

**CHARLES UNIVERSITY**

**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

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Fabio Frettoli

**CHARLES UNIVERSITY**

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**Fabio Frettoli**

**The modalities of intervention in failed  
states from a critical perspective**

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## **Introduction**

The main aim of the thesis is to analyze from a critical perspective the modalities of intervention adopted by the international community and western institutions towards the so-called “failed states”.

Among those who work in international organizations, state-building projects often appear to be the best way to resolve the problems that afflict failed states. Most policymakers involved believe in the application, in these situations, of the principles that characterize the well-known liberal peace theory<sup>1</sup>. It is indeed commonly assumed that liberal internationalism, democratic institutions and free markets are the main ingredients to develop a successful state-building project in every circumstance. The general idea behind this approach is that liberal democratic and market reforms will bring stability to the area, which in turn will cause state stability and prosperity to the singular individuals. Unfortunately the international actors, in their attempt to improve the situation as fast as possible, often have ended up focusing too much on the economic structural reforms, ignoring the factors that could bring some real benefit to the bulk of the population, favoring instead the local political elites, which are usually among the causes of the problems that afflict failed states. As a result these projects have been characterized by delays, setbacks, inefficiencies and a marginal impact on the areas where they are applied. Local actors, often underrepresented and unheard by the international actors, have manifested in more or less open ways their opposition to the approach adopted, modifying on the ground these liberal peace projects, giving birth to hybrid forms of peace. Many times international actors have initially reacted to the presence of these local actors by just avoiding to acknowledge them, only to then develop relationships and ties with warlords, tribal leaders, local chiefs and other local actors that represent customary and traditional forms of governance and support political, social and economic arrangements that clash with the principles that guide liberal peace building projects. Despite the fact these kind of ties can

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<sup>1</sup> Richmond (2009)

appear unnatural and dangerous, the idea offered in this thesis is that this encounter has the potential to develop new forms of peace, less influenced by a specific ideological approach, and more centered on the factors that shape that particular environment in which the international actors have decided to intervene. Even though these new forms of hybrid peace may require difficult choices and compromises that according to the theory of liberal peace could result unacceptable, such forms of peace can remove the actual “one-size-fits-all” approach, which up to now cannot boast many successes concerning the development of sustainable and acceptable forms of peace<sup>2</sup>.

The thesis will be composed by the following main sections: 1. Internal and external actors in failed states, 2. Theoretical framework: presentation of the liberal peace theory, 3. Critique to the application of the liberal peace theory in the context of failed states, 4. Alternatives to an ideology-driven approach towards failed states.

In order to present the context in which state-building projects are launched, the first section of the thesis will deal with the actors, both local and external, that act in the context of a failed state. As said above, often the international community in its peace building projects takes into consideration only a few main external actors (e.g. international organizations or state actors), without realizing the importance that other actors can have in a particular environment. Because of this reason this project will analyze not only those actors that are typically associated with peace building operations, such as western states, NGOs, representatives of the failed states etc., but also other ones, such as local militias, secret services, criminal organizations, terrorist groups, tribesmen and warlords, which must be kept into consideration in order to develop those kinds of hybrid forms of peace that, thanks to the fact they are rooted in the local context, can be stable and enduring. The roles that this range of actors play in stateless areas will be presented not only theoretically but also through the use of a set of pragmatic examples, taken from different scenarios, that can be helpful to

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

understand in particular the relevance of those actors which are usually perceived as secondary.

The second section of the thesis will provide a theoretical framework to the entire work. In this section the theory of liberal peace will be presented. It is widely accepted that, as previously stated, most of the interventions sponsored by international actors and western states towards stateless areas are driven by the same liberal principles that represent the funding pillars of the liberal peace theory, in particular democratization, the rule of law, human rights and free markets; therefore an extended presentation of this theory is necessary to fully understand the modalities of intervention usually adopted towards failed states. Furthermore, without an adequate knowledge of its funding principles would not be possible to understand which are the main flaws that usually afflict state-building projects and, even more important, why the international organizations and the western states are so unwilling to modify their approach towards these regions of the world. A deep understanding of the liberal peace theory can help to better understand all these elements.

Given the overall critical approach of the thesis, a section of this chapter will be reserved to present the elements of the liberal peace theory from a critical perspective, relying on Richmond's works and in particular on his paper "Understanding the Liberal Peace".

After having presented the characteristics of the liberal peace theory, the third chapter will undertake a critique to the application of the principles that embody this theory in the context of failed states. In order to show the main drawbacks of an ideology-driven approach towards stateless areas, three case studies will be presented, that represent three episodes in which the international institutions or main western states have decided to intervene, following liberal principles, in order to deal with problems caused by the existence of failed states. The three cases that will be considered are the interventions in Somalia (1993), Bosnia (1995) and Afghanistan (2001). These three cases have been chosen among many others because, besides

the fact they are representative of three different geographic areas, they all represent, according to Richmond, the application of the so-called “Conservative model of the liberal peace”, usually associated with top-down approaches to peace building and development, which tend to the use of force and conditionality<sup>3</sup>. In particular these interventions will be considered and analyzed from different perspectives, showing the weaknesses of this kind of approach towards failed states in respect of political reforms, economic reforms, stability, well-being of the population and local support to the intervention.

The conclusive section will present possible alternatives to the current modalities of intervention towards failed states, usually driven by liberal or neo-liberal ideology. The alternative approaches exposed will try to stress the necessity to develop projects which are not influenced by an ideology (the liberal one in particular) and which take into consideration both the importance of the local factors and all the actors that interact within these areas. Examples will be also presented in order to show that these alternative approaches are not unattainable but, on the contrary, in certain circumstances and in certain areas are already a well-established and functioning reality.

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<sup>3</sup> Richmond (2006)

## **1. Internal and external actors in failed states**

In this chapter will be presented the main actors, internal and external ones, that may be present and may interact with each other in a failed state. The presentation of these elements will be functional to understand that the number of actors involved in the development and evolution of failed states is usually much higher than the number of actors officially involved in state-building projects launched by international organizations in a liberal-peace framework.

### **1.1. Foreign countries**

In states where the national institutions have collapsed or are not able anymore to assure the safety of the population and the provision of basic services, foreign states have a large room of manoeuvre. Foreign countries can operate in failed states through several tools at their disposal; one particularly used tool are the development funds allocated by foreign countries through international development programs (eg. “The United Nations Development Programme”) and national “governance programming” projects. At a global level the resources mobilized for governance programming are remarkable: in 2006/07, for instance, the UK's Department for International Development allocated £322m to governance programmes, while in 2007 the United States devoted \$1.3bn<sup>4</sup>. Even when the main agent of governance is the United Nations, through its Development Programme, often the main key drivers remain the western states. In case the UN is in charge of a governance programme, especially in a weak or failed state, its staff can develop a sort of “government within the government”, thanks to the high-level skills of its members (especially in comparison with the capacities of local ministries and municipalities).

While usually western countries prefer to intervene in failed states through governance programmes, other countries, such as the Arab and Gulf States, favor a type of intervention

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<sup>4</sup> Mac Ginty (2008a)



in fragile and failed states more focused on the rebuilding of the infrastructures and houses. This has been, for example, the case in post-2006 Lebanon, where the UNDP and western states have focused their efforts in implementing the administrative skills of the Lebanese government, while countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait have spent over a billion dollars in the reconstruction of housing, roads, bridges and other principal infrastructures<sup>5</sup>.

Another tool foreign countries can utilize to influence indirectly the development of a failed state is through their intelligence agencies. Because of their geographical position, cultural and historical reasons, colonial past and economic ties, some countries can count on a more developed human intelligence (HUMINT) in those states labeled as failed. One clear example is the case of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) in Afghanistan, where, thanks to geographical and cultural proximity, ISI has actively supported the Taliban before 2002 and there are suspects that a connection between these two groups is still in place, allowing Taliban considerable protection and giving to ISI a relevant influence on the Afghan internal affairs<sup>6</sup>.

Differently, foreign countries that cannot rely on a strong human intelligence in failed states have to rely on a different kind of intelligence if they want to be proactive in these areas. The typical example in this case regards the United States, which usually cannot boast a strong human intelligence in many failed states (with the notable exception of Afghanistan). Indeed U.S. intelligence agencies have no strong presence on the ground in failed states, and even where they do, the language barriers, the risks related to the safety of the human intelligence collectors and the lack of infrastructures reduce the efficiency of these individuals<sup>7</sup>.

Therefore, when they have to operate in failed countries like Somalia, American Intelligence agencies such as CIA or NSA (often in cooperation with the Joint Special Operations

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Simons & Tucker (2007)

<sup>7</sup> Dempsey (2006)

Command) rely more on electronic surveillance, known as signals intelligence (SIGINT), rather than on human intelligence. One example of tactic used to extract information from these areas, is the geolocation of the SIM card of a suspect's mobile phone by the NSA, which then enables other agencies or the U.S. Military to conduct raids or drone strike to kill or capture the suspect; another way for the American intelligence to extract information from areas where it does not have a strong human intelligence is through the use of an aircraft which flies over an area of interest, and thanks to a pod mounted on it can “vacuum up massive amounts of data from any wireless routers, computers, smart phone or other electronic devices that are within range”. Through this system in 2012 the CIA and NSA have been able to map the wi-fi fingerprint of almost every major town in Yemen<sup>8</sup>.

## **1.2. NGOs and civil society**

Before explaining the role of NGOs and Civil Society in failed states it is important to give a definition of the latter, which can be helpful to distinguish these two types of actors; using Lund's words the term Civil Society “entails a set of interests, often quite disparate, that cut across a society’s main identity groups. These interests are expected to be in principle more or less independent of both the state, political parties and other political movements within the society”<sup>9</sup>. NGOs can be part of the civil sphere of a society, but only if they cooperate with citizens and independent institutions in order to sustain a range of societal interests<sup>10</sup>.

As failed and fragile states are usually those lacking the capabilities to provide basic services to their citizens and assure their safety, for the NGOs (in particular the international ones) is fundamental to work with the civil society and the civil society organizations<sup>11</sup>. Nowadays, especially in post-conflict societies, NGOs work side by side with civil society groups not

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<sup>8</sup> Scahill & Greenwald (2014)

<sup>9</sup> Lund, Ulvin & Cohen (2006)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Dowst (2009)

only in traditional areas such as food aid, education or health, but also in more conflict-related sectors such as reconciliation, justice and governance<sup>12</sup>. However, in order to be able to work in partnership with civil society groups, many NGOs need to be present on-site, fact that in a failed state can entail really high costs. Indeed if a NGO wants to maintain offices in these countries, it has to bear additional costs related, for instance, to the protection of the personnel employed. Furthermore in failed states infrastructures and communication networks are usually in bad condition or not well developed, fact that implies additional costs. These factors, together with possible existing legal barriers to financial support of NGOs, are the main reasons of the extremely high operating costs in these areas.

Another element that NGOs that want to operate in failed states have to face is the politically volatile environment and the related low level of security. Furthermore, as Brinkerhoff's studies show, "in societies that have been fragmented by deteriorating or conflict conditions, people's trust and tolerance levels tend to be lower and their suspicion levels are heightened"<sup>13</sup>, and therefore NGOs that work in partnership with civil society organizations might find themselves operating in an environment of societal mistrust<sup>14</sup>.

Many of the challenges the NGOs have to face in failed states are related with the fact that their goals have to be balanced between providing basic needs services in the short-term and the long-term development of the society and the state. Indeed, in states where the public sector has collapsed and the state is unable to provide basic services, is not rare that NGOs and civil society organizations decide, for humanitarian reasons, to prioritize the provision of basic needs services over the reform of the public sector. However, focusing more on the short-term needs of the population does not allow the local government to go through the reforms necessary to pick up the responsibility for service delivery in the long term, with the risk of creating a situation of dependency on the international communities and NGOs, which

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<sup>12</sup> Lund, Ulvin & Cohen (2006)

<sup>13</sup> Brinkerhoff (2007)

<sup>14</sup> Dowst (2009)

remain the ones in charge of service delivery. It should be a task of the NGOs, in partnership with civil society organizations, to determine which are the best situations in which engage the public sector and start the transfer of the competencies related to the delivery of basic services<sup>15</sup>. Clearly, in these circumstances, the level of discretion of the NGOs is high, and through their choices they can heavily influence the development (or the lack of development) of a failed state and its institutions.

### **1.3. Representatives of the failed governments**

State institutions can remain in place even when the state, as a whole entity, is unable to provide the basic services to its citizens and assure their safety. Moreover state institutions are often not the victims of state's failure, but rather are among the causes of it. This applies especially to those national institutions, such as the army, which are in charge of the security and order of a country; the genocide in Rwanda and all the subsequent chaos, for instance, were produced, at least initially, by Rwandan state agents.

State representatives within a failed state can also play an economic role in the trade of conflict goods, which studies have demonstrated to be one of the major causes for the dissolution of fragile countries such as Congo or Liberia<sup>16</sup>. Indeed, the huge profits that can be obtained through the involvement in this kind of market usually attract individuals which are part of state institutions. These individuals, despite being part of the state apparatus, find more advantageous to act outside official structures, for they personal profit or for the advantage of their supporters. This behavior favorites the creation of a sort of “shadow state”, which state representatives try to control in order to have economic advantages and a more direct and privileged access to the outside world. Clearly, the main byproduct of this shadow state is that all the goods traded within this system are not subjected to any kind of taxation, fact that

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Miliken & Krause (2002)

impoverishes and weakens the official state structures<sup>17</sup>.

#### **1.4. Armed non-state actors**

In failed states one of the major threat to both the well-being of the population and to the development of the country as a whole is the presence of armed non-state actors, which challenge the state's monopoly of the use of force. In particular circumstances these groups can even substitute the security apparatus of a country, at least at a regional or local level. Usually these actors are willing to use the force to reach their goals and are not formally part of any state institution. Nevertheless, they can have some kind of relation with state actors (in certain situations state actors can be directly involved in the activities of armed non-state actors)<sup>18</sup>.

In order to present the most relevant types of armed non-state actors active in failed states, the classification made by Schneckener in his paper “Spoilers or Governance Actors? - Engaging Armed Non-State Groups in Areas of Limited Statehood” is a good starting point.

According to Schneckener, the first typology of armed non-state actors goes under the name of “rebels” or “guerrilla fighters”. The aim of this type of actors is usually the liberation of a nation or a social class, which is usually reached through the overthrow of a government, the secession of a region or the end of the occupation of a territory by a colonial power. They pursue a social-revolutionary or ethno-nationalistic agenda, and perceive themselves as the official armies or security apparatus of the future countries. They usually avoid a direct confrontation with their opponents, usually the regular army or security forces of a country, and opt for guerrilla warfare; rebels or guerrilla fighters are usually supported by the local population or, most likely, by foreign governments or other non-state actors which provides economic resources, weapons, expertise and refuges to them<sup>19</sup>. These actors were particularly

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<sup>17</sup> Clapham (2002)

<sup>18</sup> Schneckener (2009)

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

active during the Cold War. In Africa, for instance, many groups were able to present themselves as reformists and as valid alternatives to the fragile states born at the end of the colonial era. Organizations like the Zimbabwean African People's Union obtained the support of the population both offering a detailed vision of the future and building their own state structures in the liberated areas<sup>20</sup>.

The members of the second typology of armed non-state actors presented by Schneckener are “militias” or “paramilitaries”. These actors are combat units which are usually tolerated or indirectly controlled by some state actors. Their main task are to fight rebels, threaten or attack specific groups and target opposition leaders. They are often created, funded and trained in counter-insurgency tactics by state actors, which employ them in situations where the official state security apparatus cannot be employed for reasons of public image. Despite the fact they have ties with state officers, these militias often develop their own agenda<sup>21</sup>. A quite recent example of the role played by paramilitaries groups within a failed state can be found in Bosnia, during the '92-'95 conflict. The Bosnian conflict saw the presence of several Serbian paramilitaries groups, most of them created in 1991 to fight side by side with the Yugoslav Federal Army in Croatia and organized around individuals associated with Serbian ultranationalist movements. These militias played a prominent role in the first stages of the Bosnian conflict, when they were often the first troops to attack Bosnian Muslim and Croat civilians, committing a wide range of war crimes and atrocities. In the meanwhile the Yugoslav Federal army, and later the new Bosnian Serb army, limited their direct involvement in ethnic cleansing activities to a minimum, lending artillery and providing logistical support to the militias. Usually regular troops were indeed those in charge of surrounding Bosnian Muslim villages, while the paramilitaries had the task of actually occupy the villages and eliminate the civilians<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> Reno (2002)

<sup>21</sup> Schneckener (2009)

<sup>22</sup> Ron (2003)

The third typology of armed non-state actors includes the “clan chiefs” (also known as “big men”) which are local authorities that lead a religious community, an ethnic group, a tribe or a clan. They are usually perceived as legitimate by the local population because they perform a social role in accordance with traditional rules; the reason why they are in charge can be their age, their experience, their ancestry or their personal skills. These individuals often control also a certain territory, either formally or informally. Moreover they also command armed forces usually drafted from the members of the group they lead and organized for self-defence purposes<sup>23</sup>. One of the most recent examples of armed non-state actors created for self-defence purposes can be found in the Central African Republic where, because of the weakness of the central government and the ongoing conflict, the local communities have created the “anti-balaka”, self-defence units set up to protect the local population against rebels, bandits and cattle-raiders. During the so-called “bush war” (2004-2007) the anti-balaka (which in local language means anti-sword or anti-machete, two of the most common used weapons among rebels and bandits that target the population) were local vigilante groups which were trying to defend their communities from the abuses of the APRD (Armée Populaire pour la Restauration de la Démocratie), the main rebel group. Since the beginning of the Séleka's insurgency in December 2012, anti-balaka units have become more heterogeneous, and include, among their ranks, individuals with very different backgrounds such as former soldiers and local groups of Christian vigilante farmers. However, despite their growth, the scope of these armed units is still local or at best regional<sup>24</sup>.

The fourth typology presented by Schneckener concerns warlords. Warlords are usually defined as local powerful individuals which control a specific territory during a conflict, or after its end. They maintain their power through the use of private armies, which are funded and maintained exploiting the population or local resources. Warlords are often a byproduct of

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<sup>23</sup> Schneckener (2009)

<sup>24</sup> Marima (2013)

a long-lasting civil conflict and, not rarely, they manage to maintain their own power and influence even after the end of the conflict. It's not infrequent that these individuals, in order to maintain and legalize the power and benefits achieved during the conflict, decide to enter the public sphere and run for some public office<sup>25</sup>. In Afghanistan, one of the countries which will be analyzed more in deep in the third chapter, warlordism has a long history; its origin can be traced back to the 1980s, with the rise of the mujahideen and anti-Soviet militia commanders. These individuals, during the 1980s, thanks to the development of the opium economy achieved gradually a higher degree of independence from their foreign sponsors (namely US, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia) and by the time the Soviet army withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989 some of these commanders had become important warlords with a regional reach. Since their emergence, Afghan warlords have exploited multiple sources of income to sustain their powerbase: foreign patrons, extortion, trading contraband, taxes, control of the country's entry points and the drug trade are among the most lucrative ones. Furthermore the Afghan warlords have been able to profit from the post-Taliban state-building process, thanks to the weakness of the newly-created Afghan institutions and the widespread insecurity in the country. In this phase of the Afghan history, warlords managed to maintain the financial backing of the United States, rebuilt their patronage networks and especially received senior positions in the new Afghan government. Mohammed Qasim Fahim, the commander of the Northern Alliance who occupied Kabul, obtained for instance the Defence portfolio and General Dostum, despite being allegedly responsible for human right abuses, was nominated chief of staff of the commander in chief<sup>26</sup>.

Terrorists are another type of armed non-state actors that need to be included in this paragraph because of the important role they play in failed states. Terrorists aim at achieving political goal through actions which spread fear and insecurity within the society. Moreover they are

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<sup>25</sup> Schneckener (2006)

<sup>26</sup> Mac Ginty (2010)



usually organized in clandestine groups, be they small cells or large transnational networks. Militarily speaking they are often quite weak and use actions such as kidnapping, hostage-taking, murder, suicide attacks and bombings to both compensate their military weakness and to send a political message to the society or the media. Their possible targets can be very different and can vary from military sites to government buildings, from infrastructures to the public transport system, among the others<sup>27</sup>.

Somalia's Al-Shabab is a clear example of a terrorist group acting within the borders of a failed state. Al-Shabab emerged as the radical wing of the Union of Islamic Courts in 2006, and in 2008 the US Government designated it as a foreign terrorist organization; it is believed to have between 7,000 and 9,000 fighters and despite the fact in 2012 it has lost the control of the main towns and cities in the center-south of Somalia, the region where it is active, it still controls many rural areas. Ahmed Abdi Godane is the leader of the group and the person behind the merger of the group with Al-Qaida, publicly announced in February 2012 by the leader of Al-Shabab and al-Zawahiri. Being Somalia a failed state, when Al-Shabab first emerged, it gained the support of the population because of its promise of bringing more security and stability in the country; however, its credibility was strongly reduced when in 2011, in the middle of one of the most serious drought of the last years, it rejected Western food aid. Furthermore, while most Somalis are Sufis, Al-Shabab is a strong supporter of Wahhabism and during the years has razed numerous Sufi shrines, fact that decreased once more its popularity among the population<sup>28</sup>.

Criminals and criminal organizations are another typology of armed non-state actors.

Criminals are usually members of organized structures whose core activities include robbery, extortion, killing and trade of illegal goods. Criminal organizations usually tries to develop different kinds of connection and partnership with the political powers of the countries in

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<sup>27</sup> Schneckener (2006)

<sup>28</sup> BBC website: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-15336689>

which operate, in order to secure and increase their profits.<sup>29</sup> A country where the criminal organizations have permeated not only its economy but also its state institutions is Guinea Bissau. In Guinea Bissau criminal penetration has reached such a high level that in 2008 the United Nations has labeled it as the first narco-state, or mafia state. A mafia state is characterized by a direct involvement of the institutional actors in the illegal trades. This relationship allows the development of a clientelistic network which extend to almost every sector of the state, from the judiciary to the legislative one, from the executive to the armed forces, from the entrepreneurs to the civil society. In Guinea Bissau this situation has been officially sanctioned in 2012 by the UN resolution 2048, in which were expressed concerns about the fact that the drug trade and organized crime had slowed down significantly the fight against the widespread corruption. Moreover the resolution made clear reference to the connection existing between the political and military establishment and the revenues of the drug trade<sup>30</sup>.

The last typology to be presented in this paragraph concerns those individuals that in the past were labeled as “mercenaries” and today go under the name of “contractors” and which are part of the so-called “private security companies” or “private military companies”. Private military companies usually provide offensive services which are supposed to have a military impact, while private security companies usually provide defensive services. Both these type of companies, to be defined as such, need to fit the following criteria: 1. they must act according to a market-oriented logic of action, 2. their employees must be characterized by a high level of professionalization, 3. they must be legally registered and 4. organized under private law. The choice to rely on these actors is usually associated with the common belief that the private sector, in comparison to the public one, can usually boast a better cost-efficiency tradeoff, a better access to human resources and more appropriate capabilities for

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<sup>29</sup> Schneckener (2006)

<sup>30</sup> Fichera (2013)

ad hoc performances<sup>31</sup>. According to Branovic's studies, in failing states security privatization is an increasing trend; in Afghanistan, for instance, the transformation of non-recognized armed actors into contractors is today a reality, with almost 20,000 Afghan “private security contractors” that have applied for the authorization to carry their weapons. Moreover, as Branovic states, “the number of external clients is increasing relative to internal clients” which means that “private military and security companies are increasingly used by foreign states as proxies to implement their foreign policy in weak and failing countries”<sup>32</sup>.

### **1.5. Diaspora**

We can define as diaspora those immigrants who maintain a connection, whether psychological or material, with their homeland. The members of a diaspora share different features, such as a collective memory, a strong ethnic group consciousness and a sense of solidarity with other members of their same ethnic group which reside in foreign countries. the reasons why diasporans mobilize in favor of their homeland are different; one of these is that through mobilization they can express their identities. Another reason is the belief, among those diasporans that have embraced liberal values, that they can work in favor of the basic freedoms and the empowerment of their homeland. A third reason that pushes diasporans to mobilize in favor of their home country is because they want to maintain or acquire power, be it social, political or economic power.

Whichever might be the reason that pushes the diasporans to mobilize, the resulting behavior usually ranges from sending remittances, to support insurgents (in case of an ongoing conflict), from philanthropic actions, to business investment and knowledge transfer. Among these, remittances might be the most important type of contribution diasporans make. Indeed, at a global level, remittances outpace development programs by far. Moreover, in post-

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<sup>31</sup> Branovic (2011)

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

conflict societies, remittances can be the only chance to avoid demobilized combatants to re-enter and re-ignite the conflict. In Somalia, for instance, remittances have played a central role in sustaining education investments during the Somali conflict and are estimated to support 40% of urban household incomes<sup>33</sup>.

Diaspora philanthropic organizations can instead provide specific skills and resources to specific projects. In addition, these organizations can also be important intermediaries between international development actors, such as NGOs and international institutions, and local communities. At the same time members of the diaspora can also offer their contribution to their homeland individually, offering their capabilities and skills. In post-conflict society, and as well in failed states, one element fundamental for the recovery of the country and usually lacking is human capital; it is not rare that diaspora human capital is used to staff the departments of new governments or development programs active in their homeland<sup>34</sup>.

## **1.6. Economic Actors**

In the majority of failed and fragile states the economy is weak, unable to offer a secure and well-paid job to the working population, and many times it is dependent on the export of a limited type of goods (eg. Oil, minerals, timber, etc.). Corruption is also a common characteristic of failed-states economies and the consequence is that citizens rely more on the weak state institutions than on the private sector for their sustenance and survival.

Furthermore, actors who want to operate in these countries at an economic level meet an insecure environment, which often push them to maximize their gains in the short term and then to pull out without developing long-term plans that can be sustainable both for the businessman and the local population. Insecurity tends to create an informal, distorted trade economy, based on the extraction of the local resources without reinvesting part of the gains

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<sup>33</sup> Brinkerhoff (2009)

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

at the local or regional level. In addition, many failed and fragile states lack the basic infrastructures and the financial institutions necessary to move goods and money in a rapid and secure way, fact that drives up the cost of operating in these type of areas and consequently hinders investments and the economic and social development of the area<sup>35</sup>. More specifically, the access to credit and to reliable sources of electricity are usually cited among the greatest challenges for business in a fragile states<sup>36</sup>.

Despite all these adversities, in many failed states, private sector actors have started to realize the potentialities that small and medium enterprises can display in this kind of environment. These kind of enterprises can promote long-term employment and local innovation, because they usually tend to be more involved in the country where they operate, and can therefore play a relevant role in the stabilization and economic recovery of the state. In Somalia, for instance, entrepreneurs (especially the local ones and those part of the Somali diaspora) have adopted three strategies to better operate in an institutional vacuum. First they have “imported institutions”, which means that they have started relying on institutions, the banking system for example, not available in Somalia but available in nearby countries. Second, they have started relying on local customs and local relationships and networks for the issues related to contract enforcement, payment and transmission of funds. Third, they have simplified transactions in order to make them as much safe and clear as possible<sup>37</sup>.

In a scenario where the state fails to deliver basic services, private economic actors tend also to acknowledge the importance of investing in the education sector; a higher level of education means not only a better quality of life for the population, but also more qualified workers available on the job market<sup>38</sup>.

On the other hand is also important to consider the fact that external economic actors,

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<sup>35</sup> Hameed, Lamb & Mixon (2013)

<sup>36</sup> Lakhani (2013)

<sup>37</sup> Harford (2004)

<sup>38</sup> Hameed, Lamb & Mixon (2013)

international companies in particular, can play a detrimental role in the evolution and development of failed states. In a type of economy like the one described above, foreign investment can, using Patey and Kragelund words', "act as as vehicles producing value out of natural resources through the international market place, often cementing the political power of oppressive governments, exacerbating inequalities, or worse, intensifying and prolonging civil wars"<sup>39</sup>. Indeed, in countries with ongoing civil conflicts, private sector can reduce the chances of development not only through illegal activities, diamond smuggling for instance, but also through completely legal businesses, such as the oil business. In almost every civil war private sector actors, through their activities, indirectly vehicle resources both to the government and the rebels, which use them to prolong the conflict and, in the case of the rebels, to develop the necessary international connections to access the military weapons market. Moreover, the exploitation of private businesses in weak countries is perceived by the existing elites as a fast way for self-enrichment<sup>40</sup>.

This chapter has showed the roles that internal and external actors can play in the development of a failed state, demonstrating that even actors which are usually perceived as secondary by the international community can influence, in a positive or negative way, the evolution of these areas.

The next chapter will provide a theoretical framework to the entire work, presenting and analyzing the theory of liberal peace, which is usually the prism through which the international community plans and executes different types of intervention in failed states around the world.

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<sup>39</sup> Patey, Kragelund (2008)

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

## **2. Theoretical framework: presentation of the liberal peace theory**

This chapter will present an explanation of the liberal peace theory, which will work as a comprehensive theoretical framework for the whole thesis; the first section will describe the importance of democracy and economic interdependence for the liberal peace theory; furthermore it will explain how an international system of peace, the basis for this theory, develops from and its rooted in the individual's desire for security. This first part will be based on Newbrander's work "Liberal Peace: A Dyad and Economic Interdependence, Grounded in Agent Desires". The second section of this chapter will analyze the different strands of thinking embedded in the liberal peace theory and how this different components play a more or less relevant role in the application of the liberal peace theory in specific peace building projects; this part will draw most of its content from Richmond's works, in particular his paper "Understanding the Liberal Peace".

Before starting the analysis of the liberal peace theory is important to give a brief definition of peace, in accordance to the main thinkers who shaped the liberal thinking. Hobbes defines peace as the absence of actual battles or the absence of the "will to contend by battle"<sup>41</sup>. Kant, similarly, defines peace as "the end of all hostilities" and affirms that, in order to avoid future wars, countries needs to be republican and based upon "the principles of the freedom of the members of the society"; furthermore he also states that countries need to avoid to interfere in the creation and development of another country<sup>42</sup>.

After this brief definition of the concept of peace, is now important to understand how, according to Hobbes, the desires of the individual agents who operate within a country are the main propellant for the development of an international system of peace.

In his book "Leviathan", Hobbes explains why individuals, while in the state of nature, decide to create a government; the author relies on different principles to explain this

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<sup>41</sup> Hobbes (1996). *Leviathan*. New York: Oxford University Press. (Original work published in 1651)

<sup>42</sup> Kant (2006). *Towards Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*, Yale University Press (Original work published in 1795)

phenomenon; the first principle concerns the nature of men; in the chapter XIII of Leviathan, Hobbes states that humans are essentially equals; they are equal in ability, fact that bring them to have “equality of hope in the attaining of ends”. This equality generates competition, which in turn cause war; therefore, in the state of nature men are constantly at war because of their intrinsic equality. The second principle affirms that the state of nature is regulated by the laws of nature and, given the fact that there is no central sovereignty entity and every man's first desire is the survival, the central law of nature is that man should seek peace whenever is possible. However, the laws of nature that would allow the humans to live in peace cannot be applied in the state of nature, because, as it has been said, there is no central authority who can enforce them. This is the reason that pushes men to want a government that can ensure their safety, survival and prosperity. Governments have responsibilities towards their citizens, and in particular they must mediate conflict, create the legislative framework necessary for the development of the economy, enforce contracts and laws and, clearly, ensure the security of the citizens<sup>43</sup>.

The relationship between a government and its citizen is not unilateral: the government, or a designated part of it, acts as representative of the citizens, while them, having ceded their authority to the government, accept to comply to the decisions taken by their representative(s).

In case the government does not act to promote the interests of its citizens, it loses its legitimacy and the population does not recognize the government in charge as their legitimate representative. It is important to understand that state preferences are shaped and influenced by individuals' private interests and desires. The translation of the basic desire of the citizens of security into specific state policies is the clearest example. In democracies, representatives must worry about their reelection and their legitimacy. Despite the fact that any government cannot politically represent all its citizens to the fullest, but just some individuals or some

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<sup>43</sup> Hobbes (1996). Leviathan. New York: Oxford University Press. (Original work published in 1651)



groups, all the governments that want to appear as legitimate must represent the fundamental Hobbesian desires shared by all the population.

The natural consequence of the application of this concept at the international level is that states try to protect themselves from external threats and try to promote policies that favor their citizens. Following their preferences, states constrain each others' behaviors, and intentionally or unintentionally, develop an international system. The two pillars of this system are democratic states and economic interdependence<sup>44</sup>.

To understand the importance of democratic states for this international system, and, consequently, for the liberal peace theory, is necessary to briefly analyze the theory of democratic peace. According to this theory, democracies rarely wage war against each other; at the same time, according to the democratic peace theory, in order to be labeled as democratic a government must meet three criteria: the majority of citizens must have the right to vote, at least two parties must compete in free and fair elections, and the executive is or under the scrutiny of a legislative body or directly elected. The idea of democratic peace has its roots in Kant's works; the author believed that only republican states, meant as states with a clear separation between legislative and executive powers, can give life to a peaceful system. This belief is based on the idea that the separation of legislative and executive powers strengthens the possibilities of the population to hold its government accountable of its actions, consequently putting some restraints on it<sup>45</sup>. The elections are the system through which the citizens can hold accountable and influence the choices of their representatives. This system entails an important consequence: because in a democratic government the choice to start a war is based upon popular consent and because, at the same time, citizens are those who ultimately will carry the burdens related to a war, democracies are those that, as Russett states, are more “sensitive to the human and material costs of violent conflict”; this

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<sup>44</sup> Newbrander (2012)

<sup>45</sup> Kant (2006). *Towards Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*, Yale University Press (Original work published in 1795)

means that democracies will less likely start a conflict than states with less representative types of government<sup>46</sup>.

The second element to be considered, in order to comprehend the democratic peace theory, is the idea that liberal states, which are usually built on the consent of free individuals, perceive the other liberal states as just, and therefore do feel free to start a process of cooperation with them; this process, ultimately, can give life to a peaceful international system. On the contrary, liberal states perceive illiberal states, intended as those states without democratic and republic institutions, as unjust because they do not base their power on the consensus of their citizens, and therefore treat them with more suspicion<sup>47</sup>.

Several empirical proofs have been presented by scholars to prove the validity of this theory; one proof is the fact that, according to Russett and Oneal, democracies are more likely to be victim of an aggression rather than the assailant; a second proof presented is that, because democracies try to solve internal problems without resorting to the use of violence, this modus operandi is likely to be applied also towards international relations; the third and last main empirical proof is that in case of a conflict the separation of legislative and executive power makes the process of mobilization harder for democratic leaders<sup>48</sup>.

The third element to consider in the order to understand the democratic peace theory is another intrinsic characteristic of republican governments: their transparency. The misreading of other countries' behavior is, in the international arena, often one of the reasons that spurs conflicts; in effect, states have no guarantee that they perceive the signals of other states in the right way, and therefore the transparency of republican governments, which is based on the free flow of information, help greatly to improve the relations between states<sup>49</sup>.

The three elements that have been presented above provide important insights that help to

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<sup>46</sup> Russett & Oneal (2001)

<sup>47</sup> Newbrander (2012)

<sup>48</sup> Russett & Oneal (2001)

<sup>49</sup> Newbrander (2012)

understand the democratic peace theory, on which the liberal peace theory lies upon. In particular it explains how important are democratic states for the development of a peaceful international system. However, despite their centrality, democracies are not the only pillar on which the international peaceful system envisioned by the liberal peace theory is based.

Economic interdependence is another fundamental element of this system, and needs to be analyzed to understand the liberal peace theory.

To understand the importance of the economic interdependence for the international system is necessary, once again, to consider Kant's ideas on the argument. According to the philosopher, the relevancy of the economic interdependence depends on two ideas; the first idea is that the desires of the individuals explains the inclination of the mankind towards the trade. This first idea is based in particular on one of the basic Hobbesian desires, the desire for industry and felicity. The second idea, consequential to the first one, is that trade favors peace because wars are detrimental for trade<sup>50</sup>. At the international level, these two beliefs imply, likely, that states will not recur to the use of force against their trade partners, because this behavior would damage both. From this perspective, armed conflicts entails high cost because they are usually extremely expensive and damage the flow of goods, causing extensive economic losses.

Therefore economic interdependence is an important factor for peace; more are the commercial ties between two countries, less these two countries will be willing to engage in a dispute with the partner. On the contrary, when commerce ties shrink, the chances for peace decrease<sup>51</sup>.

After the analysis of the two elements, democracy and economic interdependence, that compose the dyad on which the liberal peace theory is based, it is now the time to analyze the interactions between these two elements and their effects. Democracy and economic interdependence usually interact strengthening each other, creating a virtuous circle in which

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<sup>50</sup> Kant (2006). *Towards Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*, Yale University Press (Original work published in 1795)

<sup>51</sup> Newbrander (2012)

peace is included and that is self-reinforcing: peace favors economic interdependence and democratic governments and, conversely, trade and democracies foster a peaceful international system<sup>52</sup>. To obtain such peaceful and cooperative international system the paths to follow can be different. The theory of the evolution of cooperation, presented by Axelrod, states that rewarding cooperation with cooperation (and defection with defection) creates an environment in which, after enough cooperation, cooperation itself becomes the norm for international relations<sup>53</sup>. Another possible way to obtain a cooperative international system, is that states are backed into this system. As it has been said, citizen's major desires include peace and prosperity (that can be achieved through trade); if governments that represent them fail to comply to these desires, citizens will not re elect them. In this case states are backed by their population to act at the international level cooperatively and to create a peaceful and cooperative international system. However, the countries can have a different approach towards this cooperative system, depending on their level of internalization of the system itself. Some countries with a low level of internalization of the system, comply to the system only because they feel they are forced into it by the threat of a of a punishment. Other countries, with a slightly higher degree of internalization of the system, act according to it exclusively out of self interest. The remaining countries, those with a high degree of internalization, comply to the cooperative international system because they perceive the system as legitimate and act to maintain and strengthen it<sup>54</sup>.

In this first section of the chapter, the elements upon which the liberal peace theory lies have been analyzed. Relying on Newbrander's work, it has been explained the role of the citizens' desires in the development of a peaceful international system. Afterward, the two elements on which this system is based, democratic states and economic interdependence, have been analyzed, firstly separately and then jointly in their interactions. In the next section of this

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Axelrod & Hamilton (1981)

<sup>54</sup> Newbrander (2012)

theoretical chapter the focus will shift on the different existing strands of thinking embedded in the liberal peace theory; particular attention will be paid to the degree of centrality that these components have, or had, in the different type of peace building operations launched by members of the international community.

According to Richmond, within the liberal peace framework exist four different schools of thinking which respectively relate with the ideas of the victor's peace, the institutional peace, the constitutional peace and the civil peace.

The concept of victor's peace has evolved from the idea that peace is based and can only exist after a military victory; among the four concepts of peace this is the first that has emerged and its implementation can be seen, for instance, in the Treaty of Versailles imposed to Germany at the end of the First World War. Differently, the institutional peace is based on the desire to create an overall normative and legal framework of which states are part and in which they collectively decide how to behave and how to enforce determined choices. The concept of constitutional peace instead rests upon the Kantian idea that the roots of the peace are democracy, trade and a set of cosmopolitan values based on the notion that humans are not a mean for a higher end but ends in themselves. Conversely, civil peace is strongly connected with the idea of popular mobilization and direct action in defense of basic human rights. The liberal peace is a discourse, a framework, which embeds all these four strands of thinking, which in turn are more or less visible in the practical application of the theory, depending on the actors who try to implement it, the geographic area where it is implemented and a variety of many other factors<sup>55</sup>.

The emergence of the concept of liberal peace, which now dominates the western literature and policy discourses that reflect on the different concepts of peace, reflects three different elements, the “Augustinian thinking on 'tranquillity of order'”, the Hobbesian ideas about how to contain the state of nature and Quincy Wright's idea that peace is embodied “by a

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<sup>55</sup> Richmond (2006)

community in which law and order prevail, both internally and externally<sup>56</sup>". The liberal peace project appears therefore to be a stronghold against the toughness of the state of nature, which, however, is present in the liberal peace theory through its victor's peace component. The basic characteristics of liberal peace have their roots in the Enlightenment and in the notions of rationality and sovereignty, sustained by different forms of liberalism and progressivism; at the same time the liberal peace can exist only if the possibility of intervention is in place; it is therefore clear that victor's peace remains a central element of the liberal peace. However, in the post Enlightenment period, with the growth of civil society actors and NGOs, which introduced a new and private narrative about peace, with the several peace projects that started in the European continent and the formalization of a new institutional narrative in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the concept of victor's peace lost part of his centrality in the liberal peace project. These new narratives, sustained by the concept of victor's peace, became the starting point for what would have become the liberal peace theory<sup>57</sup>.

Within the project of liberal peace, multiple actors, such as epistemic communities, organizations institutions and states, are involved in two different types of conditional relationships; the first is a relationship with each other, based on a mix of different tendencies, conservatives, liberal and distributive ones; the second conditional relationship is instead between these actors and the location where the liberal peace project is being implemented. The principles on which liberal peace is based are associated with the so-called "peacebuilding consensus", a system in which liberal states, characterized by democratic institutions, a free market economy and a strong civil society coexist in an international system, western-oriented and characterized in turn by multilateralism. This international system is the representation of the existing consensus of its main actors, such as states, NGOs,

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<sup>56</sup> Wright (1964)

<sup>57</sup> Richmond (2006)

international organizations etc., on the basic goals entailed in the different strands of thinking which are part of the liberal peace. However, the consensus among these actors on the methodologies to be applied for the development of the liberal peace in certain areas, and also on which are the goals to prioritize, is often only superficial.

From an epistemological and ontological point of view, the concept of liberal peace is a hybrid as well; it contains different components: the philosophical component tries to offer and understanding of how peace would be from a universal moral order perspective, the positivist component adopts a more scientific approach and tries to develop a basic level of order through the study of the interactions of the actors and of how to reorganize existing structures and resources; while the last component, the post-positivist one, remains focused on the development of universal critical order through which is possible to emancipate from hegemony and marginalization<sup>58</sup>.

In the implementation of the liberal peace in a post conflict area, which of the strand of thoughts embedded in the liberal peace prevails depends on the main sponsors of that particular operation; these are usually the key states and the funders, which operate through the different agents that act within the peace building consensus. However, the centrality of some aspects of the liberal peace in a particular intervention is not steady, and other elements can gain prominence during the peace building process. During the whole process the control is in the hand of a group of actors which impress their own understanding of liberal peace upon the operation; their control over the peace building process is based on a mixture of consent, co-operation, incentives and more or less open coercion, which can result in the use of force. In this context the four different components of liberal peace have converged to create the notion of “peace-as-governance”, which accepts without much questioning the formula that assumes that democratization, market-oriented economic reforms, legal processes and human rights reforms are the key for the development of a stateless or post-

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

conflict area. The peace-as-governance is the most common type of peace applied in post conflict areas in which international actors are involved; it focuses on the (re)building of state institutions, which are perceived as the pillar over which the liberal peace can be built. For what concerns NGOs and other agencies, their focus stays on the governance of society. Peace-as-governance incorporate both institutional and private actors in its development, be they local or international actors, but at the same time its top-down approach reveals the relevancy that the victor's peace maintains at the supranational level.

Moreover, the majority of the international actors involved in peace building processes perceives the lack of development as the main challenge for the implementation of the liberal peace, and therefore tends to equate liberal peace with development; however, this equation can be easily perceived as a way to disguise the incapacity of the states and actors involved of comprehending the problems related to the peace building process in all their complexity, preferring instead a simplistic view of the situation<sup>59</sup>.

The liberal peace project, in its pragmatic application, can follow three different models.

The first model, the conservative one, is characterized by a top-down approach towards peace building and development projects; this approach is often perceived as coercive and as an expression of foreign interests, which are protected through conditionality, “dependency creation” and sometimes through the use of force. On the field this model usually takes the form of a hegemonic state-led peace, and this approach can be seen in some of World Bank and UN's projects, but especially in the US unilateral operations of state-building. The militarization of this model, which as been seen in Somalia, Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq, as been labeled as “hyper-conservative model”, in which the victor's peace plays a bigger role, especially in the phases of planning that precede the actual intervention.

The second model has been labeled as orthodox model; the actors that follow this model are aware and sensitive about the local culture and peculiarities, but at the same time are

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.



convinced that transferring their western methodologies and norms into the governance framework they are building is the most effective way to develop working state institutions. The projects based on this model are characterized by consensual negotiations in which the state, and not the population or the civil society, maintain a central role; this approach is usually preferred by international organizations and international NGOs. It represents a mix of top-down and bottom up approaches: top-down because the whole peace building project is led by international institutions, international donors, foreign states and international financial institutions; bottom-up approach because it includes activities oriented towards the civil society and the local population. However, in the orthodox model the top-down approach seems to be the stronger one, and this is explained by the fact that this model implies the technical superiority of the actors who lead the peace building efforts over the recipients. The UN's practices of state reform and peace building at the end of the Cold War, and in particular the temporary sovereignty of the UN over East Timor, are good examples of these orthodox approach.

The third model, called emancipatory model, represents a more critical interpretation of the liberal peace project. This model, and those who act according to this model, tend to be very critical towards those procedures of coercion and conditionality that are the basis of both the conservative and orthodox models. The emancipatory model tends to be very attentive about the issue of local ownership and local consensus; it usually adopts a bottom-up approach, which involves in the front line local and international NGOs in partnership with international agencies and some state donors. Therefore, this model is not state-led, but usually characterized by the presence of private actors and social movements which are focused on needs-based activities and the enhancement of social justice rather than on the creation of strong state institutions.

In the peace building consensus these models are not insulated from each other, instead they

tend to be combined in almost every peace building intervention; the strength of each one of them depends upon the priorities and interests of the main actors involved and on their peace building skills. Existing side by side, these approaches are in tension with each other, fact that put them in the position to work as brakes upon each other; however, due of this existing tension, the fragile peace building consensus can easily break down because of the disagreements among the different actors, internal and external ones, involved.

The relevance of a certain model seems also to depend on the moment in which a specific peace building operation is taken into consideration and analyzed. During an emergency period, for instance, the conservative or hyper-conservative models are the most likely to be adopted, because they have the necessary strength to preserve the liberal international community and the “sanctity” of the liberal peace theory. Instead, in a post-conflict reconstruction phase the orthodox approach can be perceived as the most adapt, because it stays focused on the rebuilding of state institutions, but at the same time pays attention to the main needs of the population. Afterward, when the situation become more stabilized, the actors involved start to think more about the long term sustainability of their project and the international institutions start planning the exit strategy, the tendency is a shift towards the emancipatory model, where local and private actors become more central<sup>60</sup>.

To sum up, all of these versions of liberal peace have distinct approaches towards the issues of conditionality and consent, but all of them share the beliefs of both the universality of the liberal peace, which allows them to intervene in very different areas and situations, and of the technical superiority of the peace building community over the recipients. While within in the conservative framework conditionality is imposed by external actors through a top-down approach, in the more critical approaches conditionality undergoes a process of negotiation which include more social justice aspects. The centrality of the different strands embedded in the liberal peace, the victor's peace, the constitutional peace, the institutional peace and the

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

civil peace, depends every time on which actors are the main sponsors and leaders of that particular peace building project. For instance, the UN, despite it usually tries to include all of these strands in its project, clearly favors the institutional peace. Differently, the US tends to assign a central role to the victor's peace and to the constitutional peace. Major donor countries instead, together with NGOs, tend to focus more on the civil peace.

Most of the contemporary peace building operations are characterized by approaches which follow the lines of the conservative and orthodox models of liberal peace. For instance, while operations in Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq can fit into the conservative (or even hyperconservative) model, with a slow shifting towards the orthodox model, other interventions, such as those in East Timor, Cambodia and Angola, fit completely in the orthodox model. However, In general terms it can be said that liberal peace has most of the time been closer to the conservative model rather than on the emancipatory one<sup>61</sup>.

This chapter has provided the necessary theoretical framework to the paper, presenting the liberal peace theory in its different aspects, its roots and the different ways in which it can be implemented in post-conflict or stateless areas. The next chapter will rely on the theoretical framework presented to analyze three specific peace building operations (Somalia 1993, Bosnia 1995, Afghanistan 2001) which fit into the conservative model of liberal peace.

Through the analysis of these three case studies, a critique to the application of the principles that embody this theory in the context of failed states will be presented.

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

### **3. Case studies: a critique to the application of the liberal peace theory in the context of failed states**

After having presented in the previous chapter the main characteristics of the liberal peace theory and its implications, this chapter will provide a critique of the practical application of the principles of this theory in the context of failed states. To provide an effective critique, three case studies will be analyzed; they represent three different situations in which the international community or main western states have decided to intervene in stateless areas to deal with the problems arisen from the lack of state institutions. The three cases presented will be the interventions in Somalia (1993), Bosnia (1995) and Afghanistan (2001). These three cases have been chosen among many others not only because in all of them the intervening actors have based their actions on the liberal peace theory principles, but also because all the three of them are the embodiment of the so-called “conservative model of the liberal peace”; this model, as it has already been stated in the introduction and as it will be showed in this chapter, is characterized by a top-down approach to peace building and tends to rely on the use of force and conditionalities.

These three cases will be analyzed from different perspectives, underlining the weakness of this approach in the fields of political and economic reforms, stability and well-being of the local population.

The three interventions will be analyzed in chronological order, starting with the three operations that targeted Somalia between 1993 and 1995.

#### **3.1. Case study: Somalia**

Since 1991 Somalia has become the archetype of a failed state. Only in the first half of the 1990's the country was targeted by three different intervention programs organized by the United States or by the wider international community. However, despite all the millions of

dollar spent, the efforts of the international community to create a centralized democratic country have failed. In this section of the thesis, after a brief explanation of the above-mentioned interventions, the different reasons that determined the failure of these interventions will be analyzed.

First of all, it is important to state that what ended up few years later to be a full-scale peace building operation, started in 1991 as a “simple” humanitarian intervention. The official motivation for the UNISOM I operation, the first operation launched in Somalia in 1993, was “to provide a humanitarian response in order to help hundreds of thousands of people that were displaced and starving because of famine and civil war”<sup>62</sup>. At the same time, other factors that pushed the UN to intervene in this country had been the large international media coverage and the new international climate, which in turn was a byproduct of the end of the Cold War and of the success of the US operation Desert Storm. Similar factors are thought to be the cause of the American UNITAF operation; Brune affirms that the biased media coverage of the Somalian civil war, which focused on the sufferings of the unarmed population but failed to report about the issue of the young armed gangs, was among the reasons that pushed the US to launch the intervention<sup>63</sup>. Basically, both these two operations were the result of a new and temporary international climate, paired with a sort of irrational feeling of sympathy towards a population about which both the international public opinion and the international community knew not much.

The first consequence of this initial situation was that the UN, and the other international agencies that backed the intervention in the area, did not have the necessary knowledge of the environment in which they were operating. Moreover, during the third operation, UNOSOM II, the efforts of the UN were focused only in Mogadishu and in the peace talks only the warlords and their militias were considered, while all the other institutions and bodies that

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<sup>62</sup> Kenning (2011)

<sup>63</sup> Brune (1998)

could represent the Somali population were sidelined. The management of the operation appeared to be ill-planned since the beginning also on its logistical side; for instance, the choice to run the whole operation directly from Mogadishu, a city which up to that moment had received about 1.7 million displaced people, proved to be completely wrong from both a logistical and a political perspective<sup>64</sup>. Instead of such a centralized approach, a federal approach to planning, government and aid could have been more effective, especially in order to reach the people who resided in the areas of Somalia far from the capital city<sup>65</sup>.

Operation Restore Hope ended up to be a type of intervention in which different kind of activities (peacemaking, peace keeping and peace enforcement) were envisaged by the mandate, fact that diminished the level of coordination on the field; more specifically, UN different relief groups were unable to act in concert, and the US failed to understand that the success of the mission it was leading was strongly correlated with the level of political anarchy in the country. Furthermore, the existence, at a certain point, of three different chains of command which controlled three distinct forces stationed in Mogadishu did not help to develop a cohesive, long-term plan that could end the civil conflict and start off a real recovery of both the Somalian society and the Somalian state<sup>66</sup>.

The inability of the international community to attain meaningful peace agreements during the several operations can be explained by three main decisions it took. First, despite UNISOM II was basically a peace building operation, the international community spent few efforts and resources in order to obtain a political agreement and to achieve societal change. On the contrary the UN decided to rely on warlords to distribute humanitarian aid, fact that only strengthened the status quo or, even worse, concentrated even more resources and power in the hands of these militiamen<sup>67</sup>; in addition, during the previous operation UNISOM I, which

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<sup>64</sup> Ahmed, Green (1999)

<sup>65</sup> Kenning (2011)

<sup>66</sup> Dworken (1995)

<sup>67</sup> Kenning (2011)

had only few troops at disposal, the UN was forced to hire bodyguards in order to protect its employees; this choice not only proved to be expensive, but above all it discouraged the process of disarmament and, pouring money in the pockets of several militiamen, favored the same kind of war economy which in a second moment it would have tried to eradicate<sup>68</sup>.

The second decision took by the international community that can be listed among the errors that compromised the whole peacekeeping/peace building operation, is the decision to kill General Mohammed Farrah Aideed. The most reasonable explanation for this choice seems to be the insufficient number of Somali advisors hired by the UN, which, if in sufficient number, could have instructed and briefed UN employees about Somali society, culture and the political situation. Indeed, the UN, and more specifically those agencies and professionals involved in the UNOSOM II mission, appeared not to consider that the attempt to capture Aideed, successful or not, would be perceived as a specific attack to the clan Aideed was leading and as an attempt to support the rival factions. Involuntarily, the UN ended up helping Aideed in gaining more internal support and creating a widespread feeling of distrust among the Somali population towards future international interventions. Moreover, it appear that the UN recruited many members of its ancillary staff from Aideed's clan, an ingenuity that not only strengthened Aideed's leadership from a financial point of view, but at the same time put him in a position in which he could access the intelligence the UN and the United States were collecting about him<sup>69</sup>.

A third mistake made by the UN/US forces deployed in Somalia concerns their approach and attitude towards the conflict. Both the UN and US intervened in Somalia with the strong belief that it would have been easy and sufficiently quick to end the civil conflict and start off an authentic recovery of the country; because of this ingenuity, as said before, in the critical moments of their deployment these actors did not have at their disposal the necessary

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<sup>68</sup> Ahmed, Green (1999)

<sup>69</sup> Mayall et al. (1996)

information and knowledge to make the correct choices. But what is worse, even in the occasions in which they realized that they could not rely on a adequate level of knowledge, they anyway failed to consult other organizations, such as some NGOs, that had been in loco for longer and that could offer the expertise and knowledge they needed. Whatever was the reason of this choice (some scholars have defined it as “a display of arrogance”)<sup>70</sup>, it was one of the main causes of the further destabilization of the political and security environment, especially in the southern of the country<sup>71</sup>.

Two other external facts that have to be considered in order to better understand the failure of the intervention in Somalia concern instead the transition from the US-led operation UNITAF to the UN-led operation UNOSOM II. First, the transition caused the replacement of the more unitary US field leadership with the UN one, less coordinated and less apt to operate in a conflict area. This clearly affected the effectiveness of the whole operation. The second fact correlated to this transition is that with UNOSOM II the international community adopted, as said previously, a more ambitious state building resolution. The resolution aimed at rebuilding Somali political institutions and economic structures, reestablishing at the same time security throughout the whole country. The problem with this choice was that the expansion of the mandates was not followed by an expansion of the means provided to carry out these new tasks. As a matter of fact, the UN and the US not only decided to expand the mandate in a moment characterized by the transition of powers and responsibilities from the US to the UN, but also failed to find an agreement about whether and how to disarm the militias. In the end both the US and the UN refused to take upon themselves the full responsibility of this task, fact that had important repercussions in the later phases of the conflict<sup>72</sup>.

Before concluding this section, it is important to stress the fact that during the interventions that went on in the first half of the 1990's, the international community worked following the

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<sup>70</sup> Kenning (2011)

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Crocker (1995)



idea that Somalia was one unitary country. The main consequence of this approach was that the international community focused its efforts on Mogadishu, the official capital which contained almost one third of the total Somali population; in doing so, however the efforts of the international community had a very limited impact on the other areas of the country<sup>73</sup>.

### **3.2. Case study : Bosnia – Herzegovina**

This second section of the chapter will analyze the peace building process in the post-Dayton Bosnia. The analysis will demonstrate how in this context the traditional peace building approach, based on the liberal peace theory, has failed to provide a full recovery for the country and a self-sustaining peace. The section will start with a brief presentation of the main steps that characterized the peace building efforts of the international community in Bosnia, which will be followed by a presentation of the different sectors of the Bosnian society and institutions in which the international community have failed to assure long term improvements.

In Bosnia, the international community has focused its activities on the implementation of the *General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (GFA)*, the agreement signed on November 21<sup>st</sup>, 1995, which officially ended the Bosnian war. The implementation of the GFA by the international community aimed at strengthening the new central state through the development of strong state institutions. Indeed, the leaders of the international community perceived the creation of a strong state as the best way to create a new, strong civil society, basing their assumption also on the belief that the cooperation between the ethnic leaders at the central state level would have trickled down to the entire society, fostering social stability<sup>74</sup>. Unfortunately in the case of Bosnia, especially in the short term, state building efforts caused increased resistances among the preexisting sub-national

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<sup>73</sup> Kenning (2011)

<sup>74</sup> Yordan (2003)

structures, representing the different ethnic groups, which perceived the new central state as a competitor for the already scarce resources. Because of this reason the central state failed to improve the cooperation between the leaders of the different ethno-national groups, which preferred to focus on the protection of the existing social structures on which they based their power; the competition generated by this behavior, in turn, reduced the effectiveness of the central state efforts and delayed the peace building process<sup>75</sup>.

The slowness that characterized the implementation of the GFA in the first two years forced the international community, more specifically the Peace Implementation Council, to assign to the High Representative more powers in both the economic and political field, in the hope of streamlining the peace building process. In particular, the High Representative obtained the power to adopt legislation when the legislative process was blocked by disagreements between politicians, and to dismiss politicians in case they were trying to delay or derail the implementation of the peace agreements<sup>76</sup>. Using these powers, the second and the third UN High Representatives during the years have removed from their positions over eighty individuals and have imposed or rewritten more than 100 laws<sup>77</sup>.

The approach adopted by the international community, exemplified by the choice to assign more powers to the High Representative, have failed to introduce the necessary elements for self-sustaining peace. Indeed this strategic approach aimed not at the resolution of the conflict, but only at its management. The choice of the international community to focus on the strengthening of the Bosnia's central state has been one of the main reasons because the reconstruction of the social fabric has been almost completely neglected.

Another element that impeded the resolution of the conflict and the development of all the features necessary for a self-sustaining peace is the fact that the GFA was more an instrument of conflict settlement than conflict resolution. Indeed, the document represented heavily the

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Chandler (2006b)

<sup>77</sup> Yordan (2003)

interests of the US and Western European countries, whose main short-term goal was the end of the Bosnian conflict and not the development of a strong Bosnian society. As a consequence the GFA allowed the leaders of the ethno-national groups to negotiate an end to the material conflict, but did not push them to focus and address the root problems of the conflict. It is not a surprise that not only the nationalist leaders opposed the GFA, but also the moderate politicians, who perceived the peace agreement as an obstacle to the development of a strong peaceful society based on features different than ethnicity<sup>78</sup>.

After having analyzed the detrimental role that the GFA had in the post-Dayton peace building process, a second element to consider is the transitional election that took place in Bosnia in September 1998. This election was the third one since the signing of the Dayton peace accords; both during the electoral campaign and during the election days many elements of democratization seemed to be present; indeed voter interest was high, presidential candidates and their parties showed an unprecedented level of internal organization, there was no episodes of violence during the vote and also the police corps behaved responsibly. Despite all these positive elements, the election results were a disappointment for the international community: at the federal level, the two main wartime parties obtained the majority of the votes, and in the Serbian Republic the right-wing nationalist candidate Poplasen defeated the candidates of western-backed government. The disappointment of the international community was so strong that, by March 1999, the High Representative had overturn the voter's choice and removed Poplasen as the president of the Serbian Republic<sup>79</sup>. Such an harsh, and even illiberal, choice by the international community can be understood if we consider the widespread belief, within the establishment of the international institutions and of the countries involved in the peace building efforts in Bosnia, that the elections were the best way to empower and legitimize political leaders who could cooperate with the international

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

community in the implementation of liberal political and economic reforms. Unfortunately it appears that the centrality given to the elections had the opposite effect and made Bosnia even more dependent on the international presence; the reason why transitional elections did not bring moderate and western-backed candidates to power but favored instead the major wartime parties has to be found, again, in the contradictions of the Dayton Accords. In order to obtain the approval of all the warring parties, the diplomatic talks that brought to the Dayton agreement resulted in a document that presented the same elements of compromise typical of the prewar Yugoslav system, which were among the very root causes of the conflict. Furthermore, the strengthened role of some international actors, such as the High Representative, introduced in the country a new level of conflict, between local leaders and the international community. This new dynamic delayed the transition of responsibilities from external actors to the national and local leaders; at the same time it pushed a quite large portion of the Bosnian population to support nationalist leaders that stood against the “international dictate” and used the international community as a scapegoat for the long-lasting problems which persisted in both the Bosnian institutions and in the Bosnian society<sup>80</sup>. A third element that determined the failure of the peace building project launched in Bosnia has been the idealized concept that the international community had of the Bosnian civil society, which actually was much different than the one envisioned by the international actors<sup>81</sup>.

The main flaw of the international approach towards the civil society was to perceive its rebuilding solely as a technical task, as a way to allocate resources and improve the delivery of the most important services to the population; in doing so, it overlooked and partially misunderstood the more serious problems related to nationalist fragmentation. In the eyes of the international community the development of the civil society was linked with the desire to

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<sup>80</sup> Woodward (1999)

<sup>81</sup> Fleet (2013)

remedy to the weaknesses of the top-down approach characteristic of a liberal peace building project. In this perspective, the sidelining of the local elites and the allocation of funds and resources directly to civic organizations and NGOs appeared to be the best way to create an environment characterized by tolerance and moderation, features necessary for a self-sustaining peace. This belief, or hope, was based on the understanding of the Bosnian civil society as both a “middle ground” between the citizens and the state, where the state institutions were not so pervasive and citizens could express their potentialities, and as an area connected with the concepts of civility, tolerance and moderation. Both these two ideas reflect a liberal-pluralist perception of Bosnia; the practical outcome of this liberal-pluralist perception was that the international community focused on the “quantifiable, numerical growth of NGOs”<sup>82</sup>. This means that the international community ended up to identify the civil society almost exclusively with the existing NGOs; their growing number, their increasing technical skills and capacity of aggregation were perceived as synonyms of a healthy civil society. Indeed, these organizations were perceived as the expression of all the values that characterize a liberal democracy. Furthermore, the existing NGOs were dependent and linked mostly to the international community, which meant that an efficient functioning of the local institutions was not necessary for the delivery of the main basic services that were being provided by the NGOs. On the other hand Bosnian population perceived all the civil society building programs connected with the increasing number of NGOs as something completely detached from what actually was the Bosnian society at that time; in addition, the widespread equation between civil society (building) and civilized society, which implied the idea that the Bosnians were an uncivilized population in need of some external actor ready to civilize them, created a widespread opposition among large sectors of the population against those programs sponsored by the international community and presented as part of the civil

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<sup>82</sup> Belloni (2001)

society building efforts<sup>83</sup>.

After the reliance on NGOs, citizen's participation was the second main feature of the international community's approach towards the issue of civil society building. In the international community's perspective the involvement of Bosnian citizens in the social and political field could bring two positive outcomes; first, it could modify the behavior of those getting involved, fostering tolerance and mutual respect; second, it could give the possibility to those at the bottom of the society to make their voice heard. Still in the international community perspective, the best channels through which the citizens could participate and express their opinion were the local NGOs. The problem with this belief was that for too long the NGOs had been set up in order to be service delivery agents and not channels through which the disempowered could express their opinions and get involved in the public life<sup>84</sup>. Moreover, the liberal peace framework offers an idea of the individuals as producers and consumers of goods, without paying much attention to the cultural and social network of which every individual is part. Therefore in a society where individuals were perceived in the way just explained, the expression of their expectations was not among the top priorities. This was also reflected in the fact that expressions of the local culture that were not perceived as useful for the enhancement of the peace building process, whose goals were not linked to specific peace building projects and that offered less-coordinate cultural elements (for instance museums, musicians, galleries etc.), were being ignored by the international community, especially in the allocation of funds<sup>85</sup>. This situation dramatically weakened the process of consolidation of the Bosnian civil society.

In brief, by perceiving civil society building as an exclusive technical task, avoiding to develop a political vision of the intervention and ignoring the existing ethnic issues, the international community developed an unrealistic and romanticized vision of the civil society,

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Kappler, Richmond (2011)

which helped to preserve the status quo<sup>86</sup>.

In order to have a complete picture of the areas in which the international community adopted a detrimental approach for the development of a self-sustaining peace, the last issue to consider concerns the allocation of international aid. The international donors had three goals in Bosnia: assist the transition from a humanitarian response to reconstruction, from a situation of conflict to a long-lasting peace, and from a socialist country to a democratic country with a market economy<sup>87</sup>. However, the fact that aid programs were organized separately by the different organizations involved in the peace building process, and the fact that many donors offered only one-off payments made practically impossible to develop a common and forward-looking strategy. Disagreements between the different agencies over the implementation of specific programs and strategies, political delays and criticisms of particular donors pushed a huge share of the international donors to abandon those programs sponsored by international organizations and to focus on bilateral aid programs, channeling aid through foreign NGOs<sup>88</sup>.

At the same time both the international institutions and the donors were putting a lot of emphasis on the need of more transparency in the allocation of international aid; these claims were nevertheless not followed by practical steps to improve the monitoring of the aid flows. Delays in delivery and implementation of programs, due to, among other reasons, a lack of oversight, contributed to drive up operational costs. Other causes of these delays were unresolved political disagreements at the national level, the decentralized structure of the Bosnian administrative system born out of the Dayton agreements, its weakness and its complex decision-making procedures. Furthermore, aid programs were often characterized by a high turnover of the field personnel, fact that reduced the institutional memory of the organizations and consequently reduced their effectiveness in the accomplishment of their

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<sup>86</sup> Belloni (2001)

<sup>87</sup> Woodward (1999)

<sup>88</sup> Hurtic, Sapcanin & Woodward (1999)

tasks<sup>89</sup>.

International assistance programs not only ended up to be a source of problems for the donors and the international organizations which launched and managed them, they also had negative repercussions on the Bosnian country, more specifically on its economy and society. Indeed, the international aid industry tended to replace the local public sector, fact that slowed the development of the local job market and obstructed the valorization of local talents. Moreover part of the international aid ended up in the hands of nationalist elites, which thanks to these new resources were able to increase their grip on some political structures. Last but not least, the humanitarian aid industry, together with a widespread criminal economy in the hands of local mafias, formed what has been defined as a “political economy of abnormality”, which greatly reduced the areas and sectors in which a healthy free market-oriented economy could develop and grow<sup>90</sup>.

### **3.3. Case study: Afghanistan**

This section will analyze several aspects of the peace building operation started in Afghanistan in December 2001. The first element that will be analyzed, in relation with its consequences on the overall peace building process, is the Bonn Agreement, which was signed in December 2001 and laid the foundation of the future Afghan state.

The Bonn Agreement was not the expression of a grand bargain between the different forces involved in the Afghan conflict, but rather the expression of a “victor's peace”; this fact allowed the transition of the power only to those leaders that were sided with the United States and the international community in the brand new “war on terror”. At the same time, the Bonn agreement sealed only a partial peace, because the side which officially had been defeated, the Taliban, retained the military capacity to fight the new institutional order that

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Belloni (2001)



was about to be built, with relevant consequences for the whole peace building process<sup>91</sup>.

Usually, post-conflict peace agreements are developed in order to provide specific benchmarks for the future peace process that can be used to evaluate its progress. The problem with the Bonn Agreement was that the benchmarks decided were not supported by a broad base, because the Afghan actors involved in the peace process did not include representatives of the largest ethnicity in the country, the Pashtuns. Moreover the BA (Bonn Agreement) stated clear deadlines for the political transition, but did not offer specific plans about the development and reforms of the economic and security sectors of the country. The fact that the BA was silent on the security sector reform and demilitarization process is even less understandable and logical if we take in consideration the fact that the UN, through its Secretary-General's Special Representative, had proposed, in the first phases of the intervention, a light footprint approach<sup>92</sup>.

An additional element that hampered the peace building process is that donor countries often operated in the country prioritizing their homeland security and with an eye on their exit strategies rather than focusing on the development of stable institutions and a strong social fabric that could help the creation of a self-sustaining peace. This behavior pushed many foreign countries to develop short-term alliances with the current power holders, the warlords, rather than attempting to build long-term alliances with other Afghan actors that could provide in the long run a higher degree of stability to the country. For instance, the United States, because of its lack of human intelligence and manpower, developed quite strong ties with Afghan militias; their commanders received both monetary resources and political support from the US in exchange of the use of their militias in counterinsurgency operations led by the Americans. This strategy, despite having clear advantages in the short term, had some harmful side effects, such as the inclusion of these militias in the Afghanistan security system

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<sup>91</sup> Goodhand, Sedra(2007)

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

as semi-formal actors, thing that allowed them to avoid to go through the process of disarmament and demilitarization. Moreover, the provision of monetary resources gave the possibility to the leaders of these militias to extend their patronage network, maintain and equip their soldiers and impose their control over sectors of the Afghan informal economy<sup>93</sup>. After having seen the effect that war conditionalities had on the Afghan peace building process, the next example will show the effect that conditionalities applied after the official end of a conflict can have on the same process.

Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) are small groups composed by soldiers, government representatives and military civil affairs officers, which are in charge of several tasks, such as “to provide a security umbrella for reconstruction activities, carry out small-scale development projects, support security sector reform (SSR), and serve as a link with the central government”. In November 2005 there were 21 PRTs deployed across Afghanistan; American PRTs used conditionalities in several occasions, both to obtain information about the enemy from the local population, promising aid in exchange of useful information, or as a form of punishment against those communities in which the level of insurgency activities were increasing, interrupting in this case the flow of aid . PRTs under the control of other country members of the anti – Taliban coalition used instead conditionalities in relation to governance issues; for instance, Netherlands and Great Britain tied the deployment of their troops in particular areas of the country to the removal of specific government representatives that, in their opinion, could harm or slow down the peace building process. In all these cases, the use of conditionalities seems to have created more problems than benefits; for what concerns the American PRTs, their use of conditionalities have proved ineffective in reducing the number of insurgency attacks and in producing reliable intelligence, while, in broader terms, this approach has probably increased the distaste of the

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<sup>93</sup> Suhrke et al. (2002)

Afghan population for the international actors and the western-backed government<sup>94</sup>.

It is important to notice that in the Afghan Peace building process conditionality has not been applied to the security sector reform. This choice depends on three factors; first, the SSR process had been divided into five sub areas, and each one of them had been assigned to one of the main G8 countries involved in the peace building. The aim of this choice was to allow to each one of these countries to focus on the implementation of a specific area of the SSR process, but in practice this compartmentalization has caused a sort of competition between the countries in charge of the reforms, fact that has allowed the Afghan actors to play the international actors one against the other and limit the degree of pressure they could exercise on the formers. Second, local actors that were supposed to be part of the SSR process had access to financial resources derived from the illicit economy, fact that similarly reduced the degree of pressure the international actors could exercise through conditionalities. Third, the choice not to apply conditionalities reflected not only local issues and dynamics, but external priorities as well<sup>95</sup>. For instance, the US decided not to apply conditionalities on the Afghan Defence Minister, but rather to manage directly the creation of the new Afghan National Army. This choice reflected two connected factors: first, the belief that, even if conditionalities were applied, the Afghan Minister of Defence did not have the capacity to implement them and, second, that the creation of a large and efficient Afghan army was fundamental for the American policymakers that were aiming at withdrawing US troops from Afghanistan in a relative short amount of time. Because of this kind of external and short term priorities, the international actors involved in the SSR process failed to face the problem of the long-term sustainability of the reforms they were trying to implement. A notable example is that, during the fiscal year 2004/05 security expenditures equalled 494 per cent of the Afghan government revenues and 23 per cent of the national GDP. The failure to assess the

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<sup>94</sup> Perito (2005)

<sup>95</sup> Goodhand, Sedra(2007)

problem of the long term sustainability of the SSR process had therefore the consequence of hampering the development of a durable peace<sup>96</sup>.

In the political field conditionalities had a limited role as well. The BA, despite establishing numerous benchmarks, did not tie them to the application of conditionalities, because many members of the international community believed the newborn Afghan government was too fragile and conditionalities could have a destabilizing effect. A widespread idea among scholars is that a more resolute approach by the international community, characterized by the use of incentives or disincentives in the first phases of the creation of the new state institutions, could have helped to reduce the control of the warlords over the provinces and over different sectors of the government. Instead the approach outlined in the BA gave life to a government with a quite widespread external legitimacy, but without the domestic legitimacy necessary for a de facto sovereignty over the Afghan territory<sup>97</sup>.

Another noteworthy problem that emerged in the political field was related with the inability of the international community and its in loco representatives to enforce a serious vetting process for the legislative elections. More specifically, the vetting process was supposed to avoid that commanders or members of armed groups or militias could apply to become candidates at the legislative elections. Unfortunately, only 34 individuals were removed from the ballots because of their ties to armed groups, despite it appears that there were more than 1,100 candidates that had links with militias or unofficial military forces. The consequence of this weak oversight was that, after the legislative elections, over 80 per cent of the winners in the provinces and 60 per cent of the winning candidates in Kabul had ties with militias and armed groups<sup>98</sup>.

Moving our attention to the socio-economic field, the issues of reconstruction and development had officially a high degree of relevance. Unfortunately, this relevance had not

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<sup>96</sup> World Bank (2005)

<sup>97</sup> Goodhand, Sedra(2007)

<sup>98</sup> IRIN report (2005)

been reflected in the amount of resources allocated to related projects; instead the majority of the international spending had been allocated to the security sector. Indeed, the year after the signature of the BA, 84 per cent of the international spending was allocated to fight the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, while 9 per cent went on humanitarian assistance, 4 per cent on ISAF and only 3 per cent on reconstruction. The capacity of a government to both raise revenues for public services and plan expenditures is fundamental for the reconstruction agenda and for the development of a self-sustaining country. Recognizing this fact, many state donors sponsored the development of institutions and structures that could help the Afghan government in this task. However, some of the most central donors, such as Japan and United States, decided to bypass the trust funds that had been instituted for this reason and decided to found directly specific projects, in order to have a more immediate impact on the situation. This choice has nevertheless had the effect of creating two competing public sectors, the official one, managed by the Afghan government and supported through trust funds, and an external public sector, funded and controlled by the international donors. To have an idea of how relevant this external public sector was, it is enough to say that in 2005 only 30 per cent of all the expenditures were controlled directly by the Afghan government through the trust funds<sup>99</sup>. In addition to the existence of this external public sector, the role of the Afghan government has been further reduced by the fact that most of the policies concerning sectors such as banking, private sector investment, energy and mining, customs and transit trade has been rewritten favoring the private sector. Furthermore, the management of different services, which in the past were in the hand of the government, has been assigned to NGOs<sup>100</sup>. A last, but not less relevant element that weakened the authority and capacity of the Afghan central government to collect revenues, is the presence of an informal economy, strengthened in particular by the illicit trade of drugs<sup>101</sup>.

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<sup>99</sup> Rubin, Hamidzada, Stoddard (2003)

<sup>100</sup> Goodhand, Sedra(2007)

<sup>101</sup> Rahimi (2008)

Because the Afghan government is not a single institutions, but an ensemble of different ministries and other structures, the international donors had the tendency to work and cooperate with those of its parts that were perceived as more efficient. This fact gave life to a sort of unofficial policy of ministerial selectivity; those ministries perceived by the international donors as reforming and efficient, which were usually led by western-oriented ministers and were characterized by strong and clear finance management procedures and familiarity with donor requirements, were rewarded with more resources by the international community, while those less performing ministries were usually left under-funded. This choice not only caused several turf wars and resentments between different ministries and their bureaucracies, but also left under-funded some of the ministries that should play a central role in every peace building process. The clearest example is the ministry of Agriculture, an institution theoretically fundamental in the reconstruction process, but that has been marginalized by the international donors because of its perceived backwardness and inefficiency. A similar tendency has appeared also within the different ministries, where the high rank bureaucrats and technocrats instead of firing the incompetent members of their staff have preferred to sideline them and work only with a smaller trusted circle of advisors; this fact has reduced the overall efficiency of these ministries and at the same time has brought to the development of a dual structure within the state<sup>102</sup>.

To sum up, most of the contradictions and problems presented in this paragraph have been caused by the fact that war fighting and peace building have been pursuit almost simultaneously in Afghanistan. This overall approach has led to some contradictions, in primis the fact that, despite the international community and international actors proclaimed that one of the central elements of their intervention was the creation of a long-lasting peace in Afghanistan, in practice security priorities of the state donors pushed the coalition to focus more on the development of agreements with local actors that could stabilize the situation in

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<sup>102</sup> Goodhand, Sedra(2007)

the short time rather than in the long one.

Moreover, many of the local actors chosen by the international community as interlocutors resulted being less representative, legitimate and strong at both the regional and local level than expected. This mistake was probably caused by a context whose main characteristic was a widespread political fragmentation<sup>103</sup>.

The management and the allocation of reconstruction, humanitarian and development aid has also played an important role in weakening the entire peace building process. In particular the provision of aid in many situations has not been of a sufficient magnitude to influence the behavior of the local actors; most of the time the reason of this failure has been the existence of a shadow economy of notable dimension, which has not been kept in sufficient account by the international donors. Furthermore the existence of both intra and inter-donors disagreements and division did not allowed the development of a unitary policy on conditional aid; while indeed thanks to a shared belief in the liberal peace principles most of the donors had a similar idea about what final form the Afghan government should have, the plans presented to obtain that result were a lot different.

In conclusion, in Afghanistan the role of the international community has been central. The protagonism of the international community has not allowed the Afghan government to develop the necessary capabilities to mobilize capital and use military force autonomously when required<sup>104</sup>. This fact has not only made the Afghan government heavily dependent on the international donors, but at the same time has reduced its legitimacy in the eyes of the Afghan population and of those local actors that could be fundamental in the development of a long-lasting and self-sustaining peace.

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

#### **4. Alternatives to an ideology-driven approach towards failed states**

An increasing number of scholars have started to criticize the application of the liberal peace theory in stateless areas. The two main questions raised in relation to this approach are if the implementation of the liberal peace theory in these areas gives actually life to a liberal project, and if this approach cannot be perceived as a project to promote a specific ideology through the use of military actions. Indeed, in its most conservative form, such as during the three interventions presented in the previous chapter, the implementation of the liberal peace theory in a failed state has been attempted through what has been defined as a “liberal war”. At the same time some authors have started to notice that the international community, and in particular some developed countries, seem less and less preoccupied to implement a pure form of governance based exclusively on the principles of the liberal peace theory, and more interested in promoting what has been labeled as “good enough governance”. This new approach might be the key for the development of a post-liberal consensus, based on a higher level of pragmatism and less on ideological stances, especially at the practical level<sup>105</sup>. Mac Ginty, for instance, affirms that the term “good enough governance” has become part of the governance lexicon and is now used to identify an ensemble of minimally acceptable standards which stand in opposition to those long and detailed lists of standards that have to be accomplished in order to define an intervention in a failed state a success in accordance to the liberal principles<sup>106</sup>. If this new perspective gains ground it would allow types of intervention less ideologized and more responsive to the every time different local dynamics; moreover it could promote choices that take into consideration the fact that the Westphalian model of sovereignty is not the unique possible solution for a stateless area.

On a pragmatic level, a less ideological approach would bring to the incorporation of (every time different) forms of local knowledge in the interventions promoted by the international

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<sup>105</sup> Myrberg (2013)

<sup>106</sup> Mac Ginty (2012)



community, fact that in turn would enhance the dialogue and exchange of ideas and viewpoints between local and international actors. The opening up of the peace building projects to a larger group of actors is a connected issue brought up by the same group of scholars that criticize the current modalities of intervention of the international community. This means that those who accept this approach are more likely to take into consideration all the existing, interacting and competing sources of authority, even if this means working with illiberal actors. This position is validated by the belief that, in order to make peace and state building projects really effective and also attractive for the local population, they should be opened up to all the parties that have a stake in their outcomes; this means that more space should be given to those that at the local level have some kind of power or influence, such as the elders (in some societies), and to those actors that are usually sidelined in the political processes, such as women and youth, and that need to be empowered. Clearly the inclusion of illiberal or violent actors or organizations can be perceived as something wrong from a moral perspective, but their exclusion can bring to even worse consequences; indeed the inclusion of traditional actors which can be determinant for the positive outcome of the peace building intervention is usually only possible when the stateless area is characterized by the absence of conflict, at least in the immediate, and this condition can often be reached only coming to terms with the above mentioned illiberal actors<sup>107</sup>.

In order to make the inclusion of this actors possible, a change of perspective is required. Usually these actors and their beliefs are perceived by the international community as something fixed, static. This view brings the international community to adopt a confrontational behavior towards these actors, in the firm belief that they cannot be reformed but just defeated. On the contrary, a central element of a more pragmatic and less ideological approach should be the perception of this kind of actors as something that in the long term, thanks to the understanding of their root causes, can be transformed, and with whom in the

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<sup>107</sup> Boege et al. (2008)

short term is necessary to keep the dialogue open<sup>108</sup>.

In regard to what has been said about empowerment, an important question on which is necessary to reflect is if top-down attempts to include those actors that are usually marginalized can account as a true act of empowerment. The answer given by Myrberg is that, yes, these attempts can be acknowledged as authentic attempts of empowerment of these categories of actors, but only if these actors not only gain the possibility to express their opinions, but also if their opinions start being taken into account; in other words, the forums of dialogue in which these actors are accepted have to be recognized as decision-making arenas. However, the emancipatory approach that is being presented, in order to be truly successful, cannot limit itself to provide new forums in which actors can debate and take decisions, it has also to address the root causes that allow the existence of the societal, economic and political structures that have been among the causes of the collapse of a certain state; in the previous chapter it has been showed how, in all the three case studies presented, the international community has failed to reform the material structures and discourses that have been the primary causes of conflict in the above mentioned countries<sup>109</sup>. Where the reform of these structures has not been taken into consideration by the international community, often local forms of resistance have emerged; these resistances, born as a consequence of both the lack of real changes in the cited structures and of a somehow paternalistic approach of the international community towards these societies, can present themselves openly as resistance or social movements, or otherwise can operate in a more hidden way through acts of marginal resistance within local agencies in charge of issues such as reconciliation and reconstruction. These actors, often operating at the margin of the officially recognized peace building framework, try to build the right environment for a self-sustaining peace, choosing and using ideas and solutions from both the liberal peace theory

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<sup>108</sup> Myrberg (2013)

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

and the local customs and traditions. In these contexts non-liberal and non-western forms of economics, society and politics are claiming increasingly more space<sup>110</sup>.

In order to better understand what are the main elements presented in this first part of the chapter and how they are translated into practice, the next section of the chapter will present the case of Somaliland, a region formally part of Somalia but that, by selectively rejecting some of the solutions proposed by the international community during the three interventions that interested the Somalian country in the first half of the 1990's and by substituting them with local alternatives, has been enjoying a higher degree of peace, development and well-being since then.

The Somaliland region gained its independence from Britain on 26 June 1960. Few days later it voluntarily merged with the recently independent Somali Republic. However, after a positive initial period, in 1969 Somalia experienced its first military coup, which brought to power major general Siad Barre. In the late 1980's the population of what used to be Somaliland started and lead the rebellion against general Barre and only at the beginning of 1991, after years of harsh repression and numerous casualties, the rebellion succeeded in expelling Barre from the country. Subsequently, in May 1991, the representatives of the Somaliland communities reaffirmed the independence of Somaliland from Somalia. Since then, Somaliland, despite not being recognized by any other country in the world, has started operating as an independent country, and its citizens have started to rebuild their state. Relying only on their own resources, on the remittances of the diasporans (because is not officially recognized, the Somaliland state cannot receive neither international aid nor international credit lines by international institutions) and on a network of local relationships and customary rules, that will now be presented in a more detailed way, Somaliland institutions have been able to restore the order, end the violence in the region and disarm the

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<sup>110</sup> Richmond (2009)

warlords and their militias<sup>111</sup>.

The first important element that characterized the local peace building process in Somaliland has been the reliance on traditional methods of conflict management and solutions. Indeed, soon after the collapse of the Somali state institutions, the elders returned to be the central actors in local politics, reviving the traditional systems of governance; local mediation committees were established in order to deal with different type of issues, and in particular to solve land-related conflicts and disagreements. To reach these goals, the members of the mediation committees relied on customary laws and based their choices, most of the time, not only on the principle of justice but also on the principle of reciprocity, which means that the decisions taken had the central goal to establish a sort of equilibrium that could be acceptable for all the parties involved in the dispute<sup>112</sup>.

Clans also played a central role in halting the conflict and in disarming the different armed groups. Every clan, usually based on a patriarchal structure, succeeded in pacifying the area of the country under its control and promoted the transition of the former combatants from their local militias to the new national army. Women too, however from a more marginal position, played an important role in the pacification of the region, thanks to their intermediate position between the paternal clan and the marital clan<sup>113</sup>.

The second relevant element that characterized the pacification process of Somaliland has been its “preparatory nature”, meaning that before organizing the three main national reconciliation conferences of Berbera, Borame and Hargeisa, the different clans organized and held several local meetings with the goal of promoting inter-clan negotiations and to push social, traditional and religious actors to be involved in the pacification process since its early beginning, providing them with a sense of genuine inclusion in the process. In the end, before and after the three national conferences named above, a total of 34 local or sub national

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<sup>111</sup> McAuslan (2011)

<sup>112</sup> Boege et al. (2008)

<sup>113</sup> Malito (2013)

conferences had been held in Somaliland to favor the peace building process<sup>114</sup>.

The codification of the local and traditional mechanisms of conflict solution into official laws of the newborn state has been the third element that characterized the development of Somaliland and its pacification. The introduction of traditional rules concerning reconciliation and conflict resolution, accepted and shared by all the clans, gave the chance to include the entire Somaliland community in the pacification of the region; similarly, the development of the “principle of clan responsibility”, which means that each clan is in charge of the security of the territory under its control, helped to include more directly the population in the management of the region, strengthening the feeling of belonging to this state.

Maintaining the focus on the legislative field, a new constitution was also approved; it proposed a hybrid system, a fusion between a western-style presidential system and elements of the *Beel* system, which perceives kinship, and the related clan system, as the base of the society. The embodiment of this mixed system of government is the parliament, which is composed by two chambers, the House of Representatives and the House of the Elders; the second chamber is not elected but is composed by all the elders of the Somaliland clans which, as it has been said previously, are in charge of the maintaining of peace and stability.<sup>115</sup>

The Somaliland institutions proved their strength in one particular episode: in 2002, after the death of the first president of Somaliland, Mohamed Egal, presidential elections were held and the opposition lost by only 80 votes; this outcome was perceived by the international community and external observers dangerous enough to bring Somaliland to the brink of a civil war. Instead the matter was resolved peacefully by the elders and since then, despite existing problems, local governments have been reestablished, local taxes have started to be collected and some services have been provided to the citizens<sup>116</sup>.

In brief, using as a starting point the common law system, of which Somaliland was part

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<sup>114</sup> Walls et al. (2008)

<sup>115</sup> Malito (2013)

<sup>116</sup> McAuslan (2011)

during the colonial era, Somaliland institutions developed a new legal system built around Somaliland traditions and customs, modeled in a way that could be efficient for that particular type of society. More specifically it has developed a set of institutional bodies that have the common characteristic of functioning through a system based on consultation and widespread consent. The ability of the Somaliland state to integrate traditional modalities of governance with a modern state system has had the result to enhance the cohesiveness of the population around these bodies and its sense of belonging to this country, fact that in turn has increased the legitimacy of Somaliland institutions. Furthermore, the increased sense of belonging of the people has allowed both open and competitive elections and a higher degree of freedom for those who want to criticize the state publicly<sup>117</sup>.

The development of such an ad hoc legal system has been made possible also by the absence of international legal assistance; the presence of international legal experts would have probably pressured the Somaliland institutions to adopt legal systems, especially in regard of specific sectors, more akin to those in place in most western countries but less appropriate for this context; the case of dispute settlement is probably the most explanatory. However, the reliance on local authorities and customary rules does not restrain the Somaliland economy, which in particular can boast a high level of trade, both at a national and international level. Indeed these customary systems are paired with an efficient and modern banking and money transfer system which can handle millions of dollars of transactions, thanks also to the large degree of trust these financial institutions enjoy among the population<sup>118</sup>.

From all the features presented it appears quite clearly that the state system, and the legal system in particular, built in Somaliland without much external pressures and assistance, seems to be working better than those systems imported and implemented by the international community (or international institutions) through expensive, ambitious and overstretched state

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<sup>117</sup> Boege et al. (2008)

<sup>118</sup> McAuslan (2011)

building programs, such as those presented in the previous chapter. In a broader perspective, the missing international recognition of Somaliland as an independent country is an example of how the international community often prefers to block the development of political systems that are different from those in place in the western and developed countries, even if their implementation would mean a higher degree of stability for the whole area. This is indeed what has happened and is still happening in the Horn of Africa: as a matter of fact the recognition of Somaliland would not only bring advantages to this country, but it would also open the doors to a different approach in the rest of Somalia, characterized by a more decentralized system of administration<sup>119</sup>.

This approach, based on customary rules and a higher degree of decentralization, would have a positive impact on the development of institutions such as, for instance, the local government of Mogadishu. Instead of an institution characterized by a top-down approach and that is in charge of a large amount of services and activities, this approach would allow the birth of a body that has the capacity to be in touch and, when opportune, delegate part of its functions to the local community and to the different organizations that are its expression. The absence of a central government for such a long time has pushed many Somalis to cooperate and provide, through several organizations, some of the most important services to the whole population. Because of the existence of these groups, the developments of institutions that from scratch have to provide the same kind of services that these local organizations are already providing would be just a waste of money and, above all, a way to make the state appear as an opponent of these civic organizations, which enjoy a widespread support among the Somali population. In this kind of scenario, the Mogadishu local government should not do much more than discuss and be in touch with this vast array of non state actors, promote the development of this network of associations and local groups and then delegate the implementation of public services to the most apt of them. In particular, indigenous

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<sup>119</sup> Kenning (2011)

authorities should be more involved in all the choices that concern the enhancement or the conservation of the peace in the region, as it has happened in Somaliland<sup>120</sup>.

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<sup>120</sup> McAuslan (2011)



## **Conclusion**

The main aim of the thesis has been to analyze from a critical perspective the modalities of intervention adopted by the international community and western institutions towards the so-called “failed states”.

State building projects often appear to be the best way to resolve the problems that afflict failed states and most of the policymakers involved seem to believe in the application of the principles that characterize the liberal peace theory. It has indeed been showed how liberal internationalism, democratic institutions and free markets are the main ingredients of every state building project sponsored by the international community; the belief behind this approach has appeared to be that liberal democratic and market reforms would bring stability to the area, which in turn would cause state stability and prosperity to the singular individuals. Unfortunately, it has been demonstrated that the international actors, in their attempt to improve the situation as fast as possible, during their interventions have often focused too much on the economic structural reforms, ignoring the real factors that could bring some benefit to the population and preferring instead to strengthen the local political elites, which in themselves appear to be one of the problems that afflict failed states. As a result these projects have been characterized by delays, setbacks, inefficiencies and a marginal impact on the areas where they have been applied. Local actors have manifested in more or less open ways their opposition to the approach adopted, modifying on the ground these liberal peace projects, giving birth to hybrid forms of peace. Only seldom international actors, after an initial refusal of these actors, have acknowledged them and developed relationships with those local actors that represent customary and traditional forms of governance and at the same time support political, social and economic arrangements that clash with the principles of the liberal peace building projects. The idea offered in this thesis has been that these relationships have the potential to develop new forms of peace, less influenced by a specific ideological approach,

and more centered on the factors that shape the specific environment in which the international actors are intervening. Even though this new forms of hybrid peace may require difficult choices and compromises that may sound unacceptable according to the theory of liberal peace, such forms of peace can remove the actual “one-size-fits-all” approach, which up to now has not been much successful.

From an organizational point of view the thesis has been divided into four chapters.

The first chapter, in order to provide the context in which state building projects happen, has focused on the actors, both local and external, that usually operate in the domain of a failed state. As previously stated, the international community in its peace building projects rarely takes into account local or secondary actors, without realizing the significance that these can have in that particular environment. Because of this reason, in the first chapter have been presented and analyzed not only those actors that are typically associated by the international community with peace building operations, such as western states, NGOs and representatives of the failed states, but also those usually not taken into full account, such as economic groups, diasporas, foreign intelligence and diverse typologies of armed non-state actors, ranging from militias to criminal organizations. The roles this range of actors play in stateless areas have been presented not only theoretically but also practically, through the use of a set of examples, taken from different scenarios, helpful to better understand the relevance of those actors (usually perceived as secondary) in these contexts.

The second section of the thesis has provided a theoretical framework to the entire work, thanks to the presentation and analysis of the theory of liberal peace. It is widely accepted that, as previously stated, most of the interventions sponsored by international actors and western states towards stateless areas are driven by the same liberal principles that represent the funding pillars of the liberal peace theory, namely democratization, the rule of law, human rights and free markets; therefore to understand the modalities of intervention towards failed

states a presentation of this theory has been necessary. Furthermore, without an adequate knowledge of its funding principles it would have not been possible to recognize and understand the main flaws that afflict state building projects and why the international organizations and the western states seem so unwilling to rethink their approach towards these regions. Given the overall critical approach of the thesis, a section of this chapter has been reserved to present the elements of the liberal peace theory from a critical perspective, relying on Richmond's works.

Following the presentation of the liberal peace theory, the third chapter has provided a critique to the application of the principles that embody this theory in the context of failed states. In order to show which are the main drawbacks of an ideology-driven approach towards stateless areas, three case studies have been presented, cases that represent three episodes in which the international institutions or main western states have decided to intervene, following liberal principles, in order to deal with problems caused by the lack of a functioning state. The three cases considered have been the interventions in Somalia (1993), Bosnia (1995) and Afghanistan (2001). These three cases, as said earlier, have been chosen among many others because, besides the fact they are representative of three different geographic areas, they all represent, according to Richmond, the application of the so-called "Conservative model of the liberal peace", usually associated with top-down approaches to peace building and development, which tend to the use of force and conditionalities. More specifically the case study of Somalia has focused on the following issues: the lack of serious planning and knowledge of the Somali cultural and political environment by the international community, the confusion arisen as a result of both the different chains of command in place simultaneously and the broad and disparate goals of the missions, the choice to consider as interlocutors only the Somali warlords and not other local actors that could represent the Somali population, the overreaching of the UNOSOM II operation and the small influence

these interventions had in the more marginal areas of Somalia. Differently, the case study of Bosnia has been more focused on the problems and limitations caused by the *General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, the insufficient attention paid to the understanding and rebuilding of the Bosnian society, the over reliance on the international NGOs in the attempt to push the Bosnian citizens to be more active in the public life, the development of the conflict between local elites and the international institutions, and both the problems and consequences related to an opaque allocation of international aid. The third and last case study, which concerned the intervention in Afghanistan, analyzed instead the problems linked to the Bonn Agreement, the prioritization, by the western countries involved, of their own home security over the development of a durable peace in Afghanistan, the use (and the non-use) of war and peace conditionalities with their consequent effects, the marginalization by the international community of specific Afghan institutions, the reduction of competences of the Afghan government in favor of NGOs and economic groups and the relative little financial support given to the reconstruction process.

After the three case studies the conclusive chapter has presented a possible alternative to the current modalities of intervention towards failed states, usually driven by a liberal or neo-liberal ideology. The alternative approach exposed has stressed the necessity to develop projects that are not driven by a specific ideology (the liberal one in particular) and which take into consideration both the importance of the local factors and all the actors that interact within these areas. After a first brief theoretical part that have underlined the main features of this approach, the example of the Somaliland peace building process has shown that this alternative approach is not unattainable but, on the contrary, in some case is already an established reality that, if acknowledged and valued, could extend its reach and its positive effects well beyond the borders of the Somaliland region.

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