approaches that accommodate both the liberal and 'the local'

and thus produce a form of hybrid peace and political order (Richmond 2010, 666). It is contended that the hybrid peace approach could gain more legitimacy from various actors in the post-conflict societies and as well as be more inclusive than the liberal approach (Richmond 2011, 28). More attention to 'the local' is a particular characteristic of this hybrid peace approach. A number of scholars who are concerned with the issues of peacebuilding have shown a similar understanding that the local, in a sense of the grass root local agencies or indigenous people, is the subject that should primarily be prioritised than the interests of the ruling elites and the international actors who impose and govern the peacebuilding policy and project.

Oliver P. Richmond (2011) argues that the praxis of peacebuilding should accommodate underlying issues such as the social welfare, justice, needs, and culture. These subjects, however, are often marginalised within the current practice of peacebuilding. To maintain its legitimacy, (liberal) peacebuilding often prevents a sustained engagement with the local contexts, cultures, and needs, and more focuses on establishing institutions, market, security, and rights. Norms, laws, and institutional reforms produced by this liberal approach nevertheless are perceived as artificial and have disconnected the local people from their own cultures, needs, expectations, customary, and social political practices. It means that peace resulted from this approach, instead of locally owned and self-sustaining, is highly dependant on international actors and it hence should be avoided at all cost (Richmond 2011, 25-6). In an empirical fact exemplified in East Timor, as M. Anne Brown and Alex Freitas Gusmao (2009) have demonstrated, efforts of rebuilding the state's institutions have resulted significant gulfs between government and local governance values and practices and between the ruling elites and the rural majority, making society to be alienated and away from peace. This was mainly because of the peacebuilding efforts driven by international actors have failed to engage with the 'everyday life' of the local people and thus disconnected them from the prevalent practices and values that have been shaping their lives (Brown and Gusmao 2009, 61). The critiques upon the liberal peacebuilding and the attention towards the local accordingly have shifted the discourse of peacebuilding to a more accommodative and emancipative approach by hybridising the liberal with the local.

As a new alternative and approach within the body of peacebuilding practice, there should be more attempts of scrutinising and interrogating the basic concept of hybridity in peacebuilding, that is, what hybrid peace approach really is? Moreover, to consider this approach as alternative that might potentially contribute a better outcome for the post-conflict peacebuilding, it hence needs to examine the strengths and weaknesses as well as kinds of difference which hybrid peace approach

might contribute to the practice of peacebuilding. To substantiate the arguments, this essay will be divided into three main sections. The first section will be primarily discussing the concept of hybrid peacebuilding: the concept of hybrid peace itself and how this concept is situated in peacebuilding. The next section of this essay will examine the strengths and weaknesses of the hybrid peacebuilding. To determine its weaknesses and strengths, it will investigate the empirical facts that have been demonstrated by scholars, particularly through several case studies such as in Bougainville, Afghanistan, and Somaliland. Despite examining several case studies, it will also explore the basic concept of the hybrid peace approach itself. Before concluding the essay, it is necessary to point out several differences that have been contributed by the hybrid peace approach for the betterment of peacebuilding both conceptually and practically.

## What is 'Hybrid Peacebuilding' or 'Hybrid Peace Approach'?

Since the liberal approach in peacebuilding has been increasingly criticised both in term of its operationalisation and conceptual foundation, the discourse of hybridity in peacebuilding has been then much discussed and central to the scholars and practitioners in the field of peace and conflict studies. Prior to the adoption of the term in the studies of peace and conflict, the notion of hybridity itself, according to Mac Ginty (2010), has been utilised in the field of anthropology. sociology, institutional, and organizational studies, as well as postcolonial studies, emphasising the significance of culture in power and identity's discourses. In the field of post-colonial studies, for example, the idea of hybridity has been central in the debate over culture and identity formation. It reflects the resilience of the natives against the colonisers as well as the struggle under the imperial domination. In the colonial situation, as Bhabha (1994, in Tom 2013, 242) points out, that the indigenous people perceived themselves trapped in the middle of two cultures, their own cultures and the colonisers' cultures. The latter was an element that colonisers inflicted to the native people and that the natives frequently resist and negotiate it and eventually this struggle yielded a new form of culture and practice called as hybrid cultures. In this sense, hybridity is seen as a positive force that reflects a resistance toward dominance of a single ideology and thus provides space for subordinate group or indigenous people to express themselves through their agencies. Despite this, the concept of hybridity has also been much criticised. Although to some extent hybridity provides space for the democratic struggle and resistance toward imperialism, it was conceived by others that hybridity is a concept that is evolved by the neocolonialist. Moreover, if it is taken for granted and is uncritically analysed, this could maintain the existence of unequal power relations.

Pieterse (1993) argues that this is important to see the link between power and domination that may potentially be maintained and reproduced within hybridity. This critique however is crucial for us in order to thoroughly analyse how power and its outcomes may produce positive hybridity and as well as to identify which aspects within hybridity that can encourage towards the creation of a durable and sustainable peace.

So how is the concept of hybridity in peacebuilding? According to Mac Ginty (2011), the concept of hybridity in peacebuilding reflects the declining of as well as advances the critiques of the liberal peacebuilding. Moreover, the theory of hybrid peace approach assumes that it is a form of the local agencies' expression, which partly functions to break the domination of the liberal peace paradigms. In literatures discussing the idea of hybrid peace approaches, the concept has been used in several different terms such as 'hybrid peace governance', 'hybrid political orders', 'hybrid peace ownership', and 'local-liberal hybridity'. Each term reflects scholars' main emphasis on how to understand the concept of hybrid peace and on how the hybrid peace approach works in post-conflict peacebuilding. Some of them will be discussed here.

For Richmond (2010), hybrid peace is manifested in a form of 'local-liberal' hybrid peace. It is the result of resistance towards the liberal peace, which is as a way of expressing the existence of the local agency. It hence led to a contamination, transgression, and modification of the international and the local and thus created a form of 'local-liberal peace'. The use of the term 'contamination' by Richmond is not meant to bring negative understanding on the concept of hybrid peace. Instead, it aims to reflect the resistive attempts of the local actors through their agency in encountering the hegemony of the liberal peace that led to a peace resulted from the fusion between the local and the liberal peace forms.

While Richmond has developed the term of 'local-liberal peace' as a way to understand the forms of hybrid peace, Boege et al. (2009) have emphasised the idea of hybrid political orders as an underlying concept for the practice of peacebuilding and state building. The characteristic of hybrid political orders, as Boege et al. argue, is formed by 'a contradictory and dialectic co-existence forms of socio-political organisation that have their roots in both non-state indigenous societal structures and introduced state and societal structures'. This kind of hybrid political orders, as contended by Boege et al., has empirically demonstrated to be the sources of stability such as the case in Somaliland. In the circumstances in which state and non-formal state institutions co-exist alongside might lead to a share of authority and legitimacy. Legitimacy here is rooted from the interaction of legitimacy

that comes from the traditions and customs and legitimacy sourced from legal-rational authority. Through this hybrid political orders the Western liberal thoughts can be deconstructed by itself and thus provide space for the co-existing interaction between the liberal peace and the 'local' which may lead to a comprehensive and durable peace.

This can be clearly seen that, while liberal peace approach has been much criticised and resisted, the idea of hybrid peace approach does not come to retreat liberalism in the field of peacebuilding. Rather, it is basically proposed to accommodate various institutions and norms where local-particular values and interests can be negotiated with the so-called 'universal human values' advocated by the liberal peace approach. In other words, as Belloni (2012, 22) argues, it is "a state of affairs in which liberal and illiberal norms, institutions, and actors coexist". The idea of hybrid peace sends the message that this approach has a willingness to engage with or work together with the local-traditional values, norms, actors, and institutions, and explore how this illiberal approach can be incorporated into the liberal modern approach so that comprehensive and durable peace can be attained (Yamashita 2014).

## The Strengths and Weaknesses of the Hybrid Peace Approach

As the main emphasis of the hybrid peace has been much focused on 'the local', assuming that through this grass-root level a genuine peace can be attained and thus its mixture with the liberal peace forms might create a durable and sustainable peace, hence, to determine the strengths of the hybrid peace forms should be measured through its practices particularly from the bottom up level. There are several strengths of the hybrid peace approach that can be identified. First, the hybrid peace approach may effectively maintain peace and security in fragile or failed states. Within a circumstance in which the state-based institutions have been destroyed in post-war environment and thus begin to rebuild, the hybrid peace approach can operate through which non-state customary institutions can maintain order to overcome the persistent of violence by its mechanisms and regulations. Hence, it may prompt the termination of violence and sustainable peacebuilding. In this context, the case of Bougainville can be taken for an exemplification. During the war, the state and its institutions in the Bougainville had not existed, yet the local customary institutions remained struggling. Elders and chief in the customary institutions had played their role in regulating conflicts and organising local people through legitimate existing local norms. Moreover, elders and chiefs had also settled the conflict through a set of customary reconciliation and conflict resolution mechanisms such as customary ceremonies that was held to reconcile the local victims and the enemies in all over the island. While this attempt was rooted locally,

the success of peacebuilding process was also determined by the involvement of the external interventions such as the UN, New Zealand, and neighbouring countries (Boege et al.2008,13-5; Boege 2011, 444-45).

Second, since the crucial problem of the liberal peace is gaining the genuine legitimacy from the society, by accommodating the traditional approaches of 'the local' within the framework of the hybrid peacebuilding the legitimacy of the society in the grass-root level can be gained easily. It means that through hybrid peace approach the existing forms of control violence and conflict transformation are respected and given space to be operated in the process of peacebuilding in which these forms have basically gained legitimacy from the local indigenous people, instead of imposing solely the Western-liberal models to the native people which may be perceived as alien and these may only be well understood by the state-political elites, not by the people on the ground (Boege 2011, 446).

Third, it is related to the level of inclusivity and the participation of the society. Through the hybrid peace approach, solutions based on consensus are not merely taken from the political elites and the local elites that may not be perceived as representative of society. Instead, hybrid peace approach will engage the participation all parties involving in conflict to gain a win-win solution, accommodating, and advocating own interests and needs and are not simply restricted to the material goals, but also embrace the issues of dignity, prestige, and honours (Schmeidl 2009a, 71; Boege 2011, 446). The last point can be identified as the strength of hybrid peace approach is that the concern upon the aspect of psychosocial and spiritual of the violent conflicts. As Boege (2011) argues that the transformation of violent conflict and peacebuilding is not simply about the negotiations, political agreements, and material reconstruction, which are advocated by the liberal peace paradigm, but also it should include process such as reconciliation, purification, and mental and spiritual healing. To address the root problem in the grass-root level, reconciliation involving the spiritual world of the ancestor and God is entailed to restore the relationship and to integrate the victims and perpetrators in the community life.

Despite its strengths, hybrid peace approach also has several weaknesses. First, it has to be distinguished between hybridity peace forms that emerge organically from within with hybridity that is created, which is top down. The former might have been proven to be resilience and effective in preserving and maintaining peace and order as in Bougainville and Somaliland, but the latter that is created and decided by the international actors might not properly represent 'the local' and tend to undermine the post-conflict peacebuilding endeavours. As in the

case of Afghanistan, the warlords and the strongmen have been included in the government in order to ensure the stability of the state (Belloni 2012, 26). However, this decision has much undermined the peace process itself since warlords may tend to use state institutions and resources for their own benefit. As Schmeidl (2009b) points out that the situation in Afghanistan under the hybrid peace order seemed to lead the state into the failed Mujahideen rule in the early 1990s, and this situation has brought fear for many Afghans if the state might return into a long bitter war as its last state-building experiment backed by the former Soviet Union. Other cases in which warlords, militia, or rebels have been included in the government can be found in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau (Belloni 2012, 26)

Second, hybridity peace forms may have a propensity to romanticise the traditional approaches of the local (Richmond 2011) that they may contradict the universal standards of human rights and liberal democracy and undermine the gender equality It is prevalent that elders and chiefs that are majority old men control the traditional custom institutions and play their rule as the peace broker. This is however problematic to the standards of the liberal democracy because the young men and particularly women can be excluded from the decision-making process. Women's voices in particular are often not accommodated in the conflict resolutions; for example, men usually represent women to decide what should be the compensation for the women have been raped. Moreover, the forms of punishment that might usually be given to the perpetrators could be widely different with the principles of the liberal democracy, which may undermine the human rights standards. For example, customary institutions often give punishment in forms of torture or violation as a practice of traditional conflict resolution such as the practice of the spearing of wrongdoers in Aboriginal communities in Australia, which the Western paradigm sees it as inhumane and yet it is regarded as more humane for the indigenous people than the Western practices (Boege 2011, 450-51). The differences between practices and norms advocated by the 'local' and the liberal that have been outlined above may create unproductive outcome of the hybrid peace form being implementing, which could distract the process of peacebuilding and bring the situation back into conflict and vulnerability.

Having identified the strengths and weaknesses of hybrid peace approach, it is also important to outline what can be considered as differences that hybridity approaches in peacebuilding have made to the practice of peacebuilding. This paper considers that hybridity in peacebuilding has expanded the conceptual understanding and practice of the Western liberal paradigm dominating contemporary post-conflict peacebuilding endeavours towards the appreciation of the local societal, cultural, and historical context, beyond the Western Weberian state-

centric model which might not adequate to preserve order and comprehensive peace in so-called fragile states (Boege et al. 2008, 4-6). As Boege (2009) has argued that in the process of post-conflict peacebuilding the international actors are very often focused on attempts to build and strengthen the capacity of state institutions, presuming that these institutions are central for maintaining peace and order. Hence, it leads peacebuilding to be conceptualised in a sense of state-building, which 'state' is understood in term of the Western Weberian state that is perceived as the best and universal model to be applied in post-conflict peacebuilding environment. Boege (2009), however, showed through the case of Bougainville, which adopted a hybrid peace form of peace, that not only had state-based institutions provided peace, security, and justice to society, but non-state customary institutions on the ground had proven to be effective in maintaining peace and order even when state was not there. It is therefore perceived important to respect and advocate informal customary institutions and mechanisms to work hand in hand with the formal state institutions and mechanisms in providing and maintaining peace, order, and security for post-conflict peacebuilding society. In contrast to liberal peacebuilding that has tendency to bring society closer to the liberal norms, this case reflects that through hybrid peace approach the strategies of local and indigenous society to achieve sustainable peace may vary in practice as the meaning of 'peace' for each society can differ, and so do the strategies of peacebuilding.

Apart from what hybrid peace approach might contribute for future peacebuilding, the weaknesses of the hybrid peace approach that have been outlined above might cast doubts whether the hybridity in peacebuilding can establish a robust and sustainable peace since the 'local' and the liberal have underlying differences in their norms and practices. Upon this matter, Richmond (2012) raises the issues of dilemmas which hybrid peace approach being encountering. Richmond argues that many of the dilemmas being encountered by hybrid peacebuilding rest on the issue of whether the local agencies or the international actors, states, elites, and NGOs should take precedence. It is also argued that the civil society and the local agencies are far more at risk than international actors or elites, and yet the latter has weakened by several failures on its attempts to build state based on liberal norms and prescriptions such as in Bosnia and Afghanistan.

Another issue that is more fundamental is regarding the ambivalence within the hybrid peace approach. The critics of hybrid peace approach toward liberal peacebuilding have brought understanding that liberal norms in peacebuilding should be no longer dominating the practice and concept of peacebuilding. The insertion of the idea of hybrid peacebuilding, which combining the liberal and the illiberal norms, has

indeed created ambivalence. On the one hand, hybrid peace approach attempts to reduce the domination of liberal system and norms. On the other hand, the combination of the liberal and illiberal, that is not intended to retreat the liberal norms from hybrid peacebuilding, is basically a new way to expand the liberalism itself in peacebuilding particularly to the non-Western society.

#### Conclusion

The liberal peace approach dominating the idea and practice of peacebuilding and disappointing has mix outcomes. institutionalising of its core ideas such as democratisation, human rights, the rule of law, and liberal market system to the post-conflict states and to a so-called 'fragile/failed states' aiming at bringing peace and security has failed to create a comprehensive and sustainable peace on the ground as exemplified in Nicaragua, Haiti, Bosnia, Afghanistan, and other post-war states. Scholars focused on the issue of peacebuilding have engaged to a new approach, approach that challenges the domination of the liberal paradigm through the accommodation and appreciation upon the 'local' and thus create spaces for the interaction between the liberal and the 'local' within forms of 'hybrid peace' or 'hybrid peacebuilding'. This new approach has potential to maintain peace and security in fragile or failed states. It can also effectively gain the genuine legitimacy from the society and increase the level of inclusivity and the participation of the society in the peacebuilding process. The most important aspect is that it concerns upon the aspect of psychosocial and spiritual of the violent conflicts that is rarely addressed by the liberal peace approach. Nevertheless, this has to be aware that forms of hybrid peace that are created and decided by the international actors may tend to exacerbate the peacebuilding itself. Moreover hybrid peace approach may also have a propensity to romanticise the traditional approaches of the local that they may contradict the universal standards of human rights and liberal democracy and undermine the gender equality. Despite its strengths and weaknesses hybrid peace approach has expanded the conceptual understanding and practice of the Western liberal paradigm towards the appreciation of the local societal, cultural, and historical context, beyond the Western Weberian state-centric model which might not adequate to preserve order and comprehensive peace in post-conflict societies. This might be too early to regard that hybrid peace approach can bring great and better change toward the concept and practice of peacebuilding, but it has potential to contribute new approach and perspective for the improvement of peacebuilding's practice and concept.

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