3 A tale of two “peaces”

Liberal peace, developmental peace, and peacebuilding

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Introduction

As China's overall national strength keeps increasing apace, its role in global governance is now a heated topic. At the same time, President Xi Jinping has expressed strong willingness to actively participate in reform of the global governance system. In the light of such a background, China is no longer merely an ordinary participant in many important global affairs, but also a core actor, as China's international identity has expanded from a norm taker to a norm contributor. As the largest inter-governmental organization, the United Nations (UN) is one of the key actors in global governance as well as the most important platform for international politics. For the past four decades, China's increasingly active participation in global affairs and integration into the international community has to a large extent been reflected in its participation in UN affairs, most notably peacekeeping (He “China's Doctrine” 110). Therefore, research into China's normative contribution to the UN peacekeeping regime can aid understanding of China's changing role in global governance.

As many UN peacekeeping operations established in the post-Cold War era now emphasize peacebuilding, this chapter will discuss China's normative contributions in that area. The major questions to be answered include: What is the Chinese norm of peacebuilding? And what will happen when the Chinese norm encounters the existing dominant peacebuilding norm?

Peacebuilding

In multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations, while working hard to secure a peaceful operational environment, peacekeepers and their civilian colleagues are authorized to conduct various peacebuilding activities, such as helping host states establish or reform political,

economic, and social institutions, and building infrastructure. With such a background, the term "peacekeeping operation" is redefined, with these operations focusing on peacebuilding, which has become an important part of the efforts by the international community to maintain peace and security since the end of the Cold War.

The term "peacebuilding" was first proposed by Galtung in 1970, and by it he meant addressing the root causes of conflict and supporting local capacity for peace management and conflict resolution (Galtung "Three Approaches to Peace" 282–304). Peacebuilding became a familiar concept within the UN following Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's 1992 report, *An Agenda for Peace*, which defined peacebuilding as actions to solidify peace and avoid relapsing into conflict (55–59). The *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace* published in 1995 by the UN Secretariat stressed the importance of building state institutions (Boutros-Ghali 47–56). Another milestone document for peacebuilding is the *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations* (also known as the "Brahimi Report") put forward by the UN Secretariat, which redefines peacebuilding as activities undertaken in post-conflict settings to reassemble the foundations of peace and to provide the tools for building something that is more than just the absence of the war (*Report of the Panel* 5). In 2005, the UN began to establish a peacebuilding architecture which has three institutional components: the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Fund, and the Peacebuilding Support Office (Jenkins 44–73). The institutional complex serves as an important platform for the UN and international community to help build sustainable peace in post-conflict societies. In 2015, the Secretary-General's Advisory Group of Experts submitted *The Challenges of Sustaining Peace: Report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture*, which redefines "peacebuilding" and introduces a broader approach, "sustaining peace". According to the review, the concept of sustaining peace is supposed to liberate peacebuilding from the strict limitation to post-conflict contexts (17).

Besides this conceptual evolution and institutional development, another important part of peacebuilding is its activities and guiding norms. Since the early 1990s, UN peacebuilding has had an institutional focus. Prolonged violent conflicts usually gravely damage institutions. It is widely believed within the international peacebuilding community that strong institutions are the pre-requisite for efforts to build lasting peace. Therefore, there has been a focus on rebuilding and reinforcing the resilience of key institutions (*Challenges of Sustaining Peace* 17). More importantly, all peacebuilding activities are required to be done

according to democratic rules and principles. In other words, a peace norm called “liberal peace” has prevailed in peacebuilding discourse and practice (*Paris At War’s End*; Mac Ginty and Richmond).

Liberal peace and its limitations

Liberal peace derives from the practices of Western Civilization, with Western Europe and North America as its center. The liberal peace norm has two fundamental elements: liberalization and democratization, from which Western states have benefited greatly. For centuries past, due to its economic and military strength, the West has enjoyed an advantageous position on the international stage and has been able to export its values and political ideology to other parts of the world, playing a dominant role in shaping the international system. Under such conditions, the liberal peace is promoted as a universal peace norm and has influenced peacebuilding within the UN peace and security architecture and beyond.

Advocates of liberal peace believe that the most important task of peacebuilding in a post-conflict state is to establish democratic political institutions as well as neoliberal economic institutions. As a result, over the last three decades, a rough template seems to have emerged for international responses to post-conflict challenges (*Challenges of Sustaining Peace* 18): usually within a year or so after international intervention is initiated, a popular election is held, followed by various capacity-building and security sector reform efforts according to liberal democratic standards. At the same time, neoliberal economic institutions are set up with help – and pressure – from the international financial organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Roland Paris’s study shows that although the 14 peacebuilding operations established from 1989 to 1999 vary in many respects, they have some similarity: all of them had sought to transform war-torn states into liberal democracies. Paris asserts that liberal peace embodies a hypothesis: liberalization of political and economic institutions can lead to self-sustaining peace (*At War’s End* 5).

However, liberal peacebuilding has two major limitations. One is that peacebuilding is dominated by a narrow statebuilding agenda. According to Oliver P. Richmond and Jason Franks, statebuilding aims at building a neoliberal, Weberian state with a clearly defined sovereign territory, and with a focus on political, economic, and security structure; peacebuilding, on the other hand, has a broader set of tasks ranging from individual needs and rights to community and governance structures (182). With statebuilding in the name of peacebuilding

becoming the core task of multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations in the post-Cold War era, the result has been that these operations focus attention on addressing a small part of the long list of challenges of post-conflict states.

Another limitation of liberal peacebuilding is that it lacks inclusiveness. Any institutions or activities which are regarded as non-liberal or non-democratic will be rejected or excluded in order to transform the post-conflict state into a Western-style liberal democracy. Western donors play an important role in promoting liberal peace. They often attach political conditions to their aid in order to force the peacebuilding host states to reform their political and economic institutions according to liberal democratic standards. More, liberal peace promotes building a strong civil society and plays down the role of state government in economic and social affairs.

However, the "one size fits all" peace approach has a mixed record. After 9/11, US efforts to rebuild Iraq and Afghanistan descended into chaos, provoking debates over the liberal peace model of peacebuilding. Some believe that democratic political institutions and neoliberal economic institutions combined may cause political disorder, social tension, and even inter-ethnic violence (Chua). The peace built by liberal peace is a "virtual peace" (Newman et al.; Campbell et al.). These debates about the benefits of the liberal peace fall into two camps: "critical voices" and "problem solvers".

"Critical voices" range from challenges to the ideological core of liberal peace to doubts about its functions. Advocates of liberal peace promote the "democratic peace thesis", which argues that states with free markets and democratic politics do not go to war. This belief or assumption sets a good excuse for liberal international intervention including peacebuilding because liberal peace benefits not only the domestic affairs of post-conflict states, but also international peace and security in a broad sense. However, some are not so optimistic. For example, Roger Mac Ginty sharply points out that the "democratic peace thesis" is "complete rubbish", for "liberal states are regularly involved in confrontations with states they deem non-liberal, often under label of 'rogue', 'failed', or 'evil'" (40). Other critical voices against liberal peace focus on the effectiveness and result of peacebuilding. Some believe that peacebuilding has been reduced to a narrow statebuilding agenda (Reilly 113; Richmond and Franks 182). The result is that although many people in the UN system and international community have an original good intention to help post-conflict states build self-sustaining peace, in reality their comprehensive peacebuilding programs focus on building liberal democratic Weberian states. In other words, institution

building has become the narrower, core task of peacebuilding. As Roland Paris notes, frustration at America's "regime change" invasion of Iraq contributed to a mounting backlash against all forms of liberal interventionism including UN-sponsored peacebuilding. Some discuss liberal interventionism as "hubristic and delusional" (Paris "Critiques of Liberal Peace" 38).

Although the critical voices can be helpful for one to understand the flaws of liberal peace, they have failed to propose useful alternatives and help solve the problems in peacebuilding. Some commentators have made efforts to provide concrete suggestions to improve liberal peace-oriented peacebuilding. They are called "problem solvers" here. Like critical voices, problem solvers too recognize many of the pitfalls of liberal peace. However, unlike most critical voices, who usually have very pessimistic views about liberal peace, problem solvers are more or less optimistic that the existing liberal peace-oriented peacebuilding can be improved. Some problem-solving approaches seek to revise the shortcomings of liberal peace intervention by redistributing power, including enhancing local responsibility and encouraging local ownership. Paris proposes changing the sequence of tasks. He suggests an approach of "institutionalization before liberalization" ("Alternatives to Liberal Peace" 163–164). Paris thinks that elections should be postponed until there has been a deeper instauration of associated institutions which will stabilize the environment for elections and render them more than symbolic exercises with only limited meaning and impact (Mac Ginty 26). In all, however, problem solvers tend to limit themselves to technical improvements without doubting the foundation of liberal peace. According to Paris, there is no realistic alternative to some form of liberal peacebuilding strategy at all ("Alternatives to Liberal Peace" 159).

As mentioned above, liberal peace derives from Western civilization. It is by nature a norm with regional characteristics. Due to the West's dominance and hegemony in the international power configuration and institutional regime, liberal peace has been promoted to become an international norm. The rise of China will undoubtedly lead to opportunities for China to influence the norms of global governance, including peacebuilding (Li and Peng; Ikenberry).

The rise of China and developmental peace

China's rise tells a peace story different from that of the West. To understand this, one should first understand the myth of China's rise: Why has China succeeded? Some try to answer this question from a political

perspective, attributing China’s success to “authoritarian government” and a “whole nation system” (*juguo tizhi*). Some try to answer this question from an economic perspective, arguing that the most important reason is that China is a Keynesian state. The government plays a leading role in economic affairs through investing in infrastructure and keeps the economic system under firm control by strengthening state-owned enterprises (SOEs). Some note that China’s efforts to reform political institutions have also contributed to its success (Eric X. Li 56–57). Each of these views explains China’s success from certain perspectives, and thus fails to present a full picture.

A rising power always promotes a zeitgeist: the United Kingdom promoted free trade and the United States promotes freedom and democracy (Zheng). The zeitgeist that the rising China promotes is peace and development, which was recognized and written into China’s Constitution in 1992 as a guiding principle for its reform and opening up strategy. To China, peace, especially internal peace, is the most critical pre-requisite for development. The late architect of China’s reform and opening up strategy, Premier Deng Xiaoping, insisted that internal stability should be secured at any cost. With a peaceful or stable political and social environment, China can make good use of its limited resources to implement the “economic development-oriented strategy”. It believes in the Marxist philosophy of materialism that the economic foundation defines superstructure. To China, many social and political conflicts can find their root causes in underdevelopment. In other words, successful national development, with economic development as the foundation, is the solution to conflicts and key to the door of peace.

The experience of China’s rise can be summarized as a norm called “developmental peace”. Like liberal peace, developmental peace too embodies a hypothesis: with political and social stability as a pre-requisite, development can lead to sustainable peace. Even though China does not have any official agenda to promote developmental peace, the norm has begun to exert influence internationally through China’s increasing international aid and economic activities, including in the field of peacebuilding (He “United Nations Peacebuilding” 91).

A comparison of the two “peaces”

Both liberal peace and developmental peace are peacebuilding norms. As is shown in Table 3.1, they differ greatly in many ways. In terms of origin, the two peace norms derive from two different civilizations and have different practice foundations. Difference in origin also means that

the two peace norms are based on different value patterns and philosophic systems.

Besides normal economic activities, aid is an important way for external actors to assist in the peacebuilding process of post-conflict states. When Western countries give aid to peacebuilding host countries, they will usually attach a liberal peace package, setting strict political conditions. For example, they may require the aid recipient countries to reform their political and economic institutions according to liberal democratic standards. They may also want aid recipient countries to lower their tariffs and privatize SOEs. However, unlike the Western countries, China does not attach political conditions to its aid to other countries (Brautigam 76).

The two peace norms have different priorities: liberal peace attaches the greatest importance to institution building while developmental peace gives priority to economic development. This difference is very critical because to post-conflict states, resources for peacebuilding can be very limited, especially at the early stage of peacebuilding. Different top priorities may lead to different results from peacebuilding.

Liberal peace prefers a small government, insisting that strong civil society like non-governmental actors should be encouraged and empowered to participate in governance and provide public services. However, developmental peace prefers a big government and downplays the role of civil society, insisting that the government should play a leading role in a state's political, economic, and social affairs. Liberal peace advocates fundamentalist rules of market economy, opposing interference in market activities from the state government. Developmental peace recognizes the role of market, too; but it insists that the state government should keep its economic affairs under control through macro-control measures such as strengthening SOEs and guiding investment in public areas including infrastructure (Lin 5–10).

Table 3.1 Comparison of the two peace norms in peacebuilding

<i>Comparison aspects</i>	<i>Liberal peace</i>	<i>Developmental peace</i>
Origin	Western civilization	Chinese civilization
Political conditions for aid	Yes	No
Top priority	Institution building	Economic development
Role of government	Small	Big
Transformation approach	Radical	Gradual
Governance model	Good governance	Effective governance
Diffusion strategy	Teaching	Imitating and learning

When it comes to pace of transformation, liberal peace often advocates radical change. Many post-conflict states are required to abandon their non-liberal and non-democratic institutions and practices, and accept reform packages or “shock therapy”. Developmental peace opposes radical change or a “one size fits all” approach. It believes that every state has its own conditions; therefore, reform should be done gradually through “wading across the stream by feeling the way” (*mozhe shitou guohe*). Liberal peace is a value-based norm. It promotes good governance, limiting governance rules and practices to a Western standard. Developmental peace is a non-value-based and inclusive norm. It promotes effective governance, welcoming any governance rules and practices that can contribute to peace and development.

Finally, the two peace norms are diffused in different ways. Liberal peace has many advocates, including the Western states and their international development institutions, the United Nations, international financial organizations, and international non-governmental organizations. These actors believe that if post-conflict states want to build lasting peace, they must accept liberal peace. Therefore, liberal peace is usually taught to host countries. Although the new Chinese leadership under President Xi Jinping has shown confidence in providing “Chinese approaches” to global governance, so far China has not promoted any Chinese normative package internationally. Some leading Chinese academics hold that China’s rise has not generated any universal norms (Junru Li 14). In other words, although many elements of developmental peace have been demonstrated in China’s international aid and economic activities including the Belt and Road Initiative, the peace norm has not been endorsed by the Chinese government or the Chinese aid community. Nevertheless, developing countries, including those post-conflict ones, cannot be prevented from imitating and learning China’s experience as well as practice in economic, political, and social development.

A case study of when the two “peaces” meet: peacebuilding in East Timor

Although liberal peace and developmental peace differ greatly, what is happening in peacebuilding proves that many post-conflict states have enough room to accommodate both peace norms. An in-depth analysis of the two peacebuilding processes of Haiti and Liberia shows that the effect of the peacebuilding in Liberia, where the two peace norms coexist and compete with each other, is comparatively much better than that in Haiti, where “liberal peace” dominates the whole peacebuilding

process while “developmental peace” cannot play a significant role (He “Norm Competition” 116–121).

An exploration of the process and result of the peacebuilding in East Timor can even better reflect the relationship between the two peace norms. From 1999 to 2012, the UN had established a series of peacekeeping operations in East Timor. Since the UN exited from East Timor in 2012, the country has appeared to be walking on a road of sustainable peace. The UN regards East Timor as one of few successful cases of peacebuilding (*Challenges of Sustaining Peace* 18). One of the main reasons for the success is that East Timor’s peacebuilding has accommodated both liberal peace and developmental peace.

When building institutions, although East Timor has to a large extent embraced liberal peace, it has not adopted confrontational democracy. Instead, East Timor has turned to consensus democracy, which provides a platform to include a wide range of political forces and avoid unnecessary waste of limited resources. For example, consensus democracy has helped to unite the limited number of East Timorese elites, most of whom are veteran politicians grown up during the revolutionary struggle against the Indonesian occupation before independence. Although veteran politicians like Xanana Gusmao and José Ramos-Horta took power in turn, these “old men” of politics contributed significantly to unite the young state and maintain political and social stability (He “Developmental Peace” 29–30).

As there is a stable political and social environment, East Timor can allocate most of its limited resources to development. A strong central government makes it possible for the young state to effectively manage its economic affairs. Political stability also secures continuity of policy and allows East Timor to make a long-term economic development plan. With effective governance, East Timor has successfully avoided a “resource curse” that bothers many resource rich countries, setting up a sovereign wealth fund with the revenue generated from the oil and gas in the Timor Sea. The success of peacebuilding in East Timor also shows that liberal peace and developmental peace can coexist and forge complementary relations, making a joint contribution to peacebuilding (He “Developmental Peace” 29–30).

Conclusion

As there are many challenges in peacebuilding for post-conflict states, any one dominant peace paradigm alone cannot help to build lasting peace. Peacebuilding has two most critical tasks: institution building and economic development, both of which are indispensable for building

sustainable peace. Therefore, in practice, there exists no logic that one is more urgent than another.

Liberal peace and developmental peace derive from different patterns of practice of two great civilizations, and they have different ideological concepts as well as normative contents. Nevertheless, both of them have advantages over each other in addressing certain challenges in peacebuilding in post-conflict states. Generally speaking, liberal peace is more concerned with institution building than development, while developmental peace more effectively helps with economic development than does liberal peace. Their coexistence can greatly benefit peacebuilding in post-conflict states. Peacebuilding in the twenty-first century will be a tale of two “peaces”.

Note

- * Yin He is Associate Professor at the China Peacekeeping Police Training Center (CPPTC). The views expressed in this chapter are those of the author and do not represent any stance of the CPPTC or the Chinese Ministry of Public Security.

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