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Indigenous Peace-Making Versus the Liberal Peace

ROGER MAC GINTY

ABSTRACT

Recent years have witnessed a resurgence of interest in indigenous, traditional and customary approaches to peace-making in the context of civil wars. Supporters claim that indigenous approaches to peace-making are participatory and relationship-focused, and that peaceful outcomes have a higher chance of community adherence than template-style international peace interventions effected through the 'liberal peace'. Using historical and contemporary examples, this article assesses the feasibility of a complementary relationship between customary and Western forms of peace-making. It posits that internationally supported peace operations (the liberal peace) are promoting a standardization of peace interventions in civil war situations that often fails to deliver a widely enjoyed peace. In some cases, traditional and indigenous approaches to peace-making and reconciliation can offer a corrective to the failings of the Western peace-making model. Yet, any temptation to romanticize 'indigenous' and 'traditional' peace-making must be resisted: instead, the concepts require careful conceptualization and interrogation. The article concludes that the structural power of Western peace-making methods limits the space for alternative approaches to peace-making and that rather than a co-existence of both forms of peace-making we are more likely to see the co-option of indigenous and traditional approaches by Western approaches.

Keywords: alternative dispute resolution; conflict resolution; indigenous peace-making; liberal peace

Introduction

This piece considers the compatibility of traditional, indigenous and customary forms of peace-making in civil wars with the currently dominant Western form of peace-making and peace support, often described as the 'liberal peace'. Much peace and development intervention in recent decades has been entirely antithetical to indigenous and traditional practices, regarding them as unaccountable, opaque and contradictory to the 'enlightened' intentions of liberal peace and internationally sponsored post-war reconstruction efforts (Fanthorpe, 2005: 27–49). In recent years, some international organizations, states and NGOs have shown increasing



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interest in traditional and indigenous approaches to peace-making in civil war situations. In part, this has been a reaction to the perceived failings of dominant Western approaches to peace-making. Thus, this article seeks to explore if there can be a useful synthesis of profoundly different approaches to peace-making. It is interdisciplinary by drawing on literature from social anthropology and peace and conflict studies, and seeks to have policy orientation by suggesting ways in which internationally supported peace-making interventions can be improved by their inclusion of traditional and indigenous approaches to peace-making.

The article has four parts. Firstly, it notes and gives possible reasons for the resurgence of interest in traditional and indigenous approaches to peace-making. Secondly, it posits the existence of a dominant proto-hegemonic form of internationally supported peace-making. This 'liberal peace' or 'Western peace' effectively minimizes the space available for indigenous and traditional approaches to peace-making. Thirdly, it reviews literature from social anthropology on war and peace-making in traditional societies before conceptualizing traditional and indigenous approaches to peace-making. It is careful not to romanticize the concepts of 'traditional' and 'indigenous', though it notes how they offer possible advantages of sustainability and participation, the 'elixir' that orthodox approaches to peace-making seek to attain. Finally, using historical and contemporary examples, the article considers the compatibility of currently dominant and internationally supported forms of peace-making with indigenous and Western forms of peace-making. The article concludes that the structural factors behind Western approaches to peace-making mean that the opportunities for traditional and indigenous approaches to peace-making are constrained.

The 'Rediscovery' of the Indigenous and Traditional

Ideas of traditional and indigenous peace-making and dispute resolution in civil wars have found increased credence among certain states, international organizations, international financial institutions and NGOs as the post-Cold War period has progressed. Crucial in this has been a renaissance in the concept of 'the indigenous'. Resistance and activism by indigenous groups gave indigenous issues a much higher profile. In large part, this was also aided by the United Nations designation of the 1995–2004 period as the 'International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples'. Although the UN General Assembly failed to adopt the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, debates and policy concern on the rights, plight and capacities of indigenous peoples spread far beyond the UN. Thus the United Kingdom's Department for International Development has funded 'project work with indigenous communities that promotes their views and voices, helps exchange information and improves communication' (FCO, 2006), while the Inter-American Development Bank established an 'Indigenous Peoples and Community Development Unit' and developed an 'Indigenous Strategy'. The International Labour Organization, for example, has sponsored research on indigenous peoples and poverty reduction

(Bhattachan and Webster, 2005). Concerns with indigenous rights have been evident at the INGO level as well with Oxfam International's *Strategic Plan* aiming to 'facilitate a stronger voice for indigenous people at the global level' (Oxfam International, 2001: 15).

While interest in indigenous peoples is not the same as an interest in their practices, the above cases show some evidence of the mainstreaming of the concerns of indigenous peoples among international actors involved in international development. In relation to civil war and dispute resolution, there has been greater interest in the actual peace-making techniques and practices on offer from indigenous groups. Indeed, some of the international actors who have shown interest in these techniques could be described as bastions of the liberal peace. The World Bank, for example, offers a training video on 'Building Social Capital through Peacemaking Circles', in which the Circles are 'an indigenous traditional mechanism for communication and building shared values, consensus and resolving conflict that was the core of earlier participatory forms of government' (World Bank, 2004). UNITAR, the UN Institute for Training and Research, has developed a training programme 'to enhance the conflict prevention and peacebuilding capacities of minority and Indigenous Peoples' (UNITAR, 2006). The draft UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples noted that such peoples should have access to 'mutually acceptable and fair procedures for the resolution of conflicts and disputes' which would 'take into consideration the customs, traditions, rules and legal systems of the indigenous peoples concerned' (UNHCR, 1994: Article 39).

Among NGOs and INGOs, examples of interest in indigenous and traditional peace-making practice are abundant and include the 2002 Lutheran World Federation Inter-Faith Summit which provided a forum for a comparative lesson-learning exercise between different African traditional peace-making techniques. These included a ritual reconciliation ceremony (*Mato-Oput*) among Acholi in northern Uganda, a traditional justice system (*Gacaca*) in Rwanda and a traditional consultative and judicial meeting (*Kgotla*) in Botswana (Lutheran World Federation, 2002). In Colombia, the Nasa community has formed a body of non-violent activists (*Guardia Indigena*) to resist violent incursions by paramilitaries. Armed only with a baston, or decorated stick with cultural significance in Nasa culture, the group incorporated tradition into its peaceful resistance to exploitation and violence (Peacework, 2004; Spindler, 2005).

A number of conflict resolution authors and practitioners have also highlighted the importance of culture in dispute resolution. At its most basic, their reasoning is that since conflict is often culturally located, then it is sensible that attempts to ameliorate and manage conflict are respectful of culture (Avruch, 1998: 63). John Paul Lederach's (1995) notion of 'elicitive training' rejects the idea of external conflict resolution 'experts' having a monopoly of wisdom and highlights the importance of local inputs in peace-building. Significantly, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) — which respects many of the qualities found in indigenous and traditional approaches to peace-making — has gained immense respectability. Such approaches emphasized that win-win outcomes were possible, that ongoing relationships were more useful than one-off victories, and that third parties could play useful roles as

invited facilitators rather than unilateral interveners. These approaches placed an emphasis on dialogue, social justice and conflict transformation (rather than resolution) (Burton, 1969: 49–56; Ropers, 2004). Legal systems in the United States, New Zealand and elsewhere have institutionalized ADR, drawing it into the mainstream (Nader, 1969; Nader and Todd, 1978; Slaton and Becker, 1990: 301–15; Jabri and Burton, 1997: 94–5).

The chief point is that many international actors hold generally positive attitudes (at the rhetorical level at least) towards traditional and indigenous approaches to peace-making. What explains this apparent popularity of activities that are identified as ‘indigenous’ or ‘traditional’ peace-making? At a superficial level, this ‘popularity’ may reflect a prosaic and mutually beneficial relationship between local and international actors: the former may be motivated by a desire to secure any resources and kudos the latter can offer, while the latter may regard traditional and indigenous actors as a means of achieving donor-driven conditions on local participation and acceptance. But this ‘popularity’ of the indigenous and traditional also operates at the normative level, where practices of traditional peace-making are able to synchronize with two cardinal ideas in development intervention strategies: local participation and sustainability. These key ideas have found operational expression through grass-roots empowerment, civil society enhancement and cultural appropriateness, all of which have become mainstays of development programmes and projects.

In its broadest sense, participation did not merely extend to local involvement in the *implementation* of development or peace projects that were conceived, funded and managed elsewhere. Instead, local participation was to occur at all levels of a development or peace project. The implications of local involvement were thus profound: not only could it guide how development was to be promoted (or peace secured), it had the potential to guide how development (and peace) could be defined. Ideas of participation have been the focus of much criticism; that they merely co-opt local elites into Western schemes or that ‘the tyranny of participation’ steers communities towards technocratic and over-simplistic ‘solutions’ to complex social problems (Cooke and Kothari, 2004; Hickey and Moran, 2004; Chopra and Hohe, 2004). But despite these criticisms, and variations in how participation is operationalized at the local level, a positive view of participation remains largely intact.

Alongside local participation, sustainability is the second key idea from development and humanitarian interventions that has fuelled renewed interest in traditional and indigenous approaches to peace-making. The logic of sustainability was that if communities could access their own resources and capacities over the longer term, then their reliance on external assistance would be reduced. Much of the discourse on sustainability in development and humanitarianism arose from frustration at repeated, short-term interventions that dealt with the manifestations of underdevelopment and failed to build or enhance capacity to deal with future problems. Sustainable practices often gave priority to environmental harmony and ecological balance, which also lay at the core of many traditional peace-making approaches (Vayda, 1976: 4).

Also relevant to the increased attention to the benefits of traditional and indigenous approaches to peace-making was a growing awareness by some states, international organizations and NGOs of the complexity of ethnonational conflict situations and the need for multifaceted conflict management approaches. The linkages between uneven development and conflict were internalized by a widening circle of conflict-intervening actors. At an institutional level, for example, the United Nations Development Programme established a Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Recovery and the United States Agency for International Development established the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation. Overall, the development and conflict-intervention policy environment has become more sensitive to the need for holistic approaches to conflict that transcended ministering to conflict manifestations. In this context, there was a mushrooming of the range of peace support activities conducted by external intervening actors and internal pro-peace actors. Peace was no longer only a matter for Tracks I and II; Track III in the shape of grass-roots political and civil society actors (and their techniques) also had a role to play. Thus the environment in which peace-support activities were being supported was more amenable to ideas of cultural sensitivity and local approaches to peace-making.

The Liberal Peace

Enormous academic energy has been devoted to testing the existence and significance of the liberal peace, or the assertion that democracies do not go to war with one another (Weede, 1984; Oneal and Russett, 1999; Doyle, 2005). This article is not interested in such debates, largely because they focus on interstate war, while the current focus is on intra-state conflict. Instead, it takes the liberal peace to be the concept, condition and practice whereby leading states, international organizations and international financial institutions promote their version of peace through peace-support interventions, control of international financial architecture, support for state sovereignty and the international *status quo*. The author acknowledges the complexities and varieties of liberal peace, but the term is a useful conceptual vehicle for the interrogation of internationally supported peace-making. The identification and conceptualization of the contemporary liberal peace (sometimes called the 'liberal democratic peace' or 'Western peace') have mainly been associated with scholars from a critical tradition who are alert to the creeping neo-imperialist tendencies of peace promoted by hegemonic forces (Barkawi and Laffey, 1999; Duffield, 2001; Paris, 2002, 2004; Chandler, 2004; Richmond, 2005; Fanthorpe, 2005; Mac Ginty, 2006; Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2007). Space constraints mean that the critique of the liberal peace is restricted to three points particularly germane to our interest in the possibility of a co-existence of traditional and Western approaches to peace-making.

Firstly, the liberal peace has managed to co-opt as its agents many of those actors that one would expect to champion alternative (including traditional and indigenous) modes of peace-making. The key proponents of the

liberal peace are leading states, international organizations and international financial institutions, notably the United States, UK, Australia, France, Germany, Canada, Norway, the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. South Africa and Nigeria have been repeatedly involved in post-Cold War peace support operations, and the African Union's promise to find 'African solutions to African problems' (*Financial Times*, 2005) have failed to materialize. Rather than provide a counter-hegemonic force against dominant Western approaches to peace-making, the African Union and its leading members largely conform to the Western peace-making template. Similarly, many NGOs, who may be expected to act as a critical bulwark against the liberal peace framework, have been co-opted as agents of the liberal peace. Importantly, the liberal peace is not just a framework, it is also a mechanism for the transmission of Western-specific ideas and practices whereby its local agents are not merely compelled to receive, they must also transmit. Thus they become facilitators and enforcers of the liberal peace for municipalities, communities and individuals further down the political chain.

Secondly, proponents of the liberal peace are convinced of its superiority in comparison with other forms of peace-making and social organization (Rawls, 1999; Mandelbaum, 2002). Paris (2002: 638) notes how liberal interventionism is based on the 'belief that one model of domestic governance – liberal market democracy – is superior to all others', while Ignatieff (2005) refers to it as an 'imperial ideology'. Highly specialized forms of liberalism and democracy are championed: an open market liberalism that gives priority to the individual (rather than the kin group) and electoral democracy with notions of an appropriate civil society (Mac Ginty, 2006). Crucially, the liberal peace is Western in ethos and prone to dismiss non-Western approaches as obstacles to the transformation of societies into 'generically liberal' oases of 'individual rights, social responsibility, accountability, democracy and respect for the rule of law' (Fanthorpe, 2005: 27–8). But the liberal peace is also generically neo-liberal in its promotion of marketization, austerity programmes and the notion that the market will provide the motive force for peace and reconstruction.

Thirdly, and particularly relevant for the current interest in traditional and indigenous peace-making, the liberal peace is operationalized in highly standardized formats that leave little space for alternative approaches to dispute resolution. External peace interventions, under the auspices of internationally sponsored peace-keeping, peace-building or reconstruction in contemporary civil wars, increasingly follow set templates. At the macro-political and programme levels this manifests itself in ceasefire monitoring, formalized peace negotiations, Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), Security Sector Reform (SSR), civil society capacity-building, post-peace accord elections, civil service reform, good governance, marketization and economic restructuring. At the project level, the standardized peace manifests itself in everything from voter registration drives to women's empowerment schemes. To a large extent, Western peace support interventions often follow a formulaic path; thus peace-support interventions in Bosnia-Herzegovina come to resemble those in East Timor, Bougainville,

Mozambique or Sri Lanka. It becomes peace from IKEA; a flat-pack peace made from standardized components. While the sharing of best practice and lessons learned is to be encouraged, there is a danger that peace support interventions become non-reflexive and uniform (Darby, 2003; Guelke, 2004). There is an added danger that the off-the-shelf peace interventions reflect the accumulated skills and capacities of the intervening parties rather than the precise needs of the recipient society. The key point though is that the single-transferable peace package risks minimizing the space for organic local, traditional or indigenous contributions to peace-making.

Empirical cases show how internationally sponsored peace interventions have been prescriptive, micro-managing and constraining of local mores. One of the starkest examples of the extent of the neo-imperialist writ of the liberal peace comes from Bosnia-Herzegovina, where the international community was incredibly interventionist. New political institutions were engineered, elected politicians were disbarred if deemed too nationalist, school curricula were rewritten, budgets and new financial architecture imposed, and a new flag and other state iconography designed (Chandler, 2000; Kostic, 2007). The impact of such a comprehensive suite of interventions was to formalize and distort local political activity. Obviously, local politics were dysfunctional enough to descend into civil war and must not be placed on a pedestal. Yet, the imposition of a Western peace has resulted in a highly compromised peace.

While sketching the contours of the liberal peace, it is important not to over-inflate its uniformity and universalism. Given the focus of this study, it is important to note that the liberal peace has been modified in recent decades through the mainstreaming of human rights, the rise of the human security perspective, the growing influence of conflict resolution NGOs, and the incorporation of Alternative Dispute Resolution techniques into some approaches to peace-building. It is also important not to underestimate the agency of local actors in war and peace-making. Rather than presenting narratives of powerlessness, Keesing stresses the importance of seeing 'peripheral populations as active agents in shaping and controlling their engagement with the outside world, giving local meaning to alien ideas, institutions and things, in various ways resisting them' (1992: 2). The liberal democratic peace has been projected, imposed, received and interpreted to different extents in different contexts (Richmond, 2005). In some cases it has been able to develop synergies with locally inspired peace and development strategies, while in other cases the disjuncture between local and international notions of peace and development has been more apparent.

Traditional and Indigenous Peace-Making

Social Anthropological Literature on War and Peace-Making in Traditional Societies

The terms traditional and indigenous peace-making require careful conceptualization. Respectively, they are taken to mean dispute-resolution and conflict-management techniques that are based on long-established practice

and local custom. Anthropological literature provides a rich source of information on customary norms and rituals for the recalibration of inter-group and intra-group harmony in traditional societies (Kemp and Fry, 2004). Interestingly, there has been little cross-over between the literatures on conflict resolution and the social anthropology of war and peace-making in traditional societies. In the absence of widespread inter-disciplinary exchange, scholars in conflict resolution and social anthropology have examined similar phenomena but have often deployed different language, theoretical frameworks and methodological tools, and — crucially — have addressed different audiences. Both literatures are diverse in their own right and defy simplistic reviews or summaries. Feminist anthropology, for example, offers valuable gendered insights often not found in 'mainstream' anthropology (Bell et al., 1993). With this caveat in mind, it is possible to identify three factors that have encouraged studies of conflict resolution and the social anthropology of war and peace-making to pursue separate paths.

First, the influence of political science and international relations on the study of conflict resolution means that many of its principal referents derive from Western statist and institutionalist perspectives. Thus, there is a bias towards using the state, bureaucracy and formal political processes (e.g. elections and parties) as core lenses for the interrogation of a proclivity towards conflict or passivity. Many orthodox or non-critical approaches to peace-making and peace-building emphasize state-building and state reform as their main methodology. This is essentially a 'problem-solving' approach which accepts the parameters or structures within which the conflict occurs and is content to 'fix' the immediate problem without challenging the meta-structures that support the conflict. Conversely, the ethnographic methodologies adopted by many social anthropologists encourage the use of very different lenses, often focused on kin groups and 'bottom up' processes and patterns of behaviour. While social anthropology no longer conforms to clichés of studies of geographically isolated premodern societies (Barley, 1986), it still retains a bias towards developing world contexts, indigenous practices and ritual.

Second (and related to the last point), both sub-disciplines often adopt different levels of analysis. While both adopt case study approaches, the cases in social anthropology are often highly specific micro-societies, usually units smaller than the object of study in conflict resolution (with the exception of examinations of personality and political leadership). The localism or concentration on highly specific societies found in social anthropology has limited the willingness of many social anthropologists to engage in comparison. In contrast, both qualitative and quantitative literature on conflict resolution have sought to make generalized claims on the causation and outcome of war. Third, the policy orientation of many political science and conflict resolution studies (many leading journals encourage 'policy relevant' submissions) helps set studies of conflict resolution apart from the social anthropology of war and peace-making. The focus of the latter on the key social markers and rituals of societies may seem somewhat tangential (even backward-looking) to the former, which has been increasingly influenced by rational choice and econometric perspectives from the social sciences.

While research on conflict resolution and the social anthropology of war and peace-making in traditional societies has followed largely independent paths, fruitful collaboration has occurred on one issue: identity formation and maintenance. While issues of identity and ethnicity have long been staples of social anthropology (Eriksen, 1993: 1), the social sciences have witnessed what Horowitz (1983: xi) termed 'the rediscovery of ethnicity' since the 1980s. This rediscovery received added impetus in the rush to explain the post-Cold War rise in civil wars (Moynihan, 1993; Huntington, 1993). Ethnicity and identity were proposed by many scholars as motive forces behind conflict causation and maintenance. While some of this literature sought to identify innate characteristics within 'the nation' (Connor, 1993: 204; Young, 2003), other literature, largely influenced by Anderson's (1991) 'imagined nations' thesis, sought to explain how identity was malleable and open to manipulation by ethnic entrepreneurs. This, in turn, resulted in literature that questioned the meaning and usefulness of the term 'ethnicity' (Brubaker and Laitin, 1998: 423) and, of course, the 'greed thesis' literature which discounted appeals to identity and related grievances as the primary factors behind conflict (Collier, 2000).

Four themes emerge from a review of literature on the social anthropology of war and peace-making in traditional societies: the rituals of warfare and peace-making; governance processes and structures; cross-cultural communication and norms of exchange; and compensation as part of peace-making. The first of these themes, the rituals of warfare and peace-making, has largely been absent from the conflict resolution literature (with the possible exception of the Just War tradition and its interest in *jus in bello* or the norms of warfare). Social anthropology, on the other hand, has provided rich accounts of the dynamics of violence in traditional societies (Vayda, 1960; Sinclair, 1991; Scott, 1994; Donald, 2000; Best, 2001). Much of this literature disproves stereotypes of 'savagery' and instead presents a complex picture of warfare with stages of escalation, norms of behaviour during warfare and delineated combatants and non-combatants. Literature on peace-making often concentrates on the elaborate ceremonies attendant to peace-making enterprises (Biggs, 1960: 25; Firth, 1973: 311; Briggs, 2000: 110–24), but also reveals that many traditional societies held, and hold, sophisticated notions of peace. Thus, for example, distinctions were made in Maori society between tactical (short-term) and strategic (long-term) peace (Vayda, 1960: 121–3; Best, 2001: 217–18).

The second theme to emerge from a review of the literature on the social anthropology of war and peace-making (governance processes and structures) describes the locus of power, leadership and decision-making styles and succession processes (Keesing, 1992). Some of this literature connects with contemporary ('good') governance debates, particularly through its interest in the (in)compatibility of traditional styles of leadership with more Western variants. Thus, issues of the accountability of powerholders and the transparency of decision-making are represented in the social anthropological literature. White and Lindstrom (1997: 13), for example, point to the 'double authority' of chiefs who become parliamentarians in Pacific islands, while Helu (1997: 3) points to the essential conservatism of customary

leadership styles and van Meijl (1997) notes the co-optation of Maori chiefs into New Zealand government devolution schemes.

The third theme to emerge in the social anthropological literature on war and peace-making in traditional societies is cross-cultural communication. This is particularly relevant to traditional societies encountering outsiders (e.g. missionaries or mineral extraction companies, etc.). Conflict resolution literature, and particularly that on negotiations, has considered the issue of cross-cultural communication and the problems arising from different cultural norms of negotiation and decision-making (Williams, 1994; Cohen, 2001: 470; Wanis-St. John, 2003). Literature from social anthropology has been effective in illustrating how traditional norms and expectations from exchange processes (negotiations and trade, etc.) can differ markedly from Western practices (Watson-Gegeo and White, 1990: 3–49; Durie, 1998: 176–7). Fundamentally, traditional societies often emphasize the importance of ongoing relationships rather than one-off exchanges found in modern commercial practice. Sillitoe and Wilson (2003: 244), for example, note how people in isolated areas of Papua New Guinea ‘... have no idea of entering into a final and binding contract ...’, while the mining corporations they deal with expect access to mineral resources following formally negotiated contracts (Ogan, 1999: 6). Chesneaux (1988: 57–8) continues the theme of the danger of cross-cultural miscommunication, noting how the Kanak people in New Caledonia regard public speeches as more important than documents and value silence more than words, tendencies misinterpreted by colonial administrators.

A final theme to emerge in the literature on war and peace-making in traditional societies is the emphasis on exchange and compensation as part of peace-making (Metge, 1971: 19–20; Donald, 2000: 173). In many traditional societies, the core of peace-making is the restoration of balance in order to ensure the sustainability of the society. Given the fragility of the human-resource ecology in many traditional societies, the restoration of balance was regarded as essential for survival. Exchange and compensation were vehicles for the restoration of balance: restoring honour so that two groups could live in harmony; restoring access to agricultural resources to a group that had been denied these resources, or compensating a group for losses incurred due to aggression by others. In many cases, compensation was nominal – an object with symbolic rather than commercial value, for example sea shells among the Sivai in Bougainville (Oliver, 1955: 418) or green stones among the Maori (Vayda, 1960: 121). Guiding the exchange and compensation mechanisms were principles of reciprocity and mutuality — or a recognition that groups in a relatively enclosed society required transparent and repeatable behavioural norms. In recent years, however, many scholars have identified the erosion of mutual compensation and exchange mechanisms in favour of monetary payments (Atkin, 1999; McDonald, 2003: 10; Fraenkel, 2004). Dinnen (2002: 298), for example, notes how in the Solomon Islands traditional customs of compensation have been subverted by monetary grants, with the result that ‘payments have been demanded, and routinely paid, as a condition for participating in peace talks’.

Conceptualizing Traditional and Indigenous Peace-Making

Common features of traditional and indigenous peace-making are, and were, consensus decision-making, a restoration of the human/resource balance, and compensation or gift exchange designed to ensure reciprocal and ongoing harmonious relations between groups. Many traditional societies developed and maintained sophisticated mechanisms for non-violent dispute resolution and constructed complex conceptions of peace. These versions of peace were far removed from versions of peace introduced by colonial powers or sponsored by elements of the international community in the contemporary era. Having little conception of state sovereignty, modern bureaucracy, written covenants, formal participation structures and linear, sequential notions of time it is unsurprising that traditional societies found, and still find, Western versions of peace alien. This inter-cultural miscommunication, or less favourably the imposition of one culture's mores on another culture, may in part explain why so many peace accords in contemporary ethnonational conflicts have difficulty in making meaningful connections with communities.

Before proceeding, four points of clarification may help with the conceptualization of traditional and indigenous peace-making. First, despite the common conflation of the terms 'traditional' and 'indigenous', the two are not interchangeable. Although there may be considerable overlap, traditional denotes that a practice or norm has a heritage of considerable duration. Indigenous suggests that an activity or norm is locally inspired. Crucially, indigenous norms and activities need not be traditional. Like all human communities, indigenous groups engage in constant processes of adaptation to their social environment. Thus, intra and inter-group negotiation and renegotiation of modes of social operation are embedded practices and provide sites for social innovation and exposure to new or externally inspired practices and ideas. Communities described as 'indigenous' are capable of employing, or adapting to, new methods of social, economic and political interaction, including new approaches to peace-making. The use of the Internet by, and on behalf of, indigenous communities in Chiapas illustrates the capacity of some indigenous communities (and their advocates) to grasp new (non-traditional) tools of articulation. Rather than 'traditional' peace-makers, Gandhi in India and Te Whiti in New Zealand were incredible innovators (Scott, 1998).

A second conceptual point is that it should not be assumed that traditional or indigenous peace-making can be blithely equated with 'good' or a higher normative value. Rather than a romantic defence of all things traditional or indigenous or the pursuit of a discourse of authenticity (which attaches a premium to anything deemed authentic), all peace-making techniques and assumptions should be exposed to rigorous tests of relevance and fitness for purpose. The casual beatification of activities and attitudes deemed as traditional or indigenous can be seen in some commentary on the Gacaca system in Rwanda, which fails to recognize the potential of this restorative justice system to 'perpetuate a culture of impunity' and undermine attempts to establish transparency in the rule of law (Ilesanmi, 2002: 222). Just as caution

is required in equating traditional with 'good', Western-inspired peace-making should not be automatically disregarded as imposed, harmful and culturally inappropriate.

Also relevant when cautioning against any positive bias in favour of traditional or indigenous peace-making is the deep conservatism of many traditional approaches to peace-making. Such peace-making tools may strive towards social conformity, the numbing of social activism and the reinforcement of the authority of existing power-holders. They are often deterrence tools that discourage deviance from norms identified as culturally appropriate. Al-Krenawi and Graham (1999: 170) note the 'hidden power' of rituals to coax participants into adherence to the social order. With reference to Melanesia and Polynesia, Helu (1997: 3) notes how political customs are 'the handiwork of the chiefly classes' and designed to reinforce their authority. In extreme cases, some traditional approaches to dispute resolution — for example, placing hot metal on the tongue as a test for telling the truth — can objectively be described as harmful to human well-being (Al-Krenawi and Graham, 1999: 168).

Perhaps the most fundamental point to bear in mind when considering any tendency towards pro-indigenous normative bias is that traditional and indigenous peace-making methods have failed to prevent violent conflict in many locations. Processes of development, population transfer and the introduction of modern weapons have punctured the moral authority and support environment necessary for many traditional and indigenous peace-making approaches. Moreover, many traditional societies were far from pacific idylls and placed a high value on warfare and were contemptuous of the notion of pursuing peace (Metge, 1971).

A third conceptual point is that the notions of 'the traditional' or 'indigenous' can be hastily invented or cynically manipulated by actors in a peace-making process who attempt to benefit from the supposed higher moral value to be gained by labelling a practice or attitude as 'traditional'. For example, peace process participants may make recourse to apparently traditional practices or notions as part of a wider peace process strategy of delay or obfuscation. They may calculate that privileges may accrue if certain issues, norms or communities are cast as 'traditional'. Thus, to label an issue as 'traditional' may award it a legitimacy it would not otherwise attain and obligate peace process participants to employ additional sensitivity when approaching that issue. Antagonists may hope that activities deemed traditional (for example, traditional weapons borne by Inkatha Freedom Party members in the run-up to South Africa's transition to majority rule) are somehow infused with a mythical quality that insulates them from scrutiny or change (Mac Ginty, 2001: 7–9). During attempts to manage armed conflict in the Solomon Islands in the 1999–2001 period, militant groups emphasized the traditional and customary nature of compensation for 'wronged' parties. Yet, in its modern incarnation, compensation was monetized and considerably removed from its traditional origins (Dinnen, 2002). Nevertheless, the government and other actors played along with the fiction of a constructed sense of the traditional.

Authors from a critical perspective also identify how the label 'indigenous' may be imposed on groups as part of a strategy of neo-colonialism. In relation to Canada, for example, Alfred and Cornthassel (2005: 598) argue that "aboriginalism" is a legal, political and cultural discourse designed to serve an agenda of silent surrender to an inherently unjust relation at the root of the colonial state itself'. They paint a picture in which the label 'indigenous' is part of the 'political-legal compartmentalization of community values' that is vital to a 'postmodern imperialism' (Alfred and Cornthassel, 2005: 600-1).

The fourth guiding point for the conceptualization of traditional peace-making is to caution against regarding traditional and Western peace-making as discrete conceptual categories. It would be appealing to conceive of distinct categories of peace-making with neatly contradictory qualities and sharply delineated boundaries. The construction of over-simplified dichotomies of a Western-political-legal-rational sphere versus a non-Western-psychological-moral-emotional sphere may even reinforce a sense of cultural imperialism (Brigg and Bleiker, 2007: 57). A pleasingly simple series of dyads may implicitly guide us towards the superiority of Western approaches to peace-making: direction versus indirection, conclusive versus inconclusive, organized versus disorganized, universal and standard versus peculiar and local, and rational versus emotional. White (1990: 53) notes how a deeply embedded Western moral framework readily identifies certain activities and ideas as deviant and others as normal, and how such a rubric guides many to view emotions 'as deep, irrational forces that run counter to orderly thought and action'. But these persistent and simplifying dichotomies of traditional versus Western overlook the much more complex picture between and within supposedly discrete categories. Indeed, given some of the long-running conflicts in the developed world (e.g. Northern Ireland or the Basque country), it could be said that established 'traditions' of conflict resolution exist in many Western states.

As already mentioned, exposure to, and negotiation with, out-groups (or in-group members who wish to challenge the social order) constitute a constant feature of all societies. Given globalization and complex interdependence, it is increasingly difficult to conceive of hermetically sealed traditional societies characterized by absolute homogeneity. Thus, the lens of the pristine pre-encounter traditional society versus the Western uber-rational model may not offer the most accurate view of the complex pattern of a hybrid of peace-making models that draws on multiple sources and uncertain heritage. As Briggs (2000: 113) notes in relation to Inuit dispute resolution practices: 'These ways of managing conflict worked very well in the tightly interdependent world of a hunting camp or small homogenous settlement.' But, as Inuit settlements have become larger and more ethnically, linguistically and economically diverse, such methods may have less purchase. Crucially, there is a danger that observers over-homogenize the 'traditional', 'indigenous' or the 'Western'. Such categories comprise much diversity, with the notion of 'the West', for example, subsuming and standardizing enormous variety and contradiction.

A Synthesis of Indigenous and Traditional Peace-Making with Western Peace-Making?

Having outlined a renewed interest in the potential of traditional and indigenous approaches and the dominance of Western approaches to peace-making, we must now consider if there are serious prospects for a synthesis between Western and traditional or indigenous versions of peace. Through the use of historical and contemporary examples, it is argued that the nature of the peace reflects prevailing power relations. Yet, in the contemporary era, despite the dominance of Western notions of peace, there are areas in which traditional and indigenous approaches to peace-making can flourish.

Historical examples of contact between different cultures provide insights into processes of accommodation between conflicting versions of peace and peace-making. In particular, cases of early European contact with indigenous communities in North America and elsewhere show evidence of willingness on behalf of the newcomers to conform to local methods of peace-making and dispute resolution. This 'willingness' was often borne of necessity and was rarely sustained once Western actors consolidated their power. The early peace-making methods often drew on local tradition and revealed the delicate inter-cultural negotiation process between different notions of peace promotion. They also point towards the extent to which peace (as an idea and a practice) adopted hybridized forms, assimilating philosophies and methods from various sources and conforming to prevailing power dynamics.

During the so-called 'Encounter era' of seventeenth and eighteenth century North America, European settlers and traders were dependent on indigenous tribes for access to supplies, markets and trade routes. This period saw much conflict, but also cooperation and compromise as indigenous groups and newcomers sought to regulate interaction. The 'forest diplomacy' of this era witnessed peace-making and dispute resolution that reflected indigenous dominance and European insecurity (Williams, 1994: 987; Burrows and Wallace, 2000: 11–13). Not only did the institutions and practices of peace-making draw on indigenous and traditional sources, but the preferred notions of peace (priority being given to reciprocity and sustainable relationships) also reflected local cultural mores. Many indigenous groups used marriage as a key element in peace-making. This 'ratification of peace by matrimony' amounted to reciprocal hostage-taking between formerly warring groups; if successful, it created enduring bonds between groups and illustrated that future conflict would have mutual costs (Biggs, 1960: 25). Very early contacts between indigenous groups and European traders and settlers in what were to become the modern states of India and New Zealand witnessed marriage as a means of cementing and sustaining inter-group relations (Ward, 2004: 13).

Hybridized versions of peace that may have suited interregnum periods before colonial projects became well established were eclipsed as European powers became more entrenched. At some point, though, a 'tipping point' was reached in which the colonial power secured the capacity to impose its

version of peace. Instead of reciprocation and sustainable resource-sharing, there was the imposition of Western models of peace and peace-making, including surrender and re-grant, formal written peace treaties and the violent suppression of indigenous groups and appropriation of their resources. Traditional social structures and inter-group relations were often eroded over a long period through the introduction of firearms, missionaries and monetized trading. Thus weakened, indigenous groups' customary norms of peace-making no longer retained their power. The 1840 Treaty of Waitangi between the British and Maori groups in the north island of modern New Zealand is instructive. The Treaty ceded vast tracts of land to the Crown, yet the Maori chiefs who signed it had little conception of sovereignty and property ownership. Translations of the Treaty were imprecise, and have been a bone of contention ever since, and some tribal chiefs thought that by not signing they were protecting themselves (Durie, 1998: 176–8). For Maoris, the primary purpose of going to war and making peace was *utu*, or redress following insult. For the British, however, colonial war and peace primarily revolved around access to resources. With such radically different views of war and peace it is clear that they were fighting different wars and making different peace. Of course, in many cases, once the colonial power was established there was no question of 'making peace' with indigenous groups: they were subjects, stripped of sovereignty and not regarded as legitimate opponents with whom to make peace.

If we fast forward to the contemporary post-Cold War era, we can still see 'encounters' between indigenous and traditional forms of peace-making and dispute resolution, on the one hand, and dominant Western practices, on the other. The question for us is to what extent can the customary forms of peace-making co-exist with Western and internationally supported peace-making? Three illustrative examples from contemporary contexts are analysed to assess the prospects for a harmonious relationship between indigenous and Western peace-making methods: *Nahe Biti* in East Timor, the *miss* ceremony and use of the *leketio* belt in northern Kenya and the *Loya Jirga* in Afghanistan.

Nahe Biti (laying out the mat) is a customary mediation process found in East Timor (Peace and Democracy Foundation, 2004). Although a number of varieties of this practice are in operation, the basic dispute resolution process involves the victim bringing a complaint to a traditional leader, such as a village chief, who then brings the disputants together, often with a ritual to signify the opening of the ceremony. The disputants are given an opportunity to present their arguments and witnesses may be called. The traditional leader then proclaims a judgement, will suggest a penalty (often a fine) and offer advice. The *Nahe Biti* may end with a statement by the 'guilty' party and a ritual in which the disputants share food and drink. The process is voluntary, only operates in relation to civil or minor cases and places an emphasis on reconciliation between the disputants and the wider community.

Of particular relevance to the question of the co-existence of indigenous and Western forms of peace-making in societies emerging from conflict was the adoption of the *Nahe Biti* methodology by East Timor's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Gusmão, 2003: 2; Byrne, 2005: 2). Established

in 2002, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission sought to investigate human rights violations between 1974 and 1999. While a Serious Crime Unit dealt with severe and large-scale human rights abuses and Indonesia conducted a limited human rights violations tribunal, the *Nahe Biti* operated at the village level with a view to addressing local concerns and grievances, contributing to community reconciliation and supporting a peaceful transition. Evaluations found that the community reconciliation process was able to smooth the re-entry of deponents back into the community and the mechanisms of 'confession, contrition and compensation' conformed to public expectations of conflict management (Schenk, 2005: 6–7). In total, over 1400 cases were considered by the community reconciliation process and the exercise was regarded as a 'qualified success' (Byrne, 2005: 3).

A second example comes from inter-tribal conflicts between the Pokot community and other groups in northern Kenya. Although receiving scant media and academic attention, such conflicts can have devastating consequences and substantial death tolls. Over one-hundred-and-sixty-thousand people have been displaced by agro-pastoralist conflict in Kenya, with the severity of such conflicts increasing after the introduction of modern weapons into what can be described as quasi-traditional disputes (Fleischer, 1998; Pkalya et al., 2003: 10–11). Cattle-raiding and access to pasture are often the primary causes behind such violence. In addition to developing elaborate mechanisms for the management of intra-group disputes, the Pokot community also have a number of customary means for the pacification of inter-group disputes (Pkalya et al., 2004: 35–40). The principal means is the *miss*, or a peace pact brokered by community elders. Once brokered, the pact is cemented by a detailed ritual involving the slaughter of bulls and the burying of weapons. By donating food, livestock and weapons for the peace ritual, a wider range of community members have an input into the peace-making process. The moral power of the *miss* technique is credited with long-lasting periods of peace between the Pokot and a number of their traditional enemies (Pkalya et al., 2004: 37–8). Women have also traditionally played a role in halting inter-group violence. According to custom, by wearing a *leketio* belt, women can protect warriors from harm. But by refusing to wear the belt warriors will be discouraged from cattle-raiding missions. Additionally, laying the belt between combatants was thought to bring a curse on combatants and thus discouraged inter-group conflict.

A third, and very different, example of a traditional form of dispute resolution comes in the form of the Afghan *Loya Jirga* (Grand Council) convened in June 2002 to choose a transitional government. Afghanistan's circumstances were unique, with the Taliban government being toppled by the United States and local allies. Although arrangements for the *Loya Jirga* were established by the December 2001 Bonn Agreement, the *Loya Jirga* process had a rich history in Afghanistan (Kazem, 2002). It provided a consensus decision-making forum for tribal chiefs in a multi-ethnic environment and its 2002 reincarnation followed precedent in that it had been used before in times of national crisis. Given the absence of accurate electoral rolls and the capacity to conduct an election, the *Loya Jirga* was regarded by many in the international community and NGO sector as a

legitimate emergency decision-making forum (UNSC, 2002; HRW, 2002). The fifteen-hundred strong 2002 *Loya Jirga* was followed by a smaller version in December 2003 to consider Afghanistan's draft constitution. Although the scene of disputes and high drama, both *Loya Jirgas* succeeded in facilitating consensus decision-making.

All three customary forms of dispute resolution offer advantages. The principal advantage is that all three are culturally intuitive and in keeping with local tradition and customary expectations of mediation (Gusmão, 2003: 2; Pigou, 2003: 40). As a result, the methods hold the potential to achieve a grass-roots legitimacy that may be lacking from more technocratic 'alien' forms of dispute resolution that form the mainstay of Western-funded and designed peace-support programmes and projects. Dispute resolution techniques deemed legitimate by a community are likely to enjoy public adherence. Another common advantage was efficacy. All three environments faced severe governance problems, whether because of remoteness in the case of northern Kenya or, in the cases of East Timor and Afghanistan, because of the lack of state capacity following protracted violent conflict. The *Nahe Biti* was able to offer low cost and swift dispute resolution, thus relieving the burden on a nascent formal courts system. The *Loya Jirga* was able to perform an emergency role in a society lacking alternative locally legitimated forums for dispute resolution. The Pokot were able to draw on customary inter-group dispute resolution techniques in the absence of an effective formal judicial system. Yet all three forms of customary dispute resolution suffer disadvantages. Variations in the execution of the *Nahe Biti* mechanism, for example, may run counter to attempts by the fledgling East Timorese state to introduce a uniform judicial system. The *Nahe Biti* and *Loya Jirga* both suffered from persistent criticisms that they failed to include women (although the 2002 *Loya Jirga* introduced quota places for women delegates), while the elite-level nature of the peace negotiations in the *miss* leave it open to criticisms of a lack of transparency.

Concluding Discussion

On one level, the contemporary examples cited in the previous section suggest that Western and international forms of peace-making and dispute resolution can co-exist with indigenous and traditional forms. In East Timor, Afghanistan and Kenya, traditional and indigenous forms of dispute resolution operate alongside more formal and Western-inspired forms of conflict management. In two of the cases (East Timor and Afghanistan), traditional and indigenous forms of dispute resolution have played important roles in much broader internationally supported peace implementation schemes. In Afghanistan, in particular, the *Loya Jirgas* fulfilled critical roles at acute moments during Afghanistan's post-Taliban transition and provided a focal point for cohesion in a society with strong centrifugal pressures. The *Nahe Biti* was able to complement the post-independence reconstruction and reconciliation programme. Given that one of the persistent criticisms of orthodox, technocratic and internationally supported peace-making interventions is

their failure to deal with the affective and socio-psychological consequences of violent conflict, it can be argued that the *Nahe Biti* offered a distinct added value to the Western peace-making model. Although Kenya does not have a formal peace-making process to tackle its agro-pastoralist conflicts, the traditional forms of dispute resolution co-exist with more formal and judicial attempts to tackle such violence.

A closer examination of the relationship between both forms of peace-making, though, suggests the dominance of Western approaches to peace-making and the marginalization of traditional and indigenous approaches. In Afghanistan and East Timor the entire peace-making context was the product of international intervention. The *Loya Jirga* was artificially resuscitated by external actors, with the 2001 Bonn Agreement establishing a 'Special Independent Commission for Convening an Emergency *Loya Jirga*'. The last *Loya Jirga* had been held in 1964, with the result that relatively few Afghans had direct experience or knowledge of this form of inter-group dispute resolution. The precedence given to Western politico-cultural norms meant that the 2002 *Loya Jirga* differed substantially from its predecessors. The desire to achieve multi-ethnic representation and the inclusion of women (standard prerequisites for many Western deliberative forums) meant that the 2002 version was a distortion of earlier *Loya Jirgas*. With over 1500 delegates it was impossible for all delegates to speak. Delegates of the modern *Loya Jirga* were required to sign an affidavit attesting that they had not taken part in crime and human rights abuses. The concept of human rights is very much a Western one and relies heavily on the legal status of the individual, as opposed to the extended family, kin group, community or language group – concepts that may have more resonance in non-Western societies. A statement professing non-involvement in crime also had little relevance in a society emerging from a protracted bloody conflict that had lacked an effective criminal justice system for decades. The final Western distortion of the *Loya Jirga* came in the venue for the 2002 forum: it was a tented city built by NATO.

In relation to the *Nahe Biti*, it is again difficult to construct a narrative depicting this as a purely organic form of dispute resolution. East Timor's post-independence peace-building context was dominated by the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISSET), which worked in conjunction with a large number of bilateral and INGO donors and agencies. In other words, much of the peace-building context was a creature of external actors. East Timorese President, Xanana Gusmão, recognizing the limited capacities of the state, was keen to adopt the *Nahe Biti* within a wider suite of reconciliation measures and the community reconciliation processes occurred under the auspices of the formal truth and reconciliation process. In a departure from traditional and indigenous processes, the *Nahe Biti* was subject to Western style evaluations funded by overseas donors, with some of the evaluation criteria reflecting Western rather than local concerns (JSMP, 2004). NGO proposals to update the *Nahe Biti* methodology as an all-purpose customary dispute resolution mechanism risk jeopardizing the very customary nature that makes it attractive in the first place.

The survival of the Pokot's dispute resolution techniques is largely the result of their geographical isolation, state incapacity and the apparently

'marginal' nature of their conflicts. While the peace-making context in Afghanistan and East Timor was, in large part, the product of international intervention, the context in the Pokot community of Kenya is largely unaffected by international factors. Yet, changes in Pokot society in recent decades have had a negative impact on local adherence to customary methods of dispute resolution. In particular, the introduction of small arms and the monetization of cattle-raiding have meant that conflicts are deadlier and the spoils are greater. A decline in respect for traditional sources of counsel (elders and women) has meant that traditional peace-making ceremonies have less purchase and are increasingly entered into on a strategic basis, i.e. as a means of buying time before they are deliberately broken (Pkalya et al., 2003: 39). Thus, in a somewhat counterintuitive way, indigenous and traditional means of dispute resolution survive (or are rehabilitated) under international auspices in Afghanistan and East Timor, while, in the case of Kenya, are marginalized and 'left to their own devices'.

The examples reviewed here (admittedly by no means a representative sample) suggest that a contradictory peace-making dynamic is in operation in relation to indigenous and traditional peace-making. On the one hand, the standardizing tendency behind Western peace-making, together with the power and resource distribution potential of its sponsors, means that — in many cases — space becomes limited for alternative approaches to peace-making, including indigenous and traditional forms of peace-making. On the other hand, there is some evidence that large-scale internationally supported peace interventions are able to provide the support environment required for the deployment of traditional and indigenous dispute mechanisms. Yet if traditional and indigenous peace-making mechanisms can only operate under the auspices of internationally supported peace interventions, can we still consider them to be 'traditional' and 'indigenous'? The answer must be 'no'. It is worth repeating, though, that discrete conceptualizations of peace-making are misleading. All peace-making is hybridized to some extent in that there will be differences according to reception, interpretation and engagement according to local factors.

It is possible, however, to conceive of local actors in post-civil war societies adopting an instrumentalist approach to indigenous and traditional peace-making so as to protect themselves from the full implications of the liberal peace. In this view, local actors adopt or maintain indigenous methods to subvert the liberal peace. For example, Western peace-building interventions may attempt to impose 'threatening' norms on local communities (such as, the inclusion of women or members of other castes). The deployment of indigenous or traditional techniques may offer insulation from Western techniques.

Critics of template-style liberal peace interventions have highlighted their technocratic and top-down nature; their acceptance of grudging intercommunal co-existence rather than an ability to effect genuinely transformative peace; their fetishization of state and institution-building; and — in the post 9/11 era — their emphasis on securitization and stabilization (Chandler, 2004). Two criticisms recur: that internationally led peace-support interventions fail to transcend a top-down bias and that they are

unable to deal with the affective and psychological dimensions of conflict and peace-making. Indigenous and traditional peace-making may be able to act as a corrective to these criticisms. Many customary dispute resolution techniques are participatory and operate at precisely the community and local levels that top-down peace-making may fail to reach. In the peace-building jargon, they possess 'anthropological sensitivity' (Ignatieff, 2005: 6). Moreover, many customary approaches to conflict are concentrated on truth-telling, reconciliation and the re-establishment of sustainable relationships, i.e. aspects of peace-making often overlooked by technocratic peace-making models. Given the power and structural biases of Western, internationally supported forms of peace-making, it is difficult to conceive of a truly complementary balance between both forms of peace-making. If both forms are to operate in the same context simultaneously, then the strength of the liberal peace-making model and its sponsors suggests that the relationship will be one of co-option rather than a co-existence of equals. While indigenous and traditional forms of peace-making may serve useful purposes, it is likely that they will only do so in 'reservations' sponsored by international actors and will not affect the meta-peace.

It may be possible to argue that the mainstreaming of Alternative Dispute Resolution approaches into liberal peace interventions allows us to paint a less harsh picture of the liberal peace and retain some optimism as to the space available for indigenous and traditional peace-making. Under this view, liberal peace-lite is on offer through culturally sensitive programming by the armies of NGOs, mediators, conflict resolution trainers and human rights groups present in most societies emerging from violent conflict. Indigenous and traditional peace-making may be given space through ADR approaches. This view has some credence, and certainly reminds us not to regard the liberal peace as an always-capable behemoth. Instead, the liberal peace is variegated in its execution and reception, and soft power versions are available. Yet, a structuralist analysis brings us back to the sobering reality that the parameters of the liberal peace (its key agents, its economic principles and mechanisms, its tools for disciplining deviance, etc.) are hard-wired into the international system. Its prevailing ideology is a hollow kind of liberalism that gives priority to neo-liberal mores, institutions and technocratic 'solutions'. While the principles and agents of ADR can mitigate some of the harsher effects of the liberal peace, they may actually be co-opted into the liberal peace. Although ADR may give space for traditional and indigenous peace-making, it may — depending on circumstances — be a local proxy for the liberal peace.

But we can temper this negative assessment by noting recent research which recognizes the power of local communities to ignore, re-negotiate and even subject the strictures of the liberal peace as transmitted to them via the language of 'reform' or 'good governance' (Richmond and Franks, 2007). Moreover, interest in alternative approaches to peace-making seems to be increasing as a greater evidence of the limitations and costs of orthodox approaches continues to emerge. While the liberal peace has a standardizing dynamic, it is also interested in lowering costs and devolving responsibility (some would say absolving itself of responsibility). This creates a space which

the agents of traditional and indigenous peace-making could exploit. Perhaps the most significant breakthrough that agents of indigenous and traditional peace-making can make is conceptual: forcing a recognition by powerful international actors that peace can be plural rather than singular. In other words, a recognition that alternative versions of peace to the liberal peace can have legitimacy. The radical research agenda now needs to move beyond merely criticizing the failings of the liberal peace to scoping the extent to which alternatives (often local mini-alternatives) are possible (Mac Ginty, 2007). This will involve a more serious analysis of the role of culture in peace-making and a reining in of any tendency to romanticize the 'traditional' or 'indigenous'. It would also benefit from a dissection of orthodox approaches to peace-making to identify those parts of peace-making processes that could usefully be replaced or augmented by indigenous or traditional practices.

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