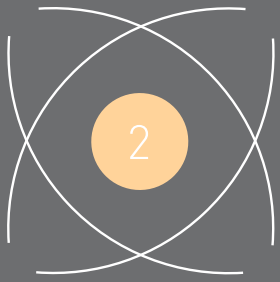

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   Articles in journals: Paulo Gorjão, "Japan's Foreign Policy and East Timor, 1975–2002" (*Asian Survey*, Vol. 42, No. 5, September/October 2002), pp. 754-771.

   Articles in newspapers: Paulo Gorjão, "UN needs coherent strategy to exit from East Timor" (*Jakarta Post*, 19 May 2004), p. 25.
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The Political Project of Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Gaining Settings and Minds

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The end of the Cold War brought with it a growing optimism about the new world order. It was believed that the political project of liberal modernity (democracy, rights and freedom, individuality and rationality) would at last become a broader reality. The "new wars" which erupted in the 1990's curtailed some of this optimism, but at the same time turned out to be a key moment to expand this liberal project. In fact, notwithstanding the destruction brought on by these violent conflicts, their treatment as deviant behavior that must be put right has reinforced (1) the political program of liberal modernity as a path to peace and (2) the international consensus around this image. Peace-building emerged as the key strategy to bring modernity to such scenarios. However, despite ideological and functional goals, in practice the ontological modernity rhetoric of empowerment was transformed into a technical, hierarchical tool, becoming part of a broader governance framework.

This article aims to explore the cumulative discourse produced by the interaction between the ideological and functional components of the political peace-building project. Not only do we argue that the self-sustaining mechanisms of this project can be more widely applied to a growing number of settings, but also that they have captured the minds of those who engage in the project's critical assessment. As such, we will first focus on the terms and context which have allowed for this political project to gain its unique status. Secondly, we will address both the theory and policy program that have been designed to respond to scenarios of violent conflict. Finally, we will address some critical inferences regarding the project and illuminate the double process of normalization it fosters: materialistic on the one hand, hermeneutical on the other. This study aims, therefore, to contribute to a self-reflective critical research agenda.

The 1990's: prospects for a new global order?

The end of the Cold War and the dismantling of a bipolar world were seen as a window of opportunity to transition to a peaceful and democratic international system. A growing

sense of victory was evident among many scholars and politicians in the West: the fall of the Berlin Wall represented, foremost, the victory of liberal democracy, not only in terms of the bipolar ideological confrontation, but also as the most suitable political contract between the state and the individual. Only democratic societies could assure the necessary equilibrium between security and liberty, and consequently guarantee a peaceful sociability.

A form of democratic moralism developed in the hearts of those engaged in defining a new world order. In his 1991 speech, George W. Bush proclaimed the "forging" of a new world order that should foster "a world where the rule of law, not the law of the jungle, governs the conduct of nations".[1] The promotion of democracy, at a national and international level, was perceived as the only path to international peace.[2]

Though there was much debate, two liberal theoretical strands underlay this broad assumption. On one hand, Fukuyama drew the picture of the last man as a democratic political individual, given his Hegelian understanding of history as a coherent evolutionary trail of human societies towards an ending point, where a form of society that satisfied its needs and requests would be attained. In this portrayal, Fukuyama presented democracy as the final stage of political evolution.[3] On the other hand, Democratic Peace theorists found a revival and update of Kantian propositions in the 1990s. Sustained at two levels of analysis – monadic and dyadic – democratic pacifism was sanctified internally as well as internationally.[4] These two levels in fact share a clear sense of peaceful exclusivity based on causal relations between political regimes and international peace, which excludes non-democracies. Accordingly, the solution for an international peaceful order was to advocate for intervention at the state level and promotion of democracy worldwide.[5]

Indeed, the prospects of a new world order became entwined with an optimistic democratic feeling, binding the scope of modernity to its liberal expression. Democracy came to be identified as the missing political element to achieve peace and deliver modernity to underdeveloped areas of the world. However, and despite not being a new phenomenon, the violent conflicts of the 1990s, later labeled by Mary Kaldor as New Wars,[6] did not fit into the vision of democratic liberal modernity. The unexpected surge in conflicts concerned those who were attached to this optimistic view of a new pacific era. So, while new analytical frameworks were being created and democracy was expanded, a new window was opened into the developing world, showing a reality distant from what was imagined and desired. Essentially, and according to Kaldor, these new wars can be distinguished by their objectives, war methods, and financing mechanisms, and their goals can be easily connected to power-related issues that converge with identity politics.[7] The privatization of violence, together with the proliferation of sub-state groups, the fragile states syndrome and the development of war economies, characterized these conflicts, giving them both local and global dimensions due to their expressions and causes.

Even though one can question the novelty of this conflictedness, our aim is neither to acquiesce, nor to defy Kaldor's propositions. In fact, the term of "new wars" encapsulates the main questions surrounding the conflictedness of post-Cold War times and reflects a certain perplexity when approaching this violence. The different elements, considered individually or together, were part, as causes or consequences, of a frame labeled as new and implicitly at odds with all that had been seen before in warfare or international relations. Their novelty can be accepted if we consider the evolving environment in which they emerged, as the term "new" mainly implies a profound divergence from the optimism of liberal modernity and its (modern) conception of war.

Modern warfare was conceived according to the Clausewitzian view of war as politics by other – specifically violent – means. This violence was framed by the legitimacy of the actors involved and the existence of behavioral constraints. The rationality of this war is its fundamental mark of modernity and is what makes it legitimate, dictating that the parties to the conflict would above all seek a resolution. This rationality is perceived as absent in the violence of new wars. They present violence from a functional perspective, a pattern of social relations based on a necessary elimination of otherness and the maintenance of a scenario capable of fueling a parallel and profitable economy.[8] Irrationality, in this violence, comes precisely from the functional role it plays. The new wars theory imagines places where violence as a daily structure of life challenges its exceptionality in modernity. Political relations established in such a society are considered to be irrational, which also underlies the perception that these places stand outside modernity, where violence is limited and circumscribed. This perception of irrationality deepened the feeling of shock in international systems as the international community was confronted with a new dilemma in the 1990s: how to proceed with the liberal modernity project if irrationality was increasing globally?

Back on Track: Rescuing the State Evolution Process Announcing the modern crusade

The description of this conflictedness as irrational and contradictory to the modern notion of violence as an exceptional solution emphasized the perception of deviance in these conflicts. These spaces were increasingly seen as "standing outside modernity", on a parallel dimension, waiting to be brought onto the right path: liberal modernity. Consequently, a generalized awareness recognized the need to intervene globally and reinforce the democratic peace theory's propositions about the expansion of democracy as the construction of global Peace.

The absence of "modernity" in these conflict settings is equated with the internalization of violent norms that results from conflict. The description of failed states or the

dichotomization of conflicts into categories of greed and grievance evidently presented conflictedness solely as the product of domestic predatory and criminal elites pursuing their interests.[9] This process of internalization, allowed by the narrative construction of failed states as the places of un-modernity and violence, is what Bickerton called "domestication of anarchy", a process where the locus of disorder descends from the international system to the domestic stage.[10] Applying to new conflicts the label of "deviant" not only safeguarded hope for post-Cold War Peace, but also reinforced the need to intervene. Indeed, liberal modernity proposes an understanding of violent conflicts that offers a rearrangement of practices, institutions and social meanings in accordance with modernity.[11] The idea of opposition between domestic disorder and modernity led to a vision of conflict resolution that enabled the international community (spaces of Peace) to offer a solution for war-torn societies.[12]

Undeniably, liberal modernity not only kept its international legitimacy, but indeed reinforced it. Despite the shock caused by the violence of these new wars, the modern international system was able to study the causes of conflict and provide prescriptions for their resolution, thus reaffirming the liberal modernity political project as the desirable ideal for peaceful societies, and portraying it as the correct way to achieve a new world order. This assertion that modernity was the answer to conflicts was present in Boutros Boutros-Ghali's *Agenda for Peace*,[13] which became a political statement in which the project of modern liberal democracy is conceptually presented as the intervention strategy necessary to attain lasting peace in conflict scenarios. His *Agenda for Democratization* canonized the role of democracy in war-torn societies, stating that "peace, development and democracy are inextricably linked".[14] This statement came to be a part of Kofi Annan's political legacy, when in 2000, as Secretary-General of UN, he argued for the promotion of democracy as a highly effective means of preventing conflict.

Making the places 'standing outside' a part of liberal democratic political modernity meant, and still means, creating a new agenda of intervention where the values and theory of modernity could be brought to bear on violent conflicts. This modernity crusade in the 1990s took the form of peace-building missions and principles. The concept of good governance became the guiding principle behind this modern crusade and was considered to be the new political prerequisite for Peace. Its inherent logic of control assumed conditions shaped by the necessity to contain and reverse deviant behavior through the principles of accountability and transparency in two complementary manners: (1) the international community's supervision of the restructuring processes and the necessary cooperation of national governments, and (2) the vigilance at a national level over a society guided by democratic principles.

The UN became the primary actor leading the modernity brigade ahead. Its ambitious post-conflict reconstruction model emerged from the idea of reengineering society as

a whole, and was explicitly formulated in the Agenda for Peace. This enormous project aimed at addressing three fundamental deficits present in war-torn societies: political fragility or failure; poor socioeconomic conditions; and the psycho-social trauma caused by the conflict. This required strategic action in four main areas: military and security, reconciliation, socio-economic and political-constitutional.[15] The political dimension of this complex project became a key feature of its pacifying nature, responsible for the cumulative discourse and practices that lie behind its capacity for intervention and legitimacy.

Adjusting theory to intervention: the political reconstruction model

Concerning the political sphere of rehabilitation, international intervention presents itself as an attempt to find mechanisms that may be implemented in order to manage (1) the problems of civil unrest in a "Clausewitz-in-reverse" logic,[16] allowing for rationality, individuality and politics to be imposed, and (2) preventing the degenerating state from failing from a governance reform perspective. Cohesion between the modernity project and the peace-building intervention was achieved through the creation of a comprehensive technical-political policy package which, under the good governance label, merged the functional and the ideological features of the modern theory with a problem-solving rationale aimed at dispelling and preventing violence. By trying to correct disabled political structures, the post-conflict rehabilitation model seeks to stabilize the existing (dis)order and subsequently to restructure it according to the "modernity/liberal" peace framework.

Good governance mechanisms such as "monitoring elections, advancing efforts to protect human rights, reforming or strengthening governmental institutions and promoting formal and informal processes of political participation",[17] are some of the different peace-building measures identified in the Agenda for Peace. They may be systematized in three main "modern" areas of intervention: governance reform, focused on the state and on democracy, protection of human rights and support of civil society.

In a top-down sequence, state reconstruction is a symbol of this political process, as it is regarded as the rehabilitation antidote to the "governance disease"[18] affecting countries in the new wars scenario. The peace-building model, as applied in UN operations in Somalia, Guatemala and Timor-Leste among many others, has focused its activities on improving institutional capacity, basing government institutions on the rule of law and on separation of powers, constructing governmental buildings and developing conciliatory and effective administrative procedures.[19] These measures were intended to provide war-torn societies with polity effectiveness and coherence, making them fit the normative international landscape and stressing the fact that the engineering nature of peace-

building permeates both the domestic and international spheres, projecting the order of modernity on a global scale.

However, despite its macro importance, state reconstruction is in itself insufficient. In relating state reconstruction with good governance, democracy emerges as the key linkage in peace-building language, and consequently state reconstruction must be supported by a democratic political regime. International "democratizing assistance" has mainly translated into technical and financial international assistance. Supporting emergent legal frameworks, preparing actors and organizations, and monitoring elections, are the three pillars of this political intervention, emphasizing quite clearly its technical and functional nature.

Protection of human rights and support for civil society are the other key elements of the peace-building good governance framework. From an institutional point of view, international intervention within this area aims to improve the human rights situation in order to facilitate the punishment of violations that happened during war and to assure protection in peacetime. In a wider perspective, it also fosters democratic practices and principles. Regarding civil society, intervention policies have been mainly directed towards the support of independent media and human rights organizations.[20] The idea is to create and develop a civil society that can function as an important catalyst for grassroots change towards democratization, "represent[ing] their local constituencies in decision-making processes and serv[ing] as a watchdog for government action".[21]

Rescuing the Hegelian interdependence of state and society, the peace-building political project presents itself as a rational and inclusive rehabilitation plan, merging the ideological and the functional elements of its proposition. Standing for capacity-building and empowerment – two updated and extended ideas of the liberal modernity project – political peace-building promises to act as a way to bring deviant political situations back to the path of liberal modernity, pulling them toward the state evolution finish line.

A broken promise?

The rational and the normative aspects of this political governance reform highlight the modern recipe of this intervention and the belief in the conditionality of modernity principles when building order and peace. However, it is precisely within this linkage that the inconsistency of the project lies: the promise of modernity principles as ideological and functional tools for empowerment, on one hand, and the building of order (and Peace), on the other.

Strict analysis of peace-building missions, whether from a conceptual or an operational standpoint, reveal that peace-building missions have been continuously obeying a technical standard operational procedure, neglecting the specific contexts of the societies at

which rehabilitation projects are directed,[22] and adopting a quick fix agenda enabling only the construction of a formal and low intensity Peace.[23]

The most apparent reason for this rests upon the dry, technical, problem-solving and functionalist approach by which this peace-building policy has been characterized – which is well summed up by Roland Paris's idea of institutionalization before liberalization – and is thoroughly related to the prescriptive tone of this intervention policy as well as by the attempt to bring a certain kind of normality to domestic spheres and to world order.

Despite the fact that the rhetoric of good governance underlying peace-building interventions is linked to modernity values as part of a whole ideological program, the implementation of good governance mechanisms developed by international organizations emerged as a selective, rather than a holistic process. This has progressively led to the imposition of legal and rational structures designed to heal societies affected by "political pathologies" (i.e. bad governance, corruption, irrationality and violence) in a technical and administrative way, leaving aside the application of capacity-building and empowerment.

A Schumpeterian bias for procedural democracy[24] and for long external transitional authorities[25] have been two of the clearest evidences of this policy. Elections have been given the leading role in democracy, while less importance has been attributed to all other democratic practices, resulting in a minimalist conception of democracy. Additionally, by excluding all local inputs in the making and implementation of policies at the state level, the political peace-building project has built a gap between the proposed discourses of Peace and the real conditions in which it is implemented.

What results from this kind of intervention is the de-politicization of the local political sphere: the state entity becomes an empty shell where the lack of concrete political articulations and social relations reveals its artificial nature. In this context of intervention, and because political institutions can only coerce society when emerging out of existing social forces,[26] the political rehabilitation project turns out to be more of a discursive product than a concrete reality, stressing the imbalance of the ideological proposition and the wider functional nature of these interventionist international policies.

Political peace-building intervention can be regarded as a cyclical process beginning with the abnormal de-politicization of the local setting due to poor governance, and arriving at a new local de-politicization, this time by means of good governance mechanisms designed by foreign experts. Chandler's logical and contradictory sequence, going from "state without politics" as a generating element of war to "peace without politics" as a prescription to solve and prevent war, clearly expresses peace-building's political contradiction: "politics as a barrier to peace".[27]

As such, the promise of modernity within peace-building's political rehabilitation project has been not fulfilled, and instead of ranging from the systemic to the individual level, political good governance mechanisms have mostly remained systemic.

Gaining Settings and Minds

The political project for peace-building has evidently internalized the political model of modernity in its most rational and empowering ideas. However, if the rationality of institutions and law has become a reality in post-conflict societies, their empowerment and capacity-building components have, conversely, been mostly disregarded. The co-optation of the modernity model did not necessarily result in the accomplishment of the modernity promise, but rather in the normalization of societies through technical and administrative therapeutic interventions in order to control them domestically and improve their standing in the international sphere.

The idea of normalization may not, at first glance, be regarded as a negative concept, but more as a limitation. This does not allow us to look at differences in a non-assimilative way, and as a regulatory mechanism in a cosmopolitan project of world order. However, the problem revealed when analyzing the normalization process in peace-building interventions – which can be glossed as the idea of "becoming one of us" – is the hierarchical element introduced in the power dynamic, showing the way the modernity package became an instrument of governance driven by Western powers and international organizations. The Agenda for Peace and the Agenda for Democratization turned out to be, in their implementation, an "agenda for hierarchical governance", even if not formally acknowledged. The technical peace-building models of intervention and for the maintenance of external experts in local scenarios are, in fact, the most prominent symptoms of the hierarchical governance nature.

The institutional, constitutional and civil Peace that the peace-building project aims to put in place in post-war scenarios is translated, through the features of its implementation, into a hegemonic Peace.[28] In reality, rather than dealing with the root causes of conflict, peace-building interventions aim mostly at assuring a liberal and controlled peace framework in the developing world.[29] Peace became a governance framework, not with the objective of bringing order and stability to all societies in a similar and modern way, but rather to bring a certain kind of order, stabilize certain societies and guarantee the continued existence of prosperity in the developed world.

Highlighting the articulation of the modernity project as a whole at a world scale, peace-building aims at controlling and disciplining non-Western governments and populations in order to protect the functioning of the global capital[30] and to prevent the disorder and instability of underdeveloped regions from spilling over to industrialized countries.[31] However, this last purpose is not necessarily accomplished through rescuing and curing deviant societies, but rather through the dynamic of "becoming one of us, but never reaching us", revealing that the rhetoric of "other-regarding"[32] or "self-effacing" ethics[33] that inspired peace-building intervention is nothing but the reflection of an informal empire, despite espousing a specific kind of ideas and values connected to local empowerment and capacity-building.

In contrast to historical formal empires which explicitly denied the right to self-government and were based on hierarchy rather than equality, and on force rather than consent, the informal empire behind peace-building denies, in its turn, any form of direct political control and surprisingly reinforces the formal legal status of sovereignty.[34] The empire is then, as David Chandler remarks, in denial, but yet in continuous expansion. From Namibia to Angola, Rwanda, Liberia, Guatemala, Timor Leste, Afghanistan and Iraq, the political project of peace-building has been extending its sights, finding settings in which to trace a path to modernity, but in a specific functional and segmented way that guarantees and bolsters the leading position of developed countries in the race towards modernity.[35]

This situation has been reached primarily through the building of an epistemic and political consensus on the objectives of intervention and the approaches to ending conflicts that are deployed in non-modern scenarios,[36] and on the conditionality of this political and social system to attain peace. In reality, while the instrumental appropriation of the modernity project by Western powers has been one of the limitations and critiques of this project, the intellectual consensus on the theoretical proposition of modernity is another limitation that should be acknowledged.

Modernity has become the reference for political thought because of the rational and normative aspects of its program, but mostly as a result of its cumulative discourses. Hence, it has given a hermeneutical framework for intellectuals and politicians to interpret reality and to react to it. However, the hegemony of the modernity idea and the power of its structures in shaping actors' and agents' behavior trap researchers and politicians in a hermeneutical mechanism which limits the analysis of the problems to the dynamic of modernity or non-modernity, and proposes to heal non-modern societies through modernity mechanisms. Consequently, even when acknowledging the deficiencies this model might entail, one finds it difficult to propose alternatives, faced otherwise with the prospect of embracing an abnormal "un-modernity".

(Endnotes)

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