

Building Peace in the Absence of States: Challenging the Discourse on State Failure

Edited by Martina Fischer and Beatrix Schmelzle

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Berghof
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Dialogue Series**

Edited by Martina Fischer and
Beatrix Schmelzle

Building Peace in the Absence of States: Challenging the Discourse on State Failure

No. 8

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Introduction

Martina Fischer and Beatrix Schmelzle

Over the past two decades a great deal has been written and argued about state failure, fragile or weak states. International organisations such as the World Bank and several UN departments have commissioned research and published policy recommendations on the issue.¹ Governments in some countries of the North have also been very busy providing analysis, with the focus mostly on increasing their own citizens' safety. This includes secret service agencies: since the 1990s, for example, the United States' Central Intelligence Agency has funded a Political Instability Task Force, which is composed of researchers from various universities. This group has published reports on state failure² and presented a global forecasting model of instability.³ In addition, several US-based think tanks have published extensively on the subject.⁴ European academia has also given considerable attention to the issue, and several

¹ See World Bank (ed.), *Fragile States – Good Practice in Country Assistance Strategies*, Operations Policy and Country Services, Washington DC, 19 December 2005; United Nations Development Group/World Bank (eds.), *An Operational Note on Transitional Results Matrices. Using Results-Based Frameworks in Fragile States*, Washington DC, January 2005; World Bank (ed.), *Strengthening the World Bank's Rapid Response and Long-Term Engagement in Fragile States*, Operations Policy and Country Services/Fragile States Group, Washington DC, 30 March 2007.

² See Jack Goldstone et al., *State Failure Task Force Report: Phase III Findings*, McLean, VA: Science Applications International Corporation, 30 September 2000; Robert Bates et al., *Political Instability Task Force Report: Phase IV Findings*, McLean, VA: Science Applications International Corporation, 2003 (online at <http://globalpolicy.gmu.edu/pitf/>).

³ See Jack Goldstone et al., "A Global Forecasting Model of Political Instability", paper prepared for the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington DC, 1-4 September 2005 (online at <http://globalpolicy.gmu.edu/pitf/>).

⁴ Within its project on leadership and building state capacity, for instance, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars has established a publication series entitled: "What Really Works in Preventing and Rebuilding Failed States" (see www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1411&fuseaction=topics.publications&group_id=215038). The Brookings Institution has published an Index of State Weakness, see Susan E. Rice and Stewart Patrick, *Index of State Weakness in the Developing World*, The Brookings Institution, Washington DC, 2008; see also The Brookings Institution (ed.), *Weak and Failed States: What they are, why they matter and what to do about them*, Washington DC, 2008.

universities are conducting research on fragile states in order to elaborate policy recommendations for improving governance mechanisms and increasing the effectiveness of peacebuilding missions. In Germany, the Institute for Development and Peace (INEF, Duisburg-Essen), the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA, Hamburg), the Center for Development Research (ZEF, Bonn) and the Centre for International Peace Operations (ZIF, Berlin) have devoted special attention to case studies and context analysis. In addition, a number of independent university departments and state-related research institutions have established the joint Research Center (SFB) 700 on Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood, which is hosted by the Freie Universität (FU) Berlin. Its mission is to analyse how effective and legitimate governance can be sustained in areas of limited statehood and to identify the problems that emerge under such conditions.⁵ Further public and private donor organisations and foundations have also commissioned studies to increase and disseminate knowledge on these issues.⁶

Most governments and donor organisations tend to focus on a functional analysis of failed states, as illustrated by the UK's development agency DFID, which defines a fragile state as one where the government is not able or willing to deliver core functions to the majority of its population, i.e. controlling the territory and providing security.⁷ While some European governments seem to place strong emphasis on development and poverty reduction programmes in order to counteract crises, the US Government and its support agency USAID have mainly acted on the need to contain potential spill-over of insecurity and unstable structures, by means of forceful intervention.

But civil society organisations engaged in peacebuilding, development and human rights, too, have been discussing the problems related to state failure, often with the purpose of improving governance structures, aid or poverty reduction programmes, development, democratisation and peacebuilding strategies. Some of them have taken a distanced or critical view on the discourse launched by those engaging in large scale international state-building and intervention projects.⁸

Amidst all these contributions, it seems that the debate on failed states finds itself at cross-purposes: some point to the threat of state failure in order to foster security mechanisms, military structures and intervention capacities as the defining features of international relations and also to promote the paradigm of liberal peace, including economic liberalisation; others point to the responsibility of the North for state failure and blame the selfsame neoliberal approach for being one particular source of state implosion, conflict and violence. Many therefore advocate a more coherent policy approach – based on development and poverty reduction and on the principle of Human Security (which means security and improvement of living conditions in the South). As Kasturi Sen, research director at the International NGO Research and Training Centre has pointed out, there is much evidence to support the view that the recent “period of global policymaking [has] led to the growing impoverishment of populations and contributed to social collapse through universal policies of privatisation”. She also states that such critique was not only raised by policymakers, researchers and practitioners, “but more recently [has come] from the World Bank itself which, for example, admitted that user charges, a main plank of neo-liberalism, had failed to reduce overall demand and improve equity in access to services such as health care”.⁹

5 The Research Center (SFB) 700 is funded by the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft - DFG). It involves scholars from the FU Berlin, University of Potsdam, the Hertie School of Governance, the Social Science Research Center Berlin (Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin - WZB), the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik - SWP), and the European University Institute, Florence (see www.sfb-governance.de/en/index.html).

6 See Heinrich Böll Foundation, *Publication Series on Promoting Democracy under Conditions of State Fragility Issue 1: Afghanistan*, Berlin, 2006.

7 See DFID, *Why we need to work more effectively in fragile states*, London, January 2005.

8 See Kasturi Sen, *Fragile States or Failed Policies: Some Donor-Induced Dilemmas*, Policy Briefing Paper 19, International NGO Training and Research Centre, Oxford (UK), 2008.

9 *Ibid.*, 3.

This *Berghof Handbook Dialogue* will not present an additional compilation of definitions and/or theoretical approaches concerning failed, fragile or weak states, nor will it offer recipes or policy recommendations in a technical sense. Our intention is instead to present some food for thought on the general premises of these concepts and to point out dilemmas which mark the current discourse (and practice). The lead article asks poignantly whether it is the states (in the South) that are failing, or the analysis of research (undertaken mostly in the North) that is inadequate or incomplete. Given a situation where state-building efforts are more often than not designed by the North and introduced to the South, this question needs to be investigated. This implies critically and honestly identifying the potential, and limits, of external intervention.

Volker Boege, currently research fellow at the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (ACPACS) at the University of Queensland, Brisbane, and his colleagues Anne Brown, Kevin Clements and Anna Nolan present a critical view on the failed states debate and the political practice that is derived from it. The authors examine the rationale and underlying assumptions of the mainstream discourse. They argue that the perception of so-called fragile states as being an obstacle to peace and development can be far too short-sighted. The same applies for its corollary, the promotion of conventional state-building along the lines of the western OECD state model as the best means for sustainable development and peace within all societies. The authors criticise that both the discourse and the policies are orientated towards the western-style Weberian/Westphalian state. Yet this form of statehood hardly exists in reality beyond the OECD world, and many countries do not resemble the model western state. Boege et al. propose that such states should not be considered as being not yet properly built or having already failed again. They argue that rather than thinking in terms of fragile or failed states, it might be theoretically and practically more useful to think in terms of *hybrid political orders*. This re-conceptualisation in their view opens up new options for conflict prevention and development, as well as for a new type of state-building. The case of East Timor is presented as an example for misguided state-building from scratch, whereas Somaliland and Bougainville offer examples of successful hybrid state-building. The article concludes by outlining that researchers as well as practitioners have to face a huge dilemma: state-building as a project of ‘social engineering’ has proved to be impossible, but it would be fatalistic and irresponsible to leave the further development of instable polities to an ‘organic’ historical process, likely to provoke or multiply bloodshed, misery and injustice. There is no other solution than staying involved, but external assistance is in need of reorientation – towards an understanding of hybrid institutions and sensitive engagement with them, instead of imposing external actors’ own ideas of what a good state should look like.

Our purpose in this Dialogue is to engage both practitioners and researchers in the debate. Therefore we have asked colleagues from academic institutions and experts with field experience to comment on these findings and propositions. We were fortunate to receive contributions from several scholars and scholar-practitioners, some of whom have gained extensive experience in different regions of the world that are affected by crisis and war (such as sub-Saharan Africa, the Balkans or Afghanistan), where state structures are either not present or have been introduced by external state-building initiatives and intervention. All contributors would agree that something has to be done about countries and regions affected by state collapse (or absence), poverty and insecurity – in order to reduce violence, suffering and humanitarian disasters. But based on their differing regional experiences they come to different conclusions regarding the impact and outreach of external intervention, the question of how external initiatives can enhance social change and transform political structures, and with regard to what works successfully and what does not.

Trutz von Trotha, professor of sociology at the University of Siegen (Germany), states that to date the discourse of political science and peace studies concerning international security, development cooperation and globalisation has resolutely relied on the normative claims and jargon of high politics (unlike empirical political sociology and ethnography). This is why, in his opinion, peace research and political science have been unable to admit the obvious: that the failing state does not function like a state, that the failed state does not have state institutions, and that we have to come to terms with the realities of political orders which are not states. Von Trotha agrees with the main thesis presented in the lead article which, in his understanding, contributes to exposing a short-sighted paradigm, just like the child exposing the lie in Andersen's fairy tale of *The Emperor's New Clothes*. But he also believes that Boege et al. do not pursue this principle to its logical conclusion, and that their ambition of changing the discourse on social-engineering blueprints for state formation into a practice of peacebuilding remains half-accomplished. He suggests that a debate is needed on the peace potential of social and cultural institutions and actors of non-state orders.

According to von Trotha, the concept of hybrid political orders responds to the circumstance that fragile, failing and failed states “accommodate political orders of great heterogeneity and non-synchronicity; that they lack a state monopoly on violence and, equally, encounter divergent claims to authority and legitimacy; that ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ institutions co-exist, ensure order and compete for ordering functions” (in this volume, 42). He concedes that the concept serves to highlight the diversity of non-state orders and to point out connections between elements of very different origins and dynamics. Moreover it emphasizes that the various components of a political order do not exist in isolation but have a profound mutual influence on each other. Nevertheless, von Trotha writes, the concept of hybrid political order “is conceived of in too static a way” (ibid.) as it fails to sufficiently highlight the dynamism of hybridity, just as it downplays the dynamics, interests, conflicts and power struggles of those customary non-state institutions and actors which the failed state model regards as being the obstacles to modern statehood and the enemies of successful state-building. While admitting that there have been successful developments in Somaliland, he doubts that these can document an example of successful state-building according to the authors' ideas, as Somaliland represents a segmentary order and etatist facade, “namely to satisfy the strict rulebook of international law and international relations, in which states are the dominant actors” (ibid., 43). He concludes that applying the Andersen Principle will consistently demand “replacing the principle of state-building with the principle of peacebuilding” (ibid., 44).

Susan L. Woodward, professor of political science in the PhD programme of the Graduate Center, City University of New York, reminds us that Boege et al. are by no means the first to have argued that in many places of the world reality differs from the standard by which state fragility and failure are being judged. However, because the authors also propose a substantial and realistic measure for assessing state performance and for better assistance policies, she expresses concern that their contribution, too, “will fall on deaf ears” (in this volume, 47). Woodward shares their critical view and strongly questions the state-builders' argument that the problem of state failure and its global threats are real. She proposes to shift the focus of the debate onto those who are promoting the concept and its application. She argues that we should turn to those actors who are making the judgements and designing state-building models and assistance, in order to realize that there is great variety in the number and type of actors involved, in their goals and in their respective models of good governance and stable statehood. Similarly, she argues, the label of state failure or fragility is applied to a vastly varied number of countries, types of conditions and outcomes of concern. This variety makes it extremely difficult to do the research necessary to accept all-encompassing policy

recommendations. Woodward asks: “is the problem the model? Is hybridity more legitimate and effective in other cases, too? What kind of hybridity are we talking about and what are its causes?” (ibid., 48), using various cases from the Yugoslav region to illustrate the problem.

The difference in foreign approaches to Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Macedonia in Woodward’s opinion strongly supports the hybridity argument made by the lead authors. She outlines that the wealthiest and most stable of all the new EU member states, Slovenia, never conceded to a complete neoliberal model, quietly retaining significant characteristics and capacities from the socialist period. Among them were aspects of its industrial policy and the financial accounting system that outsiders sought to destroy in Bosnia, where the internationally required privatization and break-up of enterprises has created an economic disaster, accompanied by widespread corruption in the foreign-managed privatization process. Using the Bosnian example, she illustrates that international intervention did not ‘ignore’ existing local structures but was aware of these and actively aimed at fundamentally transforming them. Local populations were “viewed as being burdened by the legacy of communist policies and centrally planned economies and, thus, had to be forced to become democrats and create market economies. With regard to pre-war institutions and customs, the attitude was one of slash and burn” (ibid., 52). While Yugoslavia’s economy was never centrally planned and was fully open to the world economy, and although its property structure was not state-owned but socially owned and worker managed, “the international state-builders treated them as if they had been the Soviet Union and needed fundamental change” (ibid.). With respect to the former Yugoslavia, Woodward therefore concludes that the state-building agenda is more explicitly ideological than in the cases discussed by Boege et al., but the problem is the same: “ignorance of the actual local situation, including its very successful, pre-war governance capability” (ibid.). Woodward further argues that in some countries of former Yugoslavia, internationally supported power-sharing principles have enabled the leaders of the dominant (ethnically defined) political parties to hide and protect their illegal economic activities. The internationally imposed political orders have failed to gain any domestic legitimacy in Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia, and social and economic outcomes attest to their ineffectiveness as well.

Andreas Mehler, director of the German Institute of Global and Area Studies’ Institute of African Affairs, also agrees with the lead article’s critical approach towards the mainstream discourse on fragile states. He adds more details on the situation in sub-Saharan Africa, specifically in the security sector, which is often used to assess, and re-build, state performance (after all, security provision is regarded as one core function of any state). Mehler investigates what such security sectors actually look like, and in doing so he emphasizes several problems in the current practice of outside assistance, explaining that whenever states abandon social space, it becomes possible for alternative actors to claim authority by occupying it and performing the core functions that the state is no longer able or willing to perform. As a consequence, oligopolies of violence emerge, as Mehler shows for the case of Liberia. But these processes are usually not taken into account by external policies; instead, “the uniform answer” of international actors “to a detected deficit in core functions of the state is ‘state reconstruction’”, and in their view, “‘deep’ intervention seems to be allowed in post-conflict countries [...] as they have displayed their ‘failure’ by falling prey to widespread conflict” (in this volume, 59). External agencies engage in security sector reform “which more often than not follows technocratic blueprints informed by normative assumptions about what the state should be” (ibid.). Based on his observations in Africa, Mehler finds that support for promoting change in the security sector is delivered primarily by officers of the armed forces and police of western countries, who have little knowledge about the dynamics at play in the host country. Related

development-type activities are increasingly left either to NGOs or to donor agencies who may have some capacities for monitoring security policies, “but at the same time have other normative and professional ‘distortions’, which often get in the way of applying lessons and conclusions from sober analysis” (ibid.). Another problem is that outside experts, in order to come to quick results, often fail to critically assess who their partners are: who they represent, what their interests are, what their record in security provision is and what legitimacy they can claim. External interventions are confronted with the dilemma that only in rare cases is a fresh start with new and fairly elected elites actually possible. Mehler concludes that any outside assistance aimed at increasing security needs to be based on a much better, locally-grounded analysis.

However, despite his shared criticism of mainstream analysis and state-building practice Mehler ‘waters down’ the wine offered by the lead article in terms of alternative approaches. In his view, the realities of sub-Saharan Africa show that solutions in the form of hybrid orders are in danger of bringing on more of the same – neopatrimonial instability and inefficiency – unless they are carefully monitored. He is concerned that the hybrid regime which Boege et al. advocate “will not be the kind of functional mix of ‘modern’ and ‘customary’ institutions of the Somaliland type, but rather [...] a neopatrimonial regime” (ibid., 63), where there is no division between the private and the public sphere and where clientelism dominates vis-à-vis formal procedures, but where there also exist rational-legal facades which function well in selective areas, not least in the repression apparatus. Mehler stresses that in most of Africa the inefficient state cannot justly be described as a provider of security and is instead regularly circumvented and replaced with more viable alternatives by its citizens. But it has nonetheless preserved its appeal and some of its power. According to Mehler, what Boege et al. propose may therefore not exactly (or just partly) be the answer to the problem, and he doubts that ordinary people on the ground would advocate such an approach. If a hybrid solution turns out to be identical with the neopatrimonial system – which historically has been part of the problem rather than part of the solution when it comes to security provision – little will have been won. In his conclusion Mehler urges to constantly analyse the efficiency of individual local security actors (state *and* non-state), and to care more about local perceptions, accessed for example through opinion polls, as their results can suggest the acceptance of a given hybrid order, but also produce additional reasons to alter it.

The comment by **Susanne Schmeidl** (visiting fellow at the Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy at the Australian National University and advisor to The Liaison Office in Afghanistan), which includes input from Masood Karokhail (deputy director and one of the founding members of The Liaison Office in Kabul), starts from a different angle, based on experiences in Afghanistan. Both contributors were involved in setting up the Afghan Civil Society Forum, which has been established with support of swisspeace (based in Bern, Switzerland). Schmeidl agrees that shortcomings in the currently practised analysis of failed states have led to very questionable intervention strategies. She claims that a state that provides services to its citizens or controls the means of violence and territorial integrity does not exist in Afghanistan. The average Afghan citizen shows a lack of trust in the current state, and reluctance, or even resentment, to pay taxes to an entity not considered legitimate or able to provide security or other basic needs. However, it has taken international actors several years to realize “that the Afghan state, which is mostly limited to Kabul and a few other major cities anyway, was not doing so well” (in this volume, 68). Today, seven years into the Afghan state-building project, many seem to share the opinion that the project has failed. Yet, “instead of trying to objectively diagnose the causes of the illness and search for a possible cure, the blaming game has started” (ibid.), and there seems to be a trend of blaming the “backwardness of rural

Afghanistan, which is presumably simply too pre-modern, wild and unruly to come together into an orderly state project” (ibid.). But there is evidence that external approaches have been designed top-down, implemented at high speed and have provided technocratic solutions instead of coherent strategies. Schmeidl criticises that while western states were formed over decades, if not centuries, new states like Afghanistan are expected to shape up overnight. The outcome is a “McDonaldization” of state-building, which does not take into account that building states and security takes *time* and long-term commitment.

As a case in point, Schmeidl sees the constitution-making process in Afghanistan in a very critical light. She deplores that early criticism and recommendations not to excessively speed up the process, expressed for example in a Crisis Group report, were strongly rejected. Later on, some drivers of the process (like UN Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi) conceded, that “it would have been much better to keep that [i.e. the 1964] constitution for a few more years rather than artificially decide [...] that a brand new constitution had to be produced barely two years after the adoption of the Bonn Agreement” (quoted in this volume, 69). Moreover the author deplores that external approaches have focused heavily on urban centres, arguably creating one of the most centralized states in the world. Here she sees a parallel to East Timor, the case that is presented by Boege et al. as misguided state-building from scratch, and confesses to a *déjà vu* experience, in which state-building appears as “an exercise where lessons seem to be neither observed, learned nor transferred” (ibid., 70).

Finally, Schmeidl discusses what contributes to creating successful hybrid regimes. She stresses that in Afghanistan, tribal structures have been damaged through the years of wars. As a consequence, leaders that gained legitimacy based on acceptance by their communities, and were linked to customary institutions, have been replaced by warlords that gained their power from military strength. The current situation is characterized as a combination of strong hybrid political orders and a weak central state that appears to be failing. In her view, the Afghan case illustrates the irony (or tragedy) that even though hybrid state-building was never promoted, *malevolent* hybrid orders have emerged, due to the weakness of the new administration that did not confront the warlords as *de facto* power holders, hence adopting a strategy of accommodation. The latter have managed to capture the Afghan government, creating a situation where those interested in keeping central government institutions weak and ineffective have been placed in positions of authority over the state institutions that needed to be strengthened. At the same time, others (customary institutions) that in the past had worked alongside the state have now been sidelined.

Working out organic and appropriate approaches to hybrid state-building, according to Schmeidl and Karokhail, needs the involvement of civil society, both modern and traditional. Civil society has developed some potential throughout the past years in Afghanistan, but has never been engaged meaningfully in the state-building exercise as both the government and the international representatives consider it a threat to (building) a strong state. This is the experience of The Liaison Office. Schmeidl concludes that a twofold challenge remains: firstly, to sort out how to support hybrid political orders without strengthening the wrong actors and bringing warlords into the driver’s seat, and, secondly, to listen more carefully to the citizens’ voice.

Bjoern Hofmann, graduate of the University of St. Andrews (UK) and the University of Dresden (Germany) has conducted research on Afghanistan and East Timor. In his opinion, the lead article makes a valuable contribution to the state-building discourse. Some aspects, however, should be elaborated in more detail: in particular, the underlying understanding of ‘order’, the implications of the argument for peacebuilding and the presentation of East Timor as an example for a misguided

state formation approach. First of all he sees a need for definitions and a clarification of terminology. In his view, the term “hybrid political order” carries the connotation that some kind of order does indeed exist. Hofmann admits that in Afghanistan and East Timor traditional or cultural practices of conflict management, security provision and social cohesion continued to exist during and after war, but he nevertheless suggests that the term “order” should not be applied indiscriminately. In his view, a situation that is marked by violence, suffering and lawlessness needs to be labelled as disorder; calling these situations hybrid political orders would thus be misleading. Furthermore, Hofmann criticises that Boege et al. do not specify whether their concept allows for a categorisation of order, defining whether it refers to a weak or some form of stable order, or whether it refers equally to all fragile, failing or failed states as hybrid orders without any further indication whether they have already collapsed, are weak or comparatively strong.

Hofmann does not see an added value in adopting the terminology of “hybrid political orders” and he doubts that the proposed change in terminology will contribute to more effective peacebuilding. The concept appears to him as merely “reframing the top-down versus bottom-up debate among academics and peacebuilders” (in this volume, 81), and such reframing seems to be outdated as “most scholars, and notably practitioners, agree that one approach cannot do without the other and that any peacebuilding process requires a [...] framework [...] in which bottom-up initiatives can be supported, flourish and result in a more genuine form of governance” (ibid.). Circumstances on the ground or preferences of donors and peacebuilders might lead to the adoption of policies which lean more towards one side or the other, but most peacebuilders suggest that top-down and bottom-up initiatives have to be balanced. Hofmann makes reference to recent analysis of peace operations to illustrate that in those missions where state-centred approaches have been implemented, they have “shift[ed] towards more bottom-up, emancipatory approaches over the course of time, since a successful implementation of the latter facilitates the gradual disengagement of external actors” (ibid.).

Hofmann’s assessment of the developments in East Timor differs substantially from the findings put forth by the lead article. Accordingly, he presents a more optimistic outlook on the future and the country’s peacebuilding potential. He concludes that rather than simply replacing the notion of state with the “misleading notion of a hybrid political order”, we should refine our own understanding of what constitutes a state and how state formation can be effectively supported. Instead of thinking of a state predominantly in terms of its administrative institutions and its powers, we should adopt a concept that puts the citizens at the centre. Hofmann notes that the state manifests itself in the sum of the people on a given territory, who form this state and delegate responsibilities and powers. Such state formation is based on trust and identity. State-building assistance would then ideally “find the balance between a top-down and bottom-up approach by responding to the demands of the people” (ibid., 84), and it would guarantee an inclusive process, respect cultural traditions and at the same time support political state formation.

In their final reflection, Boege et al. emphasize that they do not neglect the negative dimensions of hybrid political orders but “want to raise awareness of their positive dimensions and potentialities, identify their workable elements” (in this volume, 88). They highlight their understanding of hybrid political orders as an analytical, and not so much as a normative concept (as assumed by Mehler and Hofmann). Their intention is not to present states as ‘bad’ and hybrid political orders as ‘good’ (or as an alternative to states), but to draw attention to the institutions and processes of governance on the ground that actually determine the political order. With respect to Susan Woodward’s proposal to focus on those doing the judging, labelling and intervening and

to identify their goals and policies, the authors suggest doing both: to provide a more thorough analysis of the political interests behind the fragile states discourse *and* to deliver a detailed and comprehensive analysis of how “the real world operates” in the regions labelled as fragile, in order to demonstrate that alternatives do exist. The authors agree with Trutz von Trotha’s proposal to overcome the state-centric view and to shift the focus from state-building to peacebuilding. At the same time they clarify that they do not intend an all-out rejection of the notion of the state. They believe that states will continue to be the foundation of the international system and that in reality there will be cases of “positive mutual accommodation of introduced state and indigenous non-state institutions” (in this volume, 92). But they express their concern that “in this context, areas of non-statehood will be perceived as voids, and these voids will be in danger of being filled by other states – most probably by means of force, intervention and occupation” (ibid.). Thus they see a need to confront the western concept of the state and to create “some deeper awareness of what processes actually deliver peace, order and stability in many regions of the Global South” (ibid.).

In sum, the lead article and the comments presented in this Dialogue demonstrate that there are no simple solutions for the dilemmas, problems and questions raised. Rather than answers, more dilemmas have been outlined and more questions have been added, which was exactly the editors’ intention. This Dialogue presents one piece in the puzzle of an ongoing debate relating to the present laboratory of international state-building endeavours. This laboratory covers most distinct parts of the world, including very diverse places such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, East Timor, Somaliland, Liberia, and many regions beyond, and involves a variety of actors, such as international organisations, governments, state institutions and non-state actors. The fundamental question is which lessons can be learned from these cases: which implications do they have for our *theoretical understanding*, and is there *any political will* among those involved to question current approaches and adapt international policy accordingly? With the exception of the contribution by Hofmann, which presents a comparatively positive assessment of international state-building concepts and intervention practice, all contributions underline that to date very little institutional learning has taken place. So the most important challenge remains: how to sensitise representatives of international organisations and governments, decision-makers in parliaments, administrations and also NGOs to the *need to learn from failed state-building projects*, to ensure that more *déjà-vu* experiences can be avoided and failed concepts will be replaced by more modest and incremental approaches.

The contributions to this Dialogue also reveal that there is urgent demand for further in-depth research into peace missions. Yet this must not be the kind of research that just focuses on improving mission effectiveness, but one that puts the issue of effectiveness into a wider context and questions the underlying ideological premises, interests and purposes of those who conduct the interventions. As Roland Paris has repeatedly pointed out, a lot of literature overemphasizes policy and even subscribes to a “cult of policy relevance”.¹⁰ Normative and critical research on structures and processes and on the interaction of different actors and methods of conflict transformation needs to replace analysis that aims at making technical improvements and focuses exclusively on the measurable effectiveness of international intervention activities. Normative research in this case is more than simply practice-orientated; it means investigating which processes and institutions actually contribute to *peacebuilding*. Empirical peace research is necessary, and theory-guided studies are also urgently needed. Research on single cases should be accompanied by context studies and comparative research. It is time to critically reflect upon policies that are conducted

¹⁰ See Roland Paris, Broadening the Study of Peace Operations, in: *International Studies Review*, 2 (3), 2001, 27-44.

under labels such as “security sector reform”, “rule of law”, “transitional justice”, “democratisation & liberalisation”, “institution building” and “civil society building”. There is a need to question these core elements of the repertoire of international state-building and to modify them, grounded in a solid analysis of given realities in war-torn societies and guided by a search for processes and institutions that actually deliver peaceful co-existence and conflict transformation. It seems to the editors that, although some debate on these issue areas has started, we are still at the beginning and both, practitioners as well as scholars, need to make joint progress.

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Martina Fischer & Beatrix Schmelzle

On Hybrid Political Orders and Emerging States: What is Failing – States in the Global South or Research and Politics in the West?*

Volker Boege, Anne Brown, Kevin Clements and Anna Nolan

1. Introduction

Over the past few years an important focus of peace and conflict research, and also of security studies, has been on the relationships between large-scale violent conflict, the performance of states and global security. State fragility is seen to engender violent conflict which leads to state failure or even collapse. As states have a dual role, namely providing security and order for their citizens (internal role) and serving as the building blocks of the international system (external role), state fragility not only affects the citizens of the state and society in question, but also neighbouring states and the international community at large. Regions of state fragility are perceived as providing breeding grounds and safe havens for transnational terrorism, weapons proliferation and organised crime. The issue of fragile states is thus seen as being at the core of a variety of today's most pressing security problems. Fragile and failed states are ranked as "one of the most important foreign policy challenges of the contemporary era" (Krasner/Pascual 2005, 153). Accordingly, "learning to do state-building better is thus central to the future of world order" (Fukuyama 2004, 120).

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At the same time, the fragile states discourse also heavily frames the development policies and development assistance of major donor countries and multilateral donor organisations. State-building today is seen by major donors as a central dimension of development assistance, and functioning and effective state institutions are seen as a prerequisite for sustainable development. Fragile states are presented as a challenge to both development and security policies by policy makers and governments all over the developed world. The Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs, for example, posits: “[...] the problem of fragile states [...] now represents one of the most serious and fastest growing challenges in the areas of development, peace and security policy” (FDFA Working Group 2007, 45). Part of the particular appeal of the state-building discourse seems to lie in the possibility of integrating development, security and conflict prevention policies.

This article examines the rationale and underlying assumptions of this mainstream discourse on fragile states. We argue that the conventional perception of so-called fragile states as an obstacle to the maintenance of peace and development can be far too short-sighted, as is its corollary, the promotion of conventional state-building along the lines of the western OECD state model as the best means of sustainable development and peace within all societies.

State fragility discourse and state-building policies are orientated towards the western-style Weberian/Westphalian state. Yet this form of statehood hardly exists in reality beyond the OECD world. Many of the countries in the ‘rest’ of the world are political entities that do not resemble the model western state. In this article it is proposed that these states should not be considered from the perspective of being ‘not yet properly built’ or having ‘already failed again’. Rather than thinking in terms of fragile or failed states, it might be theoretically and practically more fruitful to think in terms of hybrid political orders. This re-conceptualisation opens new options for conflict prevention and development, as well as for a new type of state-building.

We will now first offer a brief overview of the propositions put forward by mainstream thinking on state fragility and state-building (*Sections 2 and 3*), and then introduce our alternative interpretation of governance in so-called fragile states (*Section 4*). We will go on to point out the shortcomings of what we see as a mainstream example of external state-building, and present some innovative approaches to state-building (*Section 5*). We conclude by focusing on challenges for external actors committed to assisting in state-building.

2. The State of the Art

There is considerable scholarly debate (and much confusion) regarding definitions, terminology and typical characteristics of “weak”, “fragile”, “failing”, “failed” and “collapsed” states.¹ Definitions are vague and distinctions blurred. The focus, however, is on state institutions’ lack of willingness or capacity to perform core state functions in the fields of security, representation and welfare. There is consensus that different degrees of state fragility or different stages of state failure can be identified. Fragile states can be conceptualised along a continuum of declining state performance, from weak states through failing states to failed and finally collapsed states. However, there can be, and in fact there are, various other ways of ordering the vast field of state fragility.

¹ For an overview of the debate see the edited volumes by Debiel and Klein 2002; Milliken 2003; Rotberg 2004a; Schlichte 2005a; Chesterman, Ignatieff and Thakur 2005; Debiel, Lambach and Reinhardt 2007. For definitions and typologies see Rotberg 2004b, 4-10; Schneckener 2004, 10-11; Milliken/Krause 2002, 754, 764; see also Milliken/Krause 2003; Crisis States Research Centre 2006, 4.

USAID, for example, “uses the term fragile states to refer generally to a broad range of failing, failed, and recovering states” and “distinguishes between fragile states that are vulnerable from those that are already in crisis”; “vulnerable” refers to “those states unable or unwilling to adequately assure the provision of security and basic services to a significant portion of their populations and where the legitimacy of the government is in question”, whereas states in “crisis” are the ones “where the central government does not exert effective control over its own territory or is unable or unwilling to assure the provision of vital services to significant parts of its territory, where legitimacy of the government is weak or nonexistent, and where violent conflict is a reality or a great risk” (USAID 2005, 1).

There is debate about the ubiquity of the phenomenon. The general view is that the number of fragile, failing and collapsed states is increasing. A look at the various rankings and indices shows that approximately 100 states are labelled “fragile”; approximately half of those figure prominently in several of the rankings (Schneckener 2007, 7).²

The solution recommended for these states is state-building, which is presented as sustainably strengthening state institutions in addition to enhancing the capacities of state actors for control, regulation and implementation, particularly in the core fields of statehood, namely internal security, basic social services, the rule of law and legitimacy of government (ibid., 9).

Ghani et al. (2005, 2006a, 2006b), for example, identify ten features of statehood that have to be accomplished in order to overcome fragility and guarantee state stability. These are (1) a legitimate monopoly on the means of violence, (2) administrative control, (3) sound management of public finances, (4) investment in human capital, (5) the creation of citizenship rights and duties, (6) provision of infrastructure, (7) market formation, (8) management of the assets of the state, (9) effective public borrowing, (10) maintenance of rule of law (Ghani et al. 2005, 2; with slight variations Ghani et al. 2006a and 2006b).

These or similar lists of state functions inform the strategies of various national and international donor agencies. The underlying credo is that states “have to become more effective in order to make aid more effective, and vice versa” (Fritz/Menocal 2006, 27).

Over the last few years, donors have focused on addressing this challenge. For instance, the World Bank’s so-called LICUS (Low Income Countries Under Stress) initiative aims at improving development aid effectiveness in fragile states, and the Fragile States Group (FSG) of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) also pursues the improvement of international engagement in fragile states.

Furthermore, the ministries responsible for development cooperation and the current development agencies of the major OECD donor countries all address the specific conditions of aid activities in fragile states. USAID, for instance, asserts that “there is perhaps no more urgent matter facing USAID than fragile states” (USAID 2005, 1).

The preoccupation of USAID and various other development agencies with the issue of “fragile states” clearly demonstrates that this is not a topic of merely academic interest, but has considerable impact on the practical development policies of major donor countries. The same holds true for their security policies. National security and military policies are increasingly occupied with the issue of fragile states. One can even argue that the topic of fragile states only gained major prominence when – and because – it was framed in the context of the security discourse of the major developed states. The preoccupation with transnational terrorism and the international ‘war

² The ‘top ten’ in the Foreign Policy/Fund for Peace 2007 *Failed States Index Rankings* were: Sudan, Iraq, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Chad, Cote d’Ivoire/Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Afghanistan, Guinea and Central African Republic (The Failed States Index 2007, 57). The most fragile states according to the *State Fragility Index and Matrix* are: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Chad, Myanmar/Burma, Sudan, Burundi, Cote d’Ivoire/Ivory Coast, Ethiopia, Liberia and Nigeria (Marshall/Goldstone 2007, 15-19). The CFP group’s (Country Indicators for Foreign Policy) index has Burundi at the top of its list, followed by DR Congo, Afghanistan, Somalia and Liberia (Carment, Prest and Samy 2007, 18).

on terror' provide the specific background for this approach. Fragile states are seen "through the dominant lens of Western security interests" (Boas/Jennings 2005, 388), and through this lens they appear as breeding grounds for terrorism and safe havens for terrorists, and hence as a matter of "international security" – which is, above all, the security of the developed states. The discourse of the national security community in the United States in particular is shaped very much along these lines. Fragile states are presented as a 'threat' to the national security of the USA and to 'international security', and it is for this reason that 'rebuilding states' is a challenge that US policy has to take on. The focus of state-building generally is very much on the security dimension, with building the capacities of security agencies (police, military, customs and border protection) as a priority field of external assistance. This becomes an avenue for security agencies to address development issues, to 'securitise' these issues and thus add to the legitimacy of the military and other security agencies which are expanding their areas of activity.

3. Putting State-Building into Historical Perspective

It is clear from this brief summary of the fragile states discourse that states are being measured against the OECD-type western state, which is regarded as the model stable state (i.e. a liberal constitutional democracy based on an industrialised market economy). Mainstream 'state talk' refers to various representations of the 'classical' model of the western Weberian sovereign state, and other states are presented as deviant cases, evaluated according to the degree to which they approximate the Weberian benchmarks (Hameiri 2007, 138). However, as Morten Boas and Kathleen Jennings (2005, 388) point out: "To say that something 'fails' or 'is failing' is a normative judgement that is only meaningful in comparison to something else; in this case, that something else is the existence of a westernised, 'healthy' state that, unfortunately, has little relevance to most of the states in question because it has simply never existed there." Promoting the liberal state as the ultimate model is to ignore the historical context, and with it the fact of the rather recent historical emergence of the modern state.

The history of those regions of the world in which modern states originally emerged shows that the process of state-building (or better: state formation) was inherently violent. In the pursuit of a monopoly of force, those agencies that came to stand as the state had to expropriate the means of violence from different social entities that competed with the emerging state (Weber 1988, 511). In the process, state agencies exerted violence themselves. The establishment of the 'monopoly over the legitimate use of force' against local resistance was a highly competitive and violent endeavour. Charles Tilly amply demonstrates this fact in his account of state-building in Europe (Tilly 1992). Further, similar to the formation of the state, the formation of citizenries and citizens was also replete with (structural, cultural and direct) violence. People had to be "transformed into obedient subjects by the work of state institutions such as armies, schools, and universities [...]. The spread of discourses and narratives that legitimized state rule was thus supplemented by practices that made peasants and unruly classes into law-abiding subjects of state institutions" (Schlichte 2007, 36). As a result of these processes, states were able to control internal societal insecurity, lawlessness and violence by successfully monopolising the legitimate use of violence and providing a framework for the nonviolent conduct of conflicts.³ This can be considered an enormous historical achievement of

³ Weber's definition of the state as a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory defines the essence of stateness, which fundamentally rests in enforcement capacities, that is "the ultimate ability to send someone with a uniform and a gun to force people to comply with the state's laws" (Fukuyama 2004, 6).

the modern state. Yet, although states provide for (internal) order, protection, security and conflict management on the one hand, they also amass means of violence, control and coercion on a large scale. Thus they can contribute to insecurity in the international realm (note the ‘security dilemma’).

Whereas the processes of state formation in Europe and the western world took centuries, western state forms were ‘delivered’ like products to many parts of the Global South in a relatively short time span during the era of decolonisation. The decolonisation process was guided by the replication of European political models. In the decades following the Second World War a host of independent ‘nation states’ came into being in the formerly colonised parts of the world, driven to a significant extent by the exhaustion of the colonial powers and the specific international post-war dynamics. Both the political elites of the new states and the international state community at large welcomed newly achieved statehood, often confusing the formal declaration of independence with the formation of a state, unaware of the myriad of obstacles that actual state formation still faced. In many cases, at the time of independence the state was nothing more than an empty shell. Critically, in many of the newly independent states there was no history of pre-colonial unitary rule and people did not have a tradition of national identification; only few of these states shared one common language and one common culture. Moreover, whether or not they were democracies at home, colonial powers by and large had acted as authoritarian regimes in their colonies. Hence there was generally little preparation for sustainable statehood.

Attempts to consolidate the newly introduced form of statehood once it had been formally established were often unsuccessful, and efforts to impose this new form of political order came at considerable costs (as had been the case with state formation in Europe before). Christopher Clapham reminds us that

“from the viewpoint of the indigenous peoples, on whom states were imposed, this process can readily be seen to have brought with it very significant *costs*, in social, economic, and political terms. The state-centred and state-supporting literature of political science has been so heavily concerned with emphasizing the *benefits* of statehood that the other side of the account has gone almost unnoticed [...]. The social costs of statehood, and particularly of modern statehood, include the sacrifice of identities and structures that are inimical to the hierarchies of control that states seek to impose” (Clapham 2004, 86).

The new states lacked roots in the recipient societies, particularly in cases where there was no unitary form of rule pre-existing colonial government. The global delivery of Weberian state institutions was not accompanied by the development of the economic, political, social and cultural structures and capacities that had provided the basis and framework for an efficiently functioning political order in the course of the evolution of the state in European history. This also holds true for the development of a competent and committed public service and a citizenry with a sense of citizenship, expectations towards the state, ownership of state affairs and national identity. An identity as “citizens” and the “idea of the state” does not meet with much cultural resonance within these societies, as people are relatively disconnected from the state, neither expecting much from state institutions nor willing to fulfil obligations towards the state (and often with little knowledge about what they can rightfully expect from state bodies, and what the state can rightfully expect from them).

In many cases states were not only loosely established in the first place, but there has also been a regression from certain levels of statehood that had been achieved. Such regression was primarily influenced by external factors. As Clapham notes, the “dynamics of the global system itself have undermined the mechanisms [...] through which states have to be maintained” (Clapham 2003,

44). The neoliberal economic policies along the lines of the ‘Washington Consensus’ have contributed considerably to the limitation of the capacities of states in the Global South and hence to the decline of their legitimacy and, as a consequence, their heightened fragility. The state’s core operational and regulatory functions were deliberately reduced due to the neoliberal agenda which indiscriminately targeted state institutions. Thus the economic interests and policies of the ‘strong’ states of the developed world have contributed to the increasing fragility of states in the Global South – which then in turn is registered as a threat to the security of the ‘strong’ developed states and their societies.

4. A Reality Check: Hybrid Political Orders

Instead of adopting the narrow state-centric view which is currently guiding the fragile states discourse, we suggest going beyond it and trying to comprehend the context of what truly constitutes political order in those regions of apparent fragility. In this section, we explore the forms of political order which a closer look at the conditions on the ground reveals.

As a first step, it must be acknowledged that speaking of ‘weak’ states implies that there are other actors on the stage that are strong in relation to the state. ‘The state’ is only one actor among others, and ‘state order’ is only one of a number of orders claiming to provide security, frameworks for conflict regulation and social services.

In such cases, although state institutions claim authority within the boundaries of a given ‘state territory’, in large parts of that territory only outposts of ‘the state’ can be found, in a societal environment that is to a large extent ‘stateless’. The state has not yet permeated society and extended its effective control to the whole of society. Statelessness, however, does not mean Hobbesian anarchy, nor does it imply the complete absence of institutions. In many places, customary non-state institutions of governance that had existed prior to the era of colonial rule have survived the onslaught of colonialism and ‘national liberation’. They have, of course, been subject to considerable change and have had to adapt to new circumstances, yet they have shown remarkable resilience.⁴ Customary law, traditional societal structures (extended families, clans, tribes, religious brotherhoods, village communities) and traditional authorities (such as village elders, headmen, clan chiefs, healers, *bigmen*, religious leaders, etc.) determine the everyday social reality of large parts of the population in developing countries even today, particularly in rural and remote peripheral areas. On many occasions, therefore, the only way to make state institutions work is through utilising kin-based and other traditional networks. Thus the state’s ‘outposts’ are mediated by ‘informal’ indigenous societal institutions which follow their own logic and rules within the (incomplete) state structures.

⁴ A word of caution seems appropriate here: when we talk about ‘traditional’ or ‘customary’ institutions, etc. this has to be taken in an ideal type sense. Of course, traditional societies everywhere in the world have come under outside influences; they have not been left unchanged by the powers of – originally European – capitalist expansion, colonialism, imperialism and globalisation. In practice therefore, there are no clear-cut boundaries between the realm of the exogenous ‘modern’ and the endogenous ‘traditional’, rather there are processes of assimilation, articulation, transformation and/or adoption in the context of the global/exogenous – local/indigenous interface. We base the argument on an ideal type of ‘traditional’ or ‘customary’ institutions of governance, in order to elaborate as precisely as possible the specifics of certain phenomena that do not belong to the realm of conventional institutions originating in the west that were imposed in the south. It would be misleading, however, to think of this traditional realm as unchangeable and static. It is far from that. Custom is in a constant flux and adapts to new circumstances, exposed to external influences. This fluidity and adaptability of custom allows traditional and introduced western approaches to be combined so that something new – that is not strictly customary any longer, but rooted in custom – might emerge.

This leads to the deviation of state institutions from the ideal type of ‘proper’ state institutions. They become the subject of power struggles between competing social groups and their leaders, and are utilised by those groups and leaders for their own benefit, regardless of the needs of the “nation” or the “citizenry”. In a way, the whole debate about neopatrimonialism, clientelistic networks and patronage, for example in postcolonial African states, revolves around this usurpation of imported formal governance structures by indigenous informal societal forces.

Box 1 – *Bigmen* and Democratic Representation in Melanesia

The discord between the *bigman* approach of local political leadership in Melanesian societies and the requirements of representative democracy provides an example that demonstrates the dilemma of conflating or blending introduced formal, and indigenous informal, logics of authority. A *bigman* has to affirm his customary status by means of distributing gifts to his kin, while a politician is obliged to act in the interest of the common good, not pursuing the interest of kin group members, but of citizens. A *bigman* who is at the same time a politician will have problems reconciling these two roles. For example, situations can evolve in which *bigmen* must become politicians, as only then will they get access to state coffers which make it possible to distribute gifts to their kin, and politicians must first be *bigmen*, as only then can they rely on the support of a loyal and powerful kin-based constituency. A mutual give-and-take relationship between politicians and supporting communities tends to evolve whereby a politician gains power and status through his capacity to amass wealth and redistribute at least part of it to his supporters, and these will re-elect or otherwise support the politician if he has proven sufficiently generous. This provides a rationale for the re-election of ‘corrupt’ politicians. What might be perceived as corruption in the context of western ideals of representative and accountable governance can be an extension of reciprocity and exchange of gifts in the traditional context. The never-ending litany of complaints about nepotism, parochialism, corruption and inefficiency with regard to state governments and state bureaucracies tends to miss this point.

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On the other hand, the intrusion of state agencies impacts on non-state local orders as well. Customary systems of order are subjected to deconstruction and re-formation as they are incorporated into central state structures and processes (Trotha 2000; Schlichte/Wilke 2000). They adopt an ambiguous position with regard to the state, appropriating state functions and ‘state talk’, but at the same time pursuing their own agenda under the guise of the state authority and power. Taking state functions and state talk on board, however, also means changing one’s original stance. Some governments also try to deliberately incorporate traditional authorities, in order to strengthen state capacities and legitimacy.

Box 2 – Re-emerging Traditions and the Change of the Customary in Africa

The ‘re-traditionalisation’ in some sub-Saharan African states demonstrates this tendency. Here traditional leaders were largely discredited in the post-independence era because they had often been incorporated into (indirect) colonial rule as instruments of the colonial powers, and the new political elites of the independent states attempted to do away with them as anachronistic and reactionary forces of the past. But customary forms of governance persisted, and finally the authorities of the independent states – like their former colonial rulers – realized that it might be more promising to incorporate them rather than try to suppress and displace them. Over the last several years in a number of African states, legislation has “(re)incorporated traditional leaders officially into state hierarchies in recognition of their ongoing influence as local players” (Kyed/Buur 2006, 2). This took place for example in Namibia, South Africa, Ghana, Mozambique, Uganda, Zambia and Cameroon. In recognition of the relative weakness of state institutions and the relative strength of traditional communities and authorities, governments have come to rely on the latter for performing certain state functions, thus contributing to a resurgence of customary rule, albeit in (partly) new forms and with new functions.

These approaches, however, aim at instrumentalising chiefs and other traditional authorities for state purposes (e.g. tax collection) and thus as a means for reinforcing the authority of the state – they do not constitute a genuine partnership. Recognition of traditional leaders is conceptualised as a practice that confirms the state’s authority. Traditional leaders on the other hand might nevertheless utilise their new position to reinforce their authority; but they are in danger of losing authority in the customary context, precisely because they are now perceived as agents of the state. In Mozambique for instance “the obligations placed on chiefs to collect taxes and to police rural communities are greeted with discontent by many rural citizens, with the effect of potentially pitting chiefs against the communities from which, *de facto* and *de jure*, they derive their legitimacy” (Kyed/Buur 2006, 14). In the best case, their dual role as representatives of the communities and agents of the state puts them in a position to merge the customary and the state domains (Buur/Kyed 2006, 868), but they also risk losing their authority and legitimacy. (There are also examples of more constructive forms of partnership between governments and customary authorities, for example in Pacific Island countries, see *Section 5* below).

The complex nature of governance is further complicated due to the emergence and growing importance of institutions, movements and formations that have their origins in the effects of and reactions to globalisation. The emergence of these new forces is a consequence of poor state performance, and their activities can contribute to the further weakening of state structures. Where state agencies are incapable of delivering (or unwilling to deliver) security and other basic services, and where traditional societal structures have been substantially undermined, people will turn to other social entities for support. In this situation, the actors perceived as powerful and effective include warlords and their militias in outlying regions, gang leaders in townships and squatter settlements, vigilante-type organisations, ethnically-based protection rackets, millenarian religious movements, transnational networks of extended family relations, organised crime or new forms of tribalism. Occasionally, these new formations have seized power in certain regions of a given state’s territory (be it a remote mountainous peripheral location or a squatter settlement in the capital

city). They have the capacity to exert violence on a large scale against outsiders and the capacity to control violence within their respective strongholds. Their presence and competition has substituted the state's monopoly over the legitimate use of violence. In some countries "oligopolies of power" emerge (Mehler 2003) or the "rule of the intermediaries" substitutes for the rule of the central state (Trotha 2000, 277-278).

Under such conditions, there are often combinations of forces from the customary sphere – like chiefs, traditional kings, religious authorities and their constituencies – and from the sphere of the above-mentioned new formations – like warlords and their militias, ethnic or millenarian movements or rackets of organised crime. The new formations are often linked to traditional societal entities and attempt to instrumentalise these for their own new goals, such as power and profit. The protagonists of the traditional societal entities such as lineages, clans, 'tribes' or religious brotherhoods, on the other hand, also introduce their own agendas into the overall picture. These agendas cannot be reduced to political aims, such as political power, or to economic considerations, such as private gain and profit, but include concepts such as "honour", "revenge" or the "right to (violent) self-help". Thus non-state traditional actors and institutions, their motives and concerns, and also their ways of doing things, blend with private actors and their motives. Clan leaders might become warlords (or warlords might strive for an authoritative position in the customary context) or groups of tribal warriors might become private militias. For example, warlord systems are embedded in the local societal structure of clans and tribes (as witnessed in Afghanistan or Somalia), and criminal gangs that control squatter settlements are tied back to kinship-based entities and common localities of origin. In addition, these locally embedded orders increasingly link into the globalised market and global society, for example via drug trafficking, migration, remittances, trade networks or religious affiliations. Traditional entities in many places can become integrated into transnational, regional and even global networks. Conrad Schetter's observations on "the globalised tribe" (Schetter 2007, 246-249) in the context of 'Talibanistan' as a non-state and anti-state order – rooted in local tribal structures, but increasingly embedded in regional and even global networks – not only apply to Afghanistan, but also to other regions of the Global South.

In situations like this, the subjective factor of statehood – a committed citizenry with a sense of citizenship – is almost entirely lacking; self-perceptions as citizens are almost non-existent or meaningless. This applies to political leaders, public servants and the wider community equally. People do not perceive themselves as citizens or nationals (at least not in the first place). They define themselves instead as members of particular sub- or trans-national social entities (kin group, tribe, village). This is particularly true where state agencies are not present on the ground and the state does not deliver any services with regard to education, health, infrastructure or security. Rather, it is the community that provides the nexus of order, security and basic social services. People have confidence in their community and its leaders, but they have no trust in the government and state performance. 'The state' is perceived as an alien external force, far away not only physically (in the capital city), but also psychologically. Individuals are loyal to "their" group (whatever that may be), not the state. As members of traditional communities, people are tied into a network of social relations and a web of mutual obligations, and these obligations are much more powerful than obligations as a 'citizen'. People do not obey the rules of the state, but the rules of their group. Legitimacy rests with the leaders of that group, not with the state authorities – or only with state authorities insofar as they are at the same time leaders in a traditional societal context, e.g. a minister who is also a tribal chief (and warlord), and who became a minister in the first place because of being a tribal chief (and warlord). We can identify this as hybrid legitimacy: traditional legitimacy and/or

charismatic legitimacy plus legal-rational legitimacy.⁵

To summarise our argument in this section: regions of so-called fragile statehood are generally places in which diverse and competing claims to power and logics of order co-exist, overlap and intertwine, namely the logic of the ‘formal’ state, of traditional ‘informal’ societal order, and of globalisation and associated social fragmentation (which is present in various forms: ethnic, tribal, religious...). In such an environment, the ‘state’ does not have a privileged position as the political framework that provides security, welfare and representation; it has to share authority, legitimacy and capacity with other structures. In short, we are confronted with hybrid political orders, and these orders differ considerably from the western model state.

We use the term “hybrid” to characterize these political orders because:

- it is broad enough to encompass a variety of non-state forms of order and governance on the customary side (from (neo-) patrimonial to acephalous⁶);
- it focuses on the combination of elements that stem from genuinely different societal sources which follow different logics;
- it affirms that these spheres do not exist in isolation from each other, but permeate each other and, consequently, give rise to a different and genuine political order.⁷

At the same time we seek a broader understanding and want to advocate a greater appreciation of hybridity, beyond the limits of its negative connotations.

Hybrid political orders *can* be perceived as – or can become – emerging states. Prudent policies could assist the emergence of new types of states – drawing on the western model, but acknowledging and working with the hybridity of particular political orders.

5. State-Building: Positive and Not So Positive Cases

From the perspective of the current mainstream western policy and academic discourse on fragile states, hybridity of political order is usually perceived as a negative factor (if it is perceived at all). Experience shows, however, that attempts at state-building which ignore or oppose hybridity will encounter considerable difficulty in generating effective and legitimate outcomes. Strengthening central state institutions is unquestionably important, but if this becomes the main or only focus it threatens to further alienate local societies by rendering them passive, thereby weakening both a sense of local responsibility for overcoming problems and local ownership of solutions.

⁵ Max Weber distinguishes three types of legitimate authority, namely legitimacy based on (1) Rational grounds – “resting on a belief in the ‘legality’ of patterns of normative rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands (legal authority). (2) Traditional grounds – resting on an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of the status of those exercising authority under them (traditional authority); or finally (3) Charismatic grounds – resting on devotion to the specific and exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him (charismatic authority)” (Weber 1968, 46).

⁶ Acephalous – headless – societies are societies without formal political leaders and without an institutionalised system of power and authority.

⁷ Our conceptualisation of hybrid political order is close to certain concepts of neopatrimonialism, in particular that of Erdmann and Engel (2007). They see neopatrimonialism as “a mixture of two co-existing, partly interwoven, types of domination: namely, patrimonial and legal-rational bureaucratic domination” and argue that the “two role systems or logics [...], the patrimonial of the personal relations, and the legal-rational of the bureaucracy [...] are not isolated from each other. Quite to the contrary, they permeate each other: the patrimonial penetrates the legal-rational system and twists its logic, functions, and output, but does not take exclusive control over the legal-rational logic” (Engel/Erdmann 2007, 105). However, for our purposes we need a more all-encompassing concept than neopatrimonialism, as there are regions in the Global South that are not governed by neopatrimonial domination, but nevertheless are areas of hybrid political order; in the Pacific, for instance, the concepts of neopatrimonialism, clientelism and patronage cannot be applied. We acknowledge neopatrimonialism as a specific type of hybrid political order.

Examples of state-building gone wrong on these grounds abound – from Afghanistan to the Solomon Islands.⁸ A particularly striking story in this regard is the case of East Timor. East Timor is generally presented as a success story, and the United Nations and other international organisations, along with a host of donor countries have put great effort into making state-building along the lines of the liberal democratic model a success. Conversely, East Timor demonstrates that state-building interventions can also do harm.⁹

5.1 Misguided ‘State-Building from Scratch’: East Timor

In East Timor, significant international assistance directed towards state-building appears to have been highly centralized in Dili, where it has focused on building national government institutions. The rural majority of the population has received relatively little attention. This has been consistent with the government’s own emphasis on centralization. However, government institutions continue to have little capacity for outreach beyond Dili, and furthermore they also have little connection with the customary governance practices that still provide much of the social order in the local context, particularly in rural areas. This disconnection between the government, highly centralized in Dili, and the largely rural population has led to the marginalisation of both local culture and rural communities more generally. As a consequence, many people do not find themselves at home in the form and language of the state that they now supposedly inhabit as ‘citizens’. There is a widespread feeling that the new state has marginalised East Timorese culture and customary life as sources of governance.

The crucial misperception, held both by the external actors and by many in the Timorese political elite (who had often spent a long time in exile), was seeing East Timor after the liberation from Indonesian occupation as a *tabula rasa* – a place void of governance institutions where state-building could and would have to start ‘from scratch’. Contrary to this assumption, customary values and governance institutions continue to play a significant role in people’s everyday life. Indeed, since independence there has been an extraordinary resurgence of customary practices, many of which were repressed under Indonesian occupation. They contribute to conflict management, social order and social welfare in the local context, but are widely ignored by the East Timorese political elites and the international donors – with considerable negative consequences. The wide-spread violence in 2006 (four years after formal independence), violence during and following national elections in 2007 and, most recently, the near-fatal shooting of the President and the attack on the Prime Minister in February 2008 indicate East Timor’s instability. Tens of thousands of people continue to live as displaced persons in refugee camps in and around the capital, urban street gangs are a source of ongoing insecurity, the national security forces remain deeply divided, and the government depends on the protection and support of international police and military forces. Local explanations for the unrest are registering that fundamental values and institutions of indigenous East Timorese culture and custom, which were an essential part of the struggle for independence and remain fundamental to people’s sense of collective meaning and management of community life, are being ‘overlooked’ by the new state (Trindade/Castro 2007).

⁸ On Afghanistan, Astri Suhrke gives an excellent critique of an externally driven state-building process. She reveals the shortcomings of this “project of social engineering” and of the overwhelmingly prominent foreign role in the whole undertaking (Suhrke 2007, 1291). The process in Afghanistan “remains externally driven. Two key elements of statebuilding – capital and armed force – are provided by foreign powers. This created a series of problems, above all in a third area required for statebuilding, namely legitimacy” (Suhrke 2006, 18). On the pitfalls and shortcomings of state-building in the Solomon Islands and the problematic role of the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) see Dinnen 2007; Moore 2007; and Clements/Foley 2008.

⁹ On East Timor see Brown 2008; Laakso 2007; Trindade/Castro 2007.

Efforts to rapidly introduce liberal governance norms and structures without paying attention to how they interact with local customary values have contributed to the erosion of institutions and cultural values underpinning order, and have led to the adoption of often very poorly understood liberal norms (particularly in urban areas). As a consequence, the notion of ‘democracy’ has become widely identified with ‘conflict between competing factions of the political elite’ and with ‘top-down imposition of values’; ‘democracy’ and ‘Timorese culture’ are perceived as being antagonistic. For example, introducing party political elections at the local level, in an attempt to better connect local communities with government, may instead reproduce the divisiveness of the national political scene at the local level and thus undermine social cohesion and exacerbate insecurity. The competitive dimension of liberal democratic elections (based on party affiliation) is alien to Timorese custom.¹⁰

Many Timorese norms of behaviour – of speech, dress and social behaviour, but also of accountability in decision-making and in positions of responsibility, of appropriate authorisation and correct procedures for undertaking collective activities – have been systematically overlooked and put aside over the past eight years by those representing the international community and by some of the Timorese elite. If this pattern continues, the failure to bridge the gap between national government structures and customary institutions is likely to cause further serious problems.

This example shows how the gulf between communities and government, rooted in the divorce of state institutions from traditional values and practices, can undermine the potential for democracy. State-building in East Timor is in danger of trying to produce a state that people do not recognize as their own, or from which they feel alienated in important ways. This is not a promising path to either effective government or to democracy. Moreover, the situation is a direct result of internal and external state-builders neglecting and (unintentionally) undermining community and customary sources of order and resilience, contributing to the ongoing instability.

East Timor and similar cases underline the critical importance of recognizing the hybridity of political order as the starting point for peacebuilding and state-building. The challenge for both is to search for ways and means of generating positive mutual accommodation of state and customary non-state or civil society mechanisms and institutions – which in practice are not isolated domains anyway, but elements of a particular ‘messy’ local socio-political context – so that new forms of statehood might emerge which are more capable, effective and legitimate than those generated by narrowly conceived western models of the state.¹¹

¹⁰ Other electoral models that are more sensitive to customary values are possible. The former non party-based system itself is one possible model: candidates were previously not affiliated with parties and seem to have generally been drawn from lineages designated by custom. Consensus discussion amongst village elders, as well as voting, contributed to the selection of candidates and the final choice was then publicly endorsed by elders or by those in positions of ritual authority. The whole community then accepted the authority of the community leader.

¹¹ We have no intention of romanticising or idealising customary actors and institutions. They are not ‘better’ than state institutions *per se* (they can be highly problematic). We simply want to make the point that their existence is a given that has to be reckoned with. Instead of neglecting, ignoring, undermining or fighting them, their positive potential for governance, development and peacebuilding, which can be substantial, should be respected and explored in supportive partnerships. For a critique of customary institutions see Boege 2006b, in particular 15-17.

5.2 Successful ‘Hybrid State-Building’: Somaliland and Bougainville

Positive examples are rare so far, but they do exist. Somaliland and Bougainville are two cases in point.

(1) Somaliland

The state of Somalia collapsed after the downfall of the regime of Siad Barre in 1991, “making it the longest-running instance of complete state collapse in postcolonial history” and, moreover, “the world’s foremost graveyard of externally sponsored state-building initiatives” (Menkhaus 2006, 74). In its north-western part (the former British protectorate of Somaliland), however, a functioning, effective and legitimate political order has emerged over the past fifteen years. This order combines customary institutions – in particular councils of elders (*guurti*) – and modern state institutions based on free and fair elections, such as a parliament and a president. The success of peacebuilding and ‘state-building’ in Somaliland was to a large extent due to the involvement of traditional actors and customary institutions that are rooted in the traditional clan-based Somali society.¹² Clan elders and their councils were the decisive actors in the peacebuilding process, utilising customary forms and mechanisms of conflict resolution. Given the positive role which the councils of elders played in peacebuilding, they were also entrusted with important roles in the successive process of building political order, and today they are constitutionally embedded in the political system of Somaliland. They are crucial elements of governance, in particular with regard to conflict resolution, but also with functions in the broader sphere of government and administration. At the same time, they are embedded in a political system that is modelled along the lines of western statehood. Somaliland is an example of an emerging state grounded in a hybrid political order.

Although Somaliland has proven to be a functioning, effective and legitimate political entity, it has nevertheless not yet been recognized as a ‘state’ by the international community of states. It is a state *de facto*, but not *de jure*. Peacebuilding and ‘state-building’ in Somaliland have been pursued almost completely without external assistance, based on the strength and resilience of the local communities. Nevertheless (or perhaps because of that), Somaliland provides a success story. Peace and state-building have invariably emerged from below – rather than being imposed through a top-down process – and, unusually, have taken place in the absence of a central monopoly of violence. The government “does not hold the monopoly of violence and [...] security in Somaliland is dealt with in a decentralized manner and is largely guaranteed by local politicians and elders” (Hagmann/Hoehne 2007, 24). The result is an indigenous type of statehood that “amalgamates customary, Islamic and statutory norms and practices” (ibid., 25) and enjoys high levels of legitimacy in the eyes of the people.

(2) Bougainville

A similar success story has emerged over the last decade on the South Pacific island of Bougainville. After almost ten years of a fierce war of secession between the security forces of the central state of Papua New Guinea and the secessionist Bougainville Revolutionary Army, Bougainville has been the theatre of comprehensive peacebuilding and state-building processes that commenced after the signing of a peace agreement in 2001. That agreement grants Bougainville an autonomous status, short of independence, and a referendum on its future political status (independence or autonomy within Papua New Guinea) further down the road. After the devastation

¹² For accounts of the achievements in Somaliland see Boege 2004, 103-128; Seifert 2007; Trotha 2005, 35-37; Hoehne 2006a, 2006b; Menkhaus 2006, 91-93; Hagmann and Hoehne 2007.

of the war and the almost complete breakdown of state order during the war years, Bougainville was confronted with the challenge of building a new political order. As in the case of Somaliland, the people relied heavily on traditional institutions and customary mechanisms of conflict resolution, reconciliation and peacebuilding in the post-conflict phase, and again, these institutions and mechanisms proved to be so effective that there was a strong desire to also build the new political order in Bougainville on them. Again, it was very much a bottom-up process, and the councils of elders and councils of chiefs held decisive roles in peacebuilding and ‘state-building’. As a consequence, customary institutions figure prominently in the new constitution of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville. As in the case of Somaliland, the political order in Bougainville combines elements of the western model of statehood (a president and parliament, a constitution, free and fair elections, a public service) and elements of customary governance (councils of elders and councils of chiefs, customary law and conflict resolution). This hybrid model is functioning well and enjoys a high degree of legitimacy – again, without a state monopoly on violence being in place. The political order in Bougainville is genuinely home-grown; external assistance has been moderate (Boege 2006a).

The Somaliland and Bougainville cases demonstrate that new forms of ‘state-building’ that do not simply copy the western model of the state but draw on customary institutions which are rooted in the local communities can have positive results. They support Rod Nixon’s proposition that “‘traditional structures’ are the cultural bedrock on which future attempts at state-building must be constructed” (Nixon 2006, 84).

Somaliland and Bougainville might be exceptional cases, but they are not the only ones. Even under the most desperate conditions of state failure and violent conflict, islands of (more or less) functional, effective and legitimate hybrid order can often be found in local contexts. In North Kivu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), for example, non-state institutions like churches and customary societal entities have filled the political void left by the withdrawal of the state. They have taken over state functions and thus become para-statal institutions; in particular, councils of elders have been established, comprising representatives of the various ethno-linguistic groups, who are responsible for conflict resolution and governance issues (Tull 2005a, 215-216; Tull 2005b, 15, 25). In border areas of rural Kenya and Tanzania, a form of maintenance of order and conflict resolution has evolved that is called *sungusungu*, originally in opposition to state institutions (notably the police and the judiciary) and based on local customary law instead of state law. *Sungusungu* led to the development of “hybrid forms of organisation [...], which are, strictly speaking, illegal but are officially authorised, neither part of the state nor totally rejected by it” (Heald 2007, 2). *Sungusungu* provides an example for how local people “mobilised indigenous modes of governance and turned these to new ends, thereby creating new forms of political unity and consciousness” (ibid.). Similar stories can be told from other fragile, collapsed and violence-ridden countries in the Global South (e.g. Sierra Leone, see Boege 2004, 75-84). Even in Somalia – the ‘collapsed state’ par excellence – “informal systems of adaptation, security, and governance in response to the prolonged absence of a central government” (Menkhaus 2006, 74) can be found, based on the resilience of informal and local systems of governance which provide for “governance without government”.

We agree with Ken Menkhaus' suggestion that in situations of fragile or collapsed states – as in Somalia – the

“best hope for state revival may lie in the explicit pursuit of a mediated state – in which a central government with limited power and capacity relies on a diverse range of local authorities to execute core functions of government and mediate relations between local communities and the state. In this approach, the top-down project of building a central government and the organic emergence of informal polities are not viewed as antithetical (though they are invariably political rivals, coexisting in uneasy partnership), but are instead harmonized or nested together in a negotiated division of labor” (ibid., 103).

Such positive mutual accommodation may result in ‘states’ that “might look very different from, or not conform to, Western ideals of what governance structures are ‘supposed to look like’” (Barcham 2005, 9) and might still appear weak with regard to institutions and enforcement capacities. But this very weakness may become a strength as the state gains legitimacy in the eyes of the people, because it acknowledges the strengths of local institutions and does not attempt to impose its supremacy, and because state authorities do not try to displace local orders of governance, but work with them, providing a coordinating or harmonising framework. Constructive interaction between state and customary governance is vital, as state fragility is not only a problem of political will, capacities, functions, institutions and powers of enforcement and implementation, but also a problem of expectations, perceptions and legitimacy. State weakness has two sides to it: weakness with regard to capacities of effective implementation and enforcement, and weakness of legitimacy.

6. Conclusions

Keith Krause and Oliver Jueteronke posit that state-building policies of the international community “only make sense if one accepts that an externally-driven ‘social (re)engineering’ project can accelerate or substitute for a more ‘organic’ historical process of state-building that would otherwise be driven by local actors” (Krause/Jueteronke 2007, 11). Perhaps the alternatives are misconceived here: ‘social engineering’ of state-building is not possible, but on the other hand it would be fatalistic – and cynical – to leave it all to an ‘organic’ historical process, likely to mean bloodshed, injustice and misery – as the history of European state formation amply demonstrates. One has to search for middle ground. The concepts of hybrid political orders and positive mutual accommodation might pave the way for attaining such middle ground.

By re-conceptualising fragile states as hybrid political orders, new options for governance can be envisaged. This approach can also contribute to a reorientation of external assistance. The possibilities of externally influencing governance structures can be re-examined, shifting the focus from narrow models of state-building to understanding and engaging with hybrid institutions.

At present, however, donors tend to assume the role of teaching ‘them’ (politicians and people of so-called fragile states) how to do ‘our’ (the western developed donor states’) institutions better. ‘We’ tend to impose ‘our’ idea of what a ‘good state’ is on ‘them’ (Woodward 2006, 4; Brown 2002). There is much talk of ownership, but often this is not much more than lip service; in effect, locals are supposed to ‘own’ what outsiders tell them to – “local ownership clearly means ‘their’ ownership of ‘our’ ideas” (Suhrke 2007, 1292). Closely related to this attitude is a functionalist

understanding of ‘the state’ as a set of institutions that can be delivered like a product, using certain principles of institutional design and techniques of social engineering. Accordingly, external actors focus on issues that seem to lend themselves to relatively easy implementation, by applying supposedly technocratic practices geared at building state capacities, particularly pertaining to law, justice and security, with the aim of delivering western-style courts, police, penal systems, etc. This approach ignores (or conceals) the fact that state-building is not merely a technical exercise, limited to enhancing the capacities and effectiveness of state institutions. Rather, it is a highly controversial political endeavour which is likely to involve serious political conflicts as existing distributions of power are threatened. Hence a technical approach to state-building, guided by an administrative view of the state, glosses over its political and its social character. Finally, the “booming international state-building industry” rarely considers the possibility that under certain conditions it may not be possible to build a “sustainable state through external intervention or that intervention might end up doing more harm than good” (Dinnen 2007, 260).

This ‘industry’ is guided by western political thinking that takes the existence of states and an international system of states for granted and, accordingly, entertains a deep-rooted ‘*horror vacui*’: the assumption that where there are no states, there is chaos and there are terrorists. The very idea “that the ubiquity of states might no longer be so normal, must be frightening from the perspective of a world system that for its own existence has come to depend on the premise of normalcy of states” (Doornbos 2003, 56). In particular, scholars “from traditionally state-centered disciplines such as political science or international relations have a hard time imagining that life can continue in the absence of the state. In reality, however, alternative actors perform the core state functions that the state no longer fulfils when it abandons a certain space” (Hagmann/Hoehne 2007, 21).

Accordingly, it is important to stress the positive potential rather than the negative features of so-called fragile states – de-emphasizing weakness, fragility, failure and collapse, and focusing on hybridity, generative processes, innovative adaptation and ingenuity. This also entails perceiving community resilience and customary institutions not so much as ‘spoilers’ and problems, but as assets and sources of solutions that can be drawn upon in order to forge constructive relationships between communities and governments, and between customary and introduced political and social institutions. For example, instead of denouncing kinship-based societal formations as sources of corruption and nepotism, and hindrances to accountability and transparency, one can also look at them as valuable social support networks which have their own checks and balances. Through engagement and mobilization, these networks can positively contribute to political order.

Engaging with communities and non-state customary institutions is just as important as working with central state institutions and governments. For at the end of the day, the extent to which state institutions are rooted in society is decisive for the state’s stability, effectiveness and legitimacy. Mainstream western concepts of state-building today tend to overburden the actual state institutions on the ground – “the set of expectations is simply too great” (Woodward 2006, 5) – and at the same time to underestimate the potential of non-state local customary institutions. Of course, encouraging local customary governance on the one hand can be at odds with building central institutions of the state on the other; strong communities might lack the incentive to support central state institutions. The challenge is to find appropriate forms of complementarity and interaction.

These kinds of problems have attracted relatively little scholarly attention, particularly in relation to local traditional forms of governance and their interaction with national state-based and international endeavours.¹³ More research is needed on the potential capacities (and limits or

¹³ As an important contribution in this direction see Wulf 2007. He makes the case for a multi-level public monopoly of force that combines the local, national, regional and global levels.

deficiencies) of hybrid political orders, to determine in more detail how hybridity can be utilised for peacebuilding, good (enough) governance and development.¹⁴

Dominant approaches to state-building today rest on a narrow understanding of the sources of our own political and social order. The reality is that state institutions co-exist with and depend on the family, religious, economic and cultural institutions. While the state, in the final analysis, has a coercive capacity to determine outcomes which other institutions lack, this does not mean that state institutions are the primary determinant of integration, security, welfare or legitimacy. These factors are much more critically determined by other institutions within the society. State institutions work because they are embedded in social and cultural norms and practices.

The best outcome of the novel approach to state-building outlined in this article would be that new forms of governance emerge: combining state institutions, customary institutions and new elements of citizenship and civil society in networks of governance which are not introduced from the outside, but embedded in the societal structures on the ground.

¹⁴ The Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (ACPACS) has conducted the first stage of a respective research programme (Title: “Towards Effective and Legitimate Governance: States Emerging from Hybrid Political Orders”), funded by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). The reports and papers elaborated in this project will be published in the ACPACS Occasional Papers series shortly.

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The “Andersen Principle”: On the Difficulty of Truly Moving Beyond State-Centrism

A Response by Trutz von Trotha

1. Introduction¹

In Hans Christian Andersen’s fairytale *The Emperor’s New Clothes*, the little child says at last: “But he has nothing on at all!” Volker Boege and his co-authors² have taken on that child’s role vis-à-vis their colleagues from political science and peace and conflict studies. Unlike the mainstream, they rely on their own eyes and point out the obvious: no, the failing state does not function like a state. The failed state does not have state institutions. And it does not make sense to continue denying the obvious. Instead, we have to come to terms with the realities of political orders which are not states. This insistence on what I will call the Andersen Principle is, in my view, the most important contribution of the essay – important not only for the discourse of political science and peace studies concerning international security, development cooperation and globalisation, but also for practical politics, to which both disciplines seek proximity. To date, these disciplines have relied on the normative pretensions and jargon of high politics resolutely (unlike empirical political sociology and ethnography) and, it must be said, with a strong sense of status and sinecure. Still, the Boege team does not pursue the Andersen Principle to its logical conclusion, and leaves half-accomplished its ambition of changing the discourse on social-engineering blueprints for state formation into a practice of peace and a debate on the peace potential of social and cultural institutions and actors of non-state orders.

¹ Many thanks go to Dr. Kate Sturge (Aston University Birmingham / Berlin) for translating this comment from German into English and to the Berghof editorial team for their excellent copy editing.

² For the sake of simplicity, in the following I will refer to the “Boege team” or “the authors”.

2. State-Centrism and the Failed Denial of Non-State Political Orders

Right up to the present day, political science, its sub-discipline peace studies and practical politics have found it difficult to reconcile themselves to what is empirically obvious. Their state-centrism has seemed insurmountable. In the course of the not particularly civilised “civilising process”, the state has become ‘second nature’ for the western – and not only the western – world, even though this form of political rule is anything but the historical norm. Many legacies converge in this state-centrism, not least colonialism, which tried to realize the utopia of modern state rule in the colonies and thereby globalised that utopia. As such a globalised utopia, one-dimensional thinking within the categories of statehood has even outlived decolonisation. The juridical features of statehood have remained the touchstone for participation in international relationships.

The Boege team reveals the bankruptcy of state-centrism in political science, peace studies and practical politics. This step is first of all a public affirmation of a sober sense of reality. It is a confirmation that the paramount and still most difficult task of scholarly endeavour is an empirical and analytical one. ‘Theory’, that formidable enterprise, becomes no less formidable when it offers analytical access to the world as it is. Yet, following the Platonic tradition, political science and peace studies have never been satisfied with empirical study – quite apart from the fact that it is probably considerably easier to draw up a “civilisational hexagon” (Senghaas 2004a, 17 ff.; 1996, 30 ff., 124 ff.)³ that summarises the quintessence of constitutional developments in democracy and the rule of law since the bourgeois revolutions, and to make this one of the many similar ‘templates’ for what ‘development’ ought to look like. At the Davos forums of this world, and in the political science and peace studies mainstream, we do not even find an attempt to offer the impressive theoretical elegance of a Dieter Senghaas; instead, as the authors remind us, the OECD state model is proclaimed the optimum route to sustainable development and internal peace without further ado.

If the counterfactual normativity of state-centrism can now no longer be maintained, this is due to a range of developments whose consequences had become clearly discernible by the end of the Cold War. While the “end of history” was being declared in a self-aggrandising, imperial discursive gesture, it was discovered that in not a few regions of the world, like Sudan or Sri Lanka, “small”, “new”, “asymmetrical” wars, or however else they were labelled, had been raging for decades. Sierra Leone was becoming a gangland ruled by warlords. In Rwanda, within around ten weeks hundreds of thousands of Tutsis and people thought to be Tutsi or suspected of helping Tutsis were murdered, and the murderers carried out their horrific task with machetes as if it were part of their usual daily work in the fields (Brandstetter 2007). In the DR Congo, what has now become known as the ‘African World War’ was unfolding. But just as charity begins at home, the west’s view of itself was most deeply affected by the ‘Yugoslav war’, which brought state collapse to European shores and continues to the present day in Kosovo, and by the American experience in Somalia – where, in October 1993, the military operation ‘Continue Hope’ (a name apparently chosen personally by the USA’s vision of itself) ended with dead American soldiers being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu, the Americans retreating from Somalia in disarray and images of the events racing around the world.⁴

³ See also Dieter Senghaas’ article in the *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation* (Senghaas 2004b).

⁴ It is probable that the American humiliation in Somalia contributed to the USA’s Security Council veto of an effective UN intervention in Rwanda (Dallaire 2003).

3. The Surreal Nature of Engineering State-Building

Faced with these experiences, politics underwent a momentous shift: in place of the fiction of statehood, it took upon itself the task of establishing state orders in regions afflicted by wars and other forms of severe instability within the state, regions that thus – and under the premises of the so-called “war on terrorism” – come to be perceived as threats to international or even national security. Under the banner of “civil crisis prevention, conflict resolution and the consolidation of peace” (my translation of the German government’s May 2004 action plan⁵), deployments that are heavy on personnel and resources, and potentially life-threatening for soldiers, have aimed to bring about democratic states and the rule of law on a more or less western model. Exemplary here are the deployments in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. This shift in policy was attended and fuelled by a political science, and representatives of its nearest neighbouring disciplines, that had now discovered the ‘failing’ and ‘failed’ state. Instead of proclaiming the end of history, they recommended (and still do) “learning to do state-building better”, because ultimately the future of the world order depended upon it (Fukuyama 2004, 120, as cited in the lead article). This is exemplified in the German context by the memorandum on rethinking Germany’s Africa policy (“Memorandum zur Neubegründung der deutschen Afrikapolitik”, Engel et al. 2000) and the critique of reconstruction policy in Afghanistan (Wimmer/Schetter 2002). What the Africanists’ opaque sociological jargon had named ‘structural stability’, the critics of the reconstruction policy in Afghanistan – with at least the virtue of being straight to the point – called a “state-centred” strategy which had to be pursued (ibid., 9). The ‘fiction of statehood’ had been abandoned. But the state-centrism of political action remained unaltered – and indeed, with the declining appeal of neoliberalism for development cooperation and for the internal configuration of the state, is beginning to attract renewed attention in continental Europe and beyond.

Once again the authors’ strong sense of reality is indicated by the fact that they dismiss the hackneyed precepts of a state-centred strategy in international relations and development cooperation. They rightly point out how “inherently violent”, unpredictable, protracted and convoluted the process of state formation actually is, and, again an important point to make, how high its social cost may be from the perspective of the ‘citizens’. There is one thing, though, that the Boege team in my view does not emphasize strongly enough: the idea of learning to do state-building and implementing it in a planned fashion is such a ludicrous notion that it ought to prompt serious concern over a political mainstream and an academic discipline which allows itself such surreal historical amnesia. Implementing state rule is the most radical and ambitious exercise of power, because it leaves barely a single building block of non-state political orders unaffected, including those of centralized non-state systems of power. If one considers how complex the preconditions of state rule are – not to mention the modern constitutional rule of law, let alone the welfare state – it becomes clear why successful state-building is a thoroughly ‘non-obvious’ affair,⁶ kindling more or less all the serious conflicts with which human beings can confront each other. Accordingly, in many places it has been and remains above all a concatenation of failures. Commands fade unheard. Institutions of central authority fail to take root, or decay just like the shoddy or magnificent edifices designed to house the functionaries doing their duty in the cause of state rule. The grass grows high over the transportation links between local authorities and the capital, and the bridges destroyed by the annual snowmelt remain unrepaired, because local officials lack both the material and the human resources to rebuild

5 Available (in German) online at www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/de/Aussenpolitik/Themen/Krisenpraevention/neu/Ueberblick.html. [For the English version, replace /de/ by /en/ in previous link.]

6 On the concept of the ‘non-obviousness’ (*Unselbstverständlichkeit*) of state rule, see Trotha 1994a, 1 ff.

them. Worse, if those being ruled initiate open, violent resistance against the state's claim to rule over them, the door is opened wide for entanglement in a spiral of escalating violence. The idea that one could 'learn' state-building and then, so to speak, after passing one's exams would be ready to put what one has learned into effective practice signals an extensive loss of political and administrative elites' grasp on reality, as well as that of their aides in the universities and think-tanks – a loss that is proportionate to the spread and arrogant expansionism of the managerial, administrative sense of feasibility and control.

4. The Colonial State as a Failing State

Like so many others before them, the authors assert that the emergence of the European state took centuries, whereas the postcolonial state resulted from the relatively short-notice delivery of a product exported from Europe in the period of decolonisation. In the overall context of the lead article, this is a marginal note, but it in turn requires an annotation, since it propagates a cliché that is anything but marginal.

Let me recall here Eugen Weber's (1979) influential study. In it, he argues that France, continental Europe's prime example of statehood, became a modern state – and made "peasants into Frenchmen" – only during the first half of the nineteenth century. This is an initial reservation which relativises the opposition of the west and the postcolonial world along the temporal dimension of state formation. However, the reservation acquires greater weight if we remember that when calculating the timescale of state formation, the colonial period itself must also be added to the balance. Accordingly, sub-Saharan Africa, for example, can look back on a state-building process that has taken not around sixty but around 120 years, approximating the time span between the French Revolution and the First World War. The authors support what I call the 'African strategy': making globalisation, the non-African world and especially the former colonial rulers responsible for the loss of statehood (albeit colonial statehood) that was experienced by many postcolonies. Yet on the contrary, the foundering of statehood in numerous postcolonial nations commences with the colonial state itself – and the authors themselves hint at as much in many apposite comments on the colonial state. The fact that more than a few colonial states were 'weak' and increasingly 'failing' states was conditioned by the "colonial situation" in Georges Balandier's (1982) sense, i.e. a monopoly on violence that reached only minimally into the internal relations of the subjugated communities, an administration whose bureaucratic and direct administrative agency was overlaid with, if not supplanted by, despotic and intermediary action, and a virtually complete lack of the basic legitimacy of cultural affiliation (Trotha 1994b). In other words, the history of the failing and failed state is also the history of colonial states, which did not succeed in overcoming the immense obstacles posed by the wealth of preconditions required for the modern state. The colonial state-constructors felt the cold wind of the non-obviousness of state rule. In many places, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, they did not succeed in effectively protecting themselves from it.

This failure of the colonial state, moreover, includes an experience that should act as a warning to the increasingly apparent colonialism of pacification and democratisation to which state-building military interventions mutate nowadays in the course of their occupations. A failure of state-building is predictable under two key conditions. One of these is radically exogenous state-building, that is, through conquerors who are alien in every respect⁷ – all the more so if these

7 At this point I will not further discuss the complex problem that state formation in the historically 'normal' case is exogenous to the extent that the elite agents of state formation must first of all subjugate those, in particular the mass of the peasant population, who may one day succeed in becoming self-confident 'citizens' or at least, as the German tradition has it, 'citizens of

conquerors have, like those in the current pacification deployments, made it their credo to end the occupation as soon as possible. Successful state formation is a chiefly internal transformation of societal orders, one which, of course, takes place in the context of competing political orders and which in Europe, at least, took the form of “elimination contests” which were typically violent in nature. This, certainly, is how Norbert Elias (1969) describes the warlike and bloody process by which the modern state emerged. Part of the power of Elias’s theory is that it names the indissoluble connection between political and societal transformation and the psychological reorganisation of the person as preconditions of a modern society under state rule. Only the interdependence of these three fundamental transformations makes stable statehood possible, underlining once again the radical non-obviousness of a successful process of state formation. Not least on the basis of these prerequisites for the state comes the second condition of likely failure, as the Boege team correctly observes: state-building that is faced with nations which have no history of successful statehood. This was the norm in sub-Saharan Africa.

5. From the Concept of the Failed State to the Concept of Hybrid Political Orders

The concept of the failed state, with its various degrees of failure, exists in two variants. One of these, and the one from which the Boege team most clearly dissociates itself, is what I call the “institutionalist variant”. Its view of the state is narrowed even beyond the analytical notion of the state in Max Weber’s sense. It regards the OECD model of the strong state and democratic rule of law as the yardstick by which to measure statehood. Its criteria are specific institutions such as general and fair elections guaranteeing secrecy; parliaments; parties; independent judiciaries; and human rights. It might also be called the model of “triple non-obviousness”, since it adds to Max Weber’s state the Enlightenment model with its aspects of democracy and rule of law and – at least in a rudimentary form – the interventionist model adopted by, for example, the welfare state.

As the authors’ presentation of Ghani et al.’s (2005, 2006a, 2006b) concept of the state makes clear, this model is not always easy to separate from the second variant, which I call the “functionalist” one. Here, a political order is not measured by the presence and *modus operandi* of specific institutions, but by the fulfilment of functions which the modern western state typically delivers. State-centrism here is indirect, a kind of ‘second-order’ state-centrism, because the achievements of non-state political orders are measured against (and research criteria are orientated towards) the functions of the modern state.⁸ This model is no less normative than the institutionalist one, and neither theoretical variant has anything in common with the brilliant analyses of state formation made by Bertrand de Jouvenel (1969) and Charles Tilly (1990, 1986). For the latter the beginnings of the state are to be found in brigandage, organised crime and racketeering.

Boege and his colleagues refute both variants of state-centrism in the debate on failed states. They are seeking to persuade political science and peace and conflict studies to join a voyage of discovery that will lead once and for all away from the institutional and functionalist ‘obviousness’ of state-centred thinking (and, as I would add, feeling), and towards the diversity of those political orders that they gather under the heading of “hybrid political orders”. However, in my opinion these efforts do not go far enough.

the state’ (*Staatsbürger*). The classical distinction between exogenous and endogenous state formation is hence a relative one.

⁸ This variant of state-centrism is exemplified by the theoretical basis of Research Centre (SFB) 700 of the German Research Foundation, investigating “Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood” (Risse/Lehmkuhl 2007).

The concept of hybrid political orders responds to the circumstance that the regions of fragile, failing and failed states accommodate political orders of great heterogeneity and non-synchronicity; that they lack a state monopoly on violence and, equally, encounter divergent claims to authority and legitimacy; that ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ institutions co-exist, ensure order and compete for ordering functions – in short, that the regions of fragile states are marked by a principle that has been proclaimed ‘postmodern’, namely hybridisation (Journal of American Folklore 1999). This concept is intended to highlight the diversity of non-state orders, to focus on the connections between elements of the political order that have very different societal origins and follow very different logics, and to draw attention to the fact that the different components of a political order do not exist in isolation but refer to one another, entering into a great variety of interpenetrative relationships.

So far, so good – in the context of tenacious state-centrism all the more so because the concept aims for a fundamental shift in perspective: away from the fixation on state institutions and functions, and towards the search for non-state actors and institutions which make important contributions to shaping the political order.

However, it must be asked whether the postmodern word-coinage is really necessary. Hybridity is not a peculiarity of the postcolonial order or indeed of postmodernity. It appears with the historicity of social orders itself, as should have become clear after the discussion of the historicity of the “people without history” (Wolf 1986) and the “invention of tradition” (Hobsbawm/Ranger 1983). Admittedly, this objection could be countered by saying that we are talking about degrees of hybridisation, and that the present day’s hybrid political orders represent the opposite end of the spectrum to the weak hybridity of, for example, a ‘traditional’ society. But in this counterargument it becomes evident that the concept of a hybrid political order is actually intended as a ‘sensitising concept’ in the sense used by Herbert Blumer (1954) and Norman Denzin (1989). As such, it marks a beginning, even though, on the one hand, it competes with even more general yet less ambiguous terms like “non-state orders” and, on the other, falls behind what is in many respects the greater precision of concepts like “quasi-statehood” (Hahn 2006) or “para-statehood” (Klute/Trotha 2004; Trotha 2004) – concepts, to be sure, which are more limited in analytical scope right from the outset. At the same time, I would argue that ‘hybrid political order’ is conceived of in too static a way. It fails to sufficiently highlight the dynamism of hybridity, just as it downplays the dynamics, interests, conflicts and power struggles of those customary non-state institutions and actors (Klute et al. 2008) which the ‘failed state’ model regards as being the obstacles to modern statehood and the enemies of successful state-building – and which the Boege team would, in turn, like to see taking centre stage.

But while all these modified objections have their place within a narrow academic discussion of the theory and research of hybrid political orders, they are peripheral from the point of view of the ambition the authors are pursuing: to integrate traditional and local institutions, processes and actors into a practice of state formation. For this practical objective, they seem willing to sacrifice the Andersen Principle which they have just used to argue so vehemently and persuasively against state-centred concepts of the failed state. As a result, they remain silent on the price that non-statehood makes us pay for applying the Andersen Principle.

6. Somaliland, the Andersen Principle and the Price of Peace

The authors write: “the Somaliland and Bougainville cases demonstrate that new forms of ‘state-building’ [...] can have positive results” (Boege et al. in this volume, 28). I will restrict myself to commenting on the case of Somaliland, which the Boege team presents in detail. What does that case actually demonstrate?

There is a clue in the fact that the authors place the word ‘state-building’ in quotation marks. For Somaliland is not a case that can document the success of state-building according to the authors’ ideas. Somaliland is a considerable success and a demonstration of several relevant insights. For one thing, it proves that there are ways out of the violent collapse of states, ways which lie beyond the state and in the mobilization of customary institutions and procedures. Crucially, and contrary to the cliché of the rigidity of tradition and customary ‘premodern’ institutions (a cliché that cannot be corrected within the western tradition of emancipation and progress), in Somaliland these institutions and procedures have proved to be extremely flexible and adaptable. While the state collapsed, the segmentary order has endured through all the storms of history, in ever new variations, by ‘modernising’ itself again and again. I call this kind of continuity “supple transcontinuity”. Somaliland is, as well, a demonstration of how there is a central role for the local neo-traditional authorities among the actors of peace-seeking and consolidation. But there is one thing Somaliland certainly is not, and that is an example of state-building – or only if we use the word in the context of a state-centrist debate, metaphorically and ironically, as the quotation marks are presumably intended to indicate.

Somaliland is a segmentary order in etatist clothing. Somaliland reverses, so to speak, the story of *The Emperor’s New Clothes*. It has clothes on, and those clothes fulfil precisely the task that is intended for them: they are cut according to the conventions of taste, namely to satisfy the strict rulebook of international law and international relations, in which states are the dominant actors, and to veil what this rulebook insists must not be revealed, namely a segmentary order. One of Somaliland’s most challenging features is that it has *no* monopoly on the means of violence⁹ and that the path to peace was not accompanied by disarmament of the population – thus remaining, as in all segmentary orders, permanently precarious. Why, then, should we speak of a process of state-building where there is no state? It is pointless to speculate – perhaps the answer lies in the authors’ desire to search for middle ground in the discourse on state-building. The important point is that here they abandon the Andersen Principle and, just like at the end of the story of *The Emperor’s New Clothes*, align themselves with the crowd of chamberlains who “walked with still greater dignity, as if they carried the train which did not exist”.

Somaliland is provocative because it is a segmentary order, and as a segmentary order in the garb of the modern state it claims the status of an actor in international relations and international law. This means nothing less than that the juridical and political foundations of the ‘Westphalian order’ no longer hold, and that international relations must be placed on new foundations. The challenge that seems to be posed by the twenty-first century is to continue the process which began in the context of war, when additional protocols extended the protection of the Geneva Convention beyond the circle of soldiers to combatants in civil war conflicts – that is, to non-state actors. International politics has an analogous task. It must find institutions, procedures and legal systems which are orientated on actors’ ability to ensure peace and order, not exclusively on their statehood. This is what the Boege team reports regarding Somaliland, and what defines the heart of

⁹ The same is true for Papua New Guinea, of which Bougainville is part.

its peace-policy ambitions. However, the authors risk muddying the discourse and praxis around the integration of non-state actors in the formation of orders of peace by disguising this integration as a process of state-building. After all, the issue is no longer the state alone, which has probably passed the zenith of its expansion. It is, rather, the acknowledgement that non-state orders too (or rather, in view of the long history of non-statehood: especially non-state orders) hold a substantial potential for peace and order that we cannot continue to ignore. Applying the Andersen Principle consistently would mean replacing the principle of state-building with the principle of peacebuilding.

That has, of course, its price. I imagine that it is this price, among other things, which makes it so difficult in western democratic welfare states, especially among the political elites, to find legitimation for non-state-centred politics, and which recurs in the harmonising tone of the authors' representation of non-state institutions and procedures. The price is made up of, on the one hand, the fact that the principle of peacebuilding by means of non-state orders follows a principle analogous to the Westphalian order's principle of non-intervention: to achieve peace, also those social and cultural orders and procedures of non-state actors must be accepted which do not seamlessly match the universalist claims of human rights and emancipation. Somaliland is undoubtedly not a country of human-rights individualism or unrestricted press freedom, nor one of gender mainstreaming. The history of human rights and social emancipation is a history of statehood – statehood which has been assertive to an unprecedented degree – and, of course, equally a history of the appalling violation of human rights and the suppression of emancipatory movements; something exemplified by the last century with its fascisms and totalitarianisms. Minorities need a central authority capable of asserting itself if they are to achieve their claims to recognition and emancipation. The end of the state, and a peace policy on the basis of non-state orders, makes life considerably more difficult for such minority and emancipatory claims.

What is even more problematic is that peacebuilding by means of non-state orders has to be paid for by curtailments in the reliability of that peace. Somaliland shows quite plainly that the consolidation of peace in non-state orders takes time and places huge demands on the patience of those concerned. Follow-up and re-negotiations are the rule rather than the exception. The large number of powerful and power-conscious local actors makes it necessary to put in place not a peace treaty but 'omnibus treaties' with local rulers and groups of differing degrees of influence. Concluding peace with one party does not automatically mean the acceptance of the peace treaty by another party. In fact, the peace treaty of the now widely accepted type loses its significance. It is replaced by a plethora of small-scale agreements with more or less influential coalitions of actors. In contrast to western notions of law, moreover, peace accords are only temporary agreements, which therefore remain as precarious as the peace in segmentary orders. Reliable guarantees of lasting peace do not exist in non-state orders. Unlike in state orders with a legitimate monopoly on violence, the non-state order remains in the shadow of violent self-help and of the relative political autonomy of social units, whether those be segments, 'age sets' or 'big men' (Godelier/Strathern 1991; Trotha 1986). We must use the Andersen Principle and the principle of peacebuilding to learn how to deal with such insecurity and lack of reliability – though this should at least be made easier by the fact that the principle of denial and refutation of non-statehood, as pursued by state-centred politics for decades, has failed miserably in many parts of the world.

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A Case for Shifting the Focus: Some Lessons from the Balkans

A Response by Susan L. Woodward

1. Introduction

In their article *What is Failing: States in the Global South or Research and Politics in the West?*, Volker Boege, Anne Brown, Kevin Clements and Anna Nolan argue that if we wish to achieve the dual goals of the current focus on fragile states – conflict prevention and development – then we must take seriously the reality of most contemporary political orders. In contrast to the model of international state-builders, who seek a “western-style Weberian/Westphalian state” that “hardly exists in reality” (Boege et al. in this volume, 16), we should appreciate the stabilizing consequences of hybridity – a mixture of the customary and rational-legal – in countries often labelled fragile or even failed according to this model. They may well be far more stable, effective and legitimate than the “misguided” efforts to do “state-building from scratch” (ibid., 25) which generate political instability and economic crisis, for example in East Timor, precisely because of this mixture.

This is a very important contribution, not least because of two problems it allows me to discuss. First, Boege et al. are by no means the first to lodge a persuasive criticism against the current focus on fragile and failing states. Others have argued as well that much of the real world operates differently and more effectively than the standard by which fragility and failure are being judged, including in relation to the desired outcomes of peace and development. Because the authors also propose a substantial and realistic measure for judging real states and for better assistance policies, however, I am especially concerned that their contribution, too, will fall on deaf ears.

My suspicion that their audience is not listening or open to such alternative policies leads to the second problem. This is their apparent acceptance of the other half of the state-builders' argument: that the problem of state failure and its global threats are real. Yet if we turn our focus onto those individual and organised actors who are making these judgements and designing state-building models and assistance, we do not see one model but great variety, in the number and type of actors involved, in their goals and in their respective models of "good governance" and stable statehood. Similarly, the vast number of countries, types of conditions and outcomes of concern to which the label of fragile or failed states is now applied makes it nearly impossible to do useful research and deduce policy recommendations about a single model, causes of hybridity or its outcomes. There are numerous open questions: is the problem the model? Is hybridity more legitimate and effective in other cases, too? What kind of hybridity are we talking about and what are its causes?

I propose, instead, that we shift the focus of the failing states debate onto those who are promoting the concept, its application and the remedial policies to see whether we can learn more for achieving the goals of Boege and his colleagues. I use the great variation in the Yugoslav cases to illustrate the problem and to propose some explanations that I believe should be added to this debate.

2. Learning from the Balkan Cases

The Yugoslav cases are particularly useful as a starting point because they were prominent in setting the initial state-failure agenda. Although the explicit interventions during the 1990s (three continue even now) represent only two aspects of the vast state-failure debate – the humanitarian and spillover consequences of violent conflict over the state and post-war state-building operations – they have two additional advantages in addressing the concerns of the authors. They cannot be dismissed as separate islands and political orders, and the variety of international action differentiated places that were part of the same contiguous space and the same customary and local political order (in Boege et al.'s terms). The current international consensus that civil wars are a threat to global security and that both international peace and local development depend on complex state-building interventions to build effective and legitimate states began with the intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina after the negotiated peace agreement of November 1995 and culminated in the transitional administration for Kosovo in June 1999. The intrusive case that Boege et al. analyse – Timor-Leste – was actually modelled on the Kosovo mission only months later and by the very same United Nations (UN) staff.

2.1 The Concept of State Failure and the External Model of State-Building

The first thing we learn from the Yugoslav cases is how inconsistent and political the use of the state-failure label is. The Yugoslav state failed in June 1991 when two of its six federal republics, Slovenia and Croatia, declared independence. But the label adopted by outsiders (first by supportive neighbours, then by diplomats of the European Union (EU) and the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), finally *de jure* by the UN in May 1992) was the one proposed by the Slovenes in their campaign, in Europe and the US, to justify independence in direct violation of the international principle of the territorial integrity of sovereign states. Yugoslavia, as the EU's *ad hoc* commission of jurists ruled, was "in the process of dissolution". Even Bosnia and

Kosovo, the two most intrusive state-building interventions, are rarely if ever referred to as failed or even fragile states, although clearly the continuing presence of international military forces and civilian administrations to manage both cases – for thirteen and nine years respectively thus far – is an implicit measure, at least, of their perceived inability to be fully self-governing and their perceived continuing threat to regional security.

The second lesson regards the causes of state failure. The domestic political conflict in Yugoslavia during the 1980s could never have led to state collapse without (1) the external assistance policies that first provoked the destabilizing constitutional conflict, primarily from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and that then, as was the case with the US and the EU, took sides in the internal conflict, nor without (2) the willingness of outsiders to recognize each subsequent secession (Slovenia and Croatia, then Bosnia-Herzegovina and then, with much external disagreement and delay, Macedonia, Montenegro and Kosovo). Even in Macedonia, which outsiders labelled an “oasis of peace” for a decade, the Albanian insurgency that broke that peace in February 2001 was a direct consequence of outsiders’ actions – the 1999 NATO bombing campaign against Serbia in support of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and the Kosovar Albanian claims for independence over the border from Macedonia. Equally, none of the massive violence in each of the wars for independence – excepting the Montenegrin separation from Serbia in May 2006 – would have been necessary if the international community (the UN or the EU) had had in place, or had devised, a procedure to negotiate secession and to resolve the conflicts over borders among overlapping claims for self-determination peacefully. State failure and civil war needed outside accomplices.

Third, if Boege et al. are correct that there is a single model driving standards of judgement and external state-building policies, we would expect to see this model applied in at least the five cases of direct intervention to stop the violence, if not the two peaceful cases of Serbia and Montenegro. Yet we do not, as the next sections will illustrate.

2.1.1 Slovenia and Croatia: The Weberian Model

Intervention in Slovenia and Croatia aimed to secure their independence by negotiating the withdrawal of the Yugoslav army and, in the case of Croatia, replacing it with United Nations peacekeepers. The model of the state was thus Weberian in its minimal sense: establishing the new states’ monopoly over the use of force within their claimed territories. This required two United Nations missions in the case of Croatia because order was being imposed as well on eleven percent of the local population, who were Serbs living in border areas and who wanted rather to belong to a state with fellow Serbs (Serbia) if Yugoslavia ended. After a Croatian military operation in 1995 expelled the UN protection forces – sent to protect these Serbs in four areas of Croatia while outsiders sought a negotiated constitutional settlement between them and the Croatian government – a more intrusive state-building operation was established in the one remaining area of the four, called the UN Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia (UNTAES).

But it, too, treated the state in this minimal sense: its mandate was to restore Croatian government control by integrating local Serbs through joint police forces and holding local and parliamentary elections. In recognizing Croatian sovereignty pre-emptively in December 1992, Germany did require a further element in exchange, namely that the Croatian parliament adopt a revision of its constitution (drafted by German lawyers) to guarantee minority rights – but neither Germany nor the EU acted to require its implementation (and it has never been implemented).

2.1.2 Serbia and Montenegro: Compliance

Intervention in Serbia and Montenegro aimed, instead, at regime change in Serbia, on the argument that its president, Slobodan Milosevic, was responsible for all of the wars of Yugoslav succession. Economic sanctions and political isolation could be labelled a state-destroying, not state-building set of policies, although their guiding idea was rather to force the democratic transition of an authoritarian state through popular anger and elections. One component of this external pressure on Milosevic was support for Montenegrin independence. (Montenegrin political parties were split on whether to remain in a federation with Serbia after the other four republics left or to secede as well.) But because there was no war, international action could not negotiate or force the withdrawal of the Yugoslav army. The methods had to be economic. Sanctions were removed from Montenegro and, following a plan devised by an independent economic research institute in Brussels and supported financially by the US, EU and the international financial institutions (IFIs), a process of separation began by replacing the Yugoslav dinar with the Euro and changing the relevant government institutions.

Compliance with EU and US policies replaced regime change as the international goal when Serbs defeated Milosevic at the polls in September 2000. Sanctions and partial isolation were kept in force, however, in order to compel Serbian cooperation in arresting and delivering persons indicted for war crimes in the Bosnian and Croatian wars to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague. With Milosevic defeated, however, the EU moved to reverse their initial support for Montenegrin independence by requiring the two governments to form a confederation, called a State Union. Hardly a standard western model, the goal was to ease EU diplomacy (foreign, economic and security policies) by creating only one international interlocutor in place of two (and possibly, some argued, regaining some control over a government accused of criminal trafficking). The western model of state-building for Serbia and Montenegro, thus, repeatedly delayed the Westphalian component, with the consequence of delaying as well the domestic process of state-building that was actively assisted for Slovenia and Croatia.

2.1.3 Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia and Kosovo: Intrusive, Post-Conflict State-Building

The interventions in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia and Kosovo, by contrast, are as imposed and disregarding of local traditions and bases of sustainable peace as Boege et al. describe for Timor-Leste, and for the same ostensible reason. That is, in all three cases the model for their independent states was drafted by outsiders, either US government lawyers (from the State Department and the National Security Council) or US and EU diplomats – and not even translated into local languages. The goal of the constitutions was to end wars between parties (three in Bosnia, two in Kosovo and two in Macedonia) who were engaged in a bitter contest over the kind of state and borders they sought. The choice of state model, as in Slovenia and Croatia, was to support politically the sovereignty claims of the party these outsiders favoured and then to impose a *fait accompli* of minority rights on the others.

In contrast to Slovenia and Croatia, however, the resulting imposition is not a Weberian state even in the sense of the minimal criterion of governmental monopoly over the use of force or a Westphalian state in the sense of sovereign independence from outsiders with respect to domestic affairs. Outsiders still, in 2008, control military power; in Bosnia, they also controlled police power until mid-2008 and monitor it to this day. In Kosovo, they will continue to control police and judicial power for an unspecified period into the future. The NATO-led military deployments

are now EU-led, but remain on the ground to deter local opposition to these externally imposed constitutions and international decisions. In Macedonia, NATO did not disarm and demobilize the Albanian insurrectionists. While it replaced the Yugoslav security forces in Kosovo, as in Croatia, NATO did not implement its 1999 “undertaking” for disarmament and demobilization with the KLA either. In a camouflage step toward Kosovo independence (and in violation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1244 of 1999, which recognized the territorial integrity of Serbia and granted Kosovo extensive autonomy), the KLA was retained as a renamed civilian protection force until it could assume the role of national army upon independence (declared, nine years later, in February 2008). By contrast, NATO did eventually require the three warring armies in Bosnia to integrate into one unified army under a central command and civilian defence ministry in 2005, a decade after the war ended, which reversed the non-Weberian provision of the Dayton peace accord that left control over army and police to the three warring parties (Croat, Bosniak, Serb). Although the reversal was a demand by the Bosniak authorities in Sarajevo against the continuing opposition of the other two, one could hardly say, as in Macedonia, that the government had an uncontested monopoly over the legitimate use of force.¹ Indeed, initially, as in Kosovo, the goal was an American commitment at the peace talks to “train and equip” a new Federation (Bosniak-Croat) army to deter and be able to defeat the Bosnian Serb army within their common territory, not an inclusive army.

One might interpret the massive UN and EU investment in a Bosnian border service or, in all three cases, in building a border police, training customs officials and supplying technologically sophisticated surveillance and communications hardware as being driven by a Weberian model of the state, at least if one were unaware of its purpose and primary authority. In fact, the programmes aim to build, for the EU’s Office for Justice and Home Affairs, a capacity to manage EU regulations on migration and against criminal trafficking in drugs, people and other illicit goods through the Balkans to ‘Europe proper’. The widely noted underinvestment in building the judiciary in each country would reinforce this interpretation.

The external state-builders in these three cases, moreover, conceived of conflict resolution and prevention as a matter of constitutional reform by which governments would be required to grant local political, administrative and fiscal autonomy to minorities and to guarantee cultural rights and proportionality in public offices. The terms demanded by outsiders in the Dayton Accord for Bosnia, Ohrid Agreement for Macedonia and Ahtisaari Plan for Kosovo provoked strong opposition from the governments and majority populations on two grounds: that they would create the bases for further separation and potential collapse of their state by institutionalising ethnically defined political rights and, secondly, that they would create immensely complicated and fiscally unsustainable governmental structures. They could also point to inconsistency in these international demands – for extensive decentralization in Kosovo and Macedonia, but a strong and capacious central government in Bosnia including a reduction of the powers granted by the Dayton Accord to local and entity governments – and in their justifications – that such decentralization would *not* be fiscally unsustainable, as the local opposition claimed in Kosovo and Macedonia, whereas centralization in Bosnia was necessary *because* the fiscal burden and duplication of functions of so many layers of government was unsustainable.

¹ Bosniak authorities viewed the continuing struggle over the locus of control for the police forces as an even greater threat to the state than the army, whereas opposition from the Croats and Serbs was so great that the EU chose its strongest conditionality, refusal to sign a Stabilization and Accession Agreement, until they conceded to unification. A European Stability Initiative report (ESI 2007) analyses the many perspectives.

The extent of external imposition and its negative consequences for state-building is also dramatic in the policies for development. The goal of the IFIs, the US Treasury, the EU and most bilateral donors was governmental reform for rapid and extensive trade and monetary liberalisation and property privatization. Whether through a currency board in Bosnia chaired by a non-Bosnian appointed by the IMF or orthodox macroeconomic stabilization policies as condition for credits and loans in all three cases, the effect was centralizing but weakening governmental capacity in the economy along with destabilizing outcomes of high unemployment (rates of 50 to 70 percent), low or no economic growth and the prospect of long-term aid dependence, trade deficits and meagre tax revenues, despite the fiscally expensive, complex political orders to respect minority rights and all the border services, police and militaries designed by outsiders.

2.2 External Actors and Local Structures

The recommendation by Boege and his colleagues to appreciate the advantages of hybridity is based on their own appreciation in the cases they study for the roles of existing local structures and customs in conflict management and economic development. It is also based on their view that outsiders, in contrast, ignore these in their state-building policies, even assuming a *tabula rasa* when they intervene, as if there were no local structures of authority at all, especially in countries emerging from war. This was not the case in the Balkans. Although they were most intrusive in Bosnia, in all cases the outsiders took the pre-war institutions and customs seriously – but saw them as obstacles to their goals.

Post-conflict intervention was an opportunity for fundamental transformation. For example, the local populations were viewed as being burdened by the legacy of communist politics and centrally planned economies and, thus, had to be forced to become democrats and create market economies. With regard to pre-war institutions and customs, the attitude was one of slash and burn. The highly effective accounting system and globally competitive public enterprises of the socialist period had to be replaced on the grounds, they argued, of corruption and enabling wartime leaders to amass private wealth and post-war power. Although Yugoslavia's economy was never centrally planned, was fully open to the world economy as a member of the IMF and World Bank from 1949 and a full member of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, GATT – predecessor of the World Trade Organization (WTO) – by 1965, although its property structure was not state-owned but socially owned and worker managed – the most extreme form of democratic participation in the economy, public services and local government in the world – the international state-builders treated them as if they had been the Soviet Union and needed fundamental change. Yet, while the state-building agenda is therefore more explicitly ideological than in the cases discussed by Boege et al. the problem is thus the same – ignorance of the actual local situation, including its very successful, pre-war governance capability.

As a country, Yugoslavia had a highly modern professional army that was key to the southern defence of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the largest Bosnian firms were highly competitive conglomerates, particularly in capturing Middle Eastern markets, and the local neighbourhood associations (*mesne zajednice*) in towns and cities ensured an unusually high level of service delivery to the very smallest unit. Why then would Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia not be able to continue some of these practices?

The preferred fate of all of the post-Yugoslav governments is to be members of the European Union, thus their governments would have also chosen to transform their socialist institutions. But the difference in foreign approaches to Slovenia (already an EU member) and Croatia

(approved for membership) on the one hand, and Bosnia (especially), Kosovo and Macedonia on the other, does strongly support the hybridity argument made by Boege et al. The wealthiest and most stable of all the new EU member states, Slovenia, never conceded to a complete neoliberal model, quietly retaining instead significant characteristics and capacities from the socialist period, such as an industrial policy and the financial accounting system that outsiders sought to destroy in Bosnia. Sarajevo industrialists complained loudly about the economic disaster caused by the internationally required privatization and break-up of their renowned enterprises, to no avail against outsiders' policies and despite evidence from investigative journalists of widespread corruption in the foreign-managed privatization process. Bosnian villagers chose to rebuild first of all the community centre from the socialist period, against donor protest, as a means of restoring a sense of social stability after the war. Citizens also informally revived their neighbourhood associations, abolished by the international peace agreement, because, as anthropologists discovered in research on social capital after the war (World Bank 2002), these forms of cooperation were the most effective and legitimate means of reconciliation, not the artificial and ethnicizing policies of donors who funded "multiethnic" projects (cooperation between people of different ethnicities) and refused aid to those which were not.

Macedonians complain as well that the power-sharing principles of the imposed Ohrid Accord only enabled the leaders of the dominant (ethnically defined) political parties to hide and protect their illegal economic activities and wealth, rather than to appreciate the decades of coexistence on which they could rebuild post-war stability. The failure of these imposed political orders to gain any domestic legitimacy is the subject of a very large literature on Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia. The social and economic outcomes attest to their ineffectiveness as well, particularly when compared to Slovenia and Croatia.

2.3 Explaining the Variation

Most analysts have no difficulty arguing that international administration and directive state-building were necessary in Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia because they were incapable of doing the task themselves – whether so labelled or not, *de facto*, they are considered failed states. Yet all seven cases experienced civil war, and the level of violence in Croatia was immensely greater than in either Kosovo or Macedonia. All had the same socialist past. All were parts of the same state with its developmental, welfare and national defence capacities, its rational-legal administration and its highly educated population and professional class, that is, features often associated with a Weberian/Westphalian state. Why would international policies, models and corresponding outcomes differ so greatly?

One possible explanation is economic, a difference that also divided Yugoslavia north and south. The three emerging states where interventionist policies and imposed state-building occurred were the poorest areas, with the highest unemployment, lowest export-earning capacity and need for federal subsidies for welfare expenditures and investment from northern firms. Perhaps it is not surprising that along with Serbia and Montenegro, they strongly opposed the break-up of Yugoslavia.

3. Conclusion

Outsiders varied substantially in the model of the state they supported or imposed in the Balkans, and in each case, that model was a motley composite of separate sectoral reforms and political objectives. Boege et al. are correct, however, that also in the Balkans hybridity in their sense makes for greater stability, development and legitimacy (at least in such radical transitions) and that the smaller the external intrusion and greater the local control over the choice and pace of institutional change were, the more locals chose a mixed system. Boege et al. have also contributed substantially to the failing-state debate by turning our focus onto the characteristics of the political orders themselves, as opposed only to their presumed outcomes of international concern, measured in risk factors and quantitative socio-economic indicators. I argue, however, that their research and recommendations cannot be utilised if we focus on *countries labelled* fragile or failed states. We need to redirect this debate and our research onto *those doing the judging, labelling and intervening* – to identify their goals, their actual policies and their openness to listening.

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Hybrid Regimes and Oligopolies of Violence in Africa: Expectations on Security Provision “From Below”

A Response by Andreas Mehler

1. Introduction

The contribution by Volker Boege, Anne Brown, Kevin Clements and Anna Nolan questions the underlying assumptions of the mainstream discourse on fragile states, and rightly so. It is obvious that the conventional perception of fragile states can become an obstacle to the maintenance of peace and development instead of forming the basis of long-term peacebuilding, particularly when state-building has become a blue-print approach to ‘reconstructing’ a country along the lines of the ‘Westphalian’ state. At first I was hesitant to comment upon this paper because I share most of its analysis. However, on closer inspection, I became interested in doing two things: First, I want to add more details on the specific situation in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in the security sector – which, as the ideal-type location of the monopoly of force/violence and security provision for its citizens, is often used to assess, and re-build, state performance. Yet what do such security sectors actually look like? Who are the relevant security actors? I would argue that outside assistance needs to be based on much better, locally-grounded analysis. Second, I need to “water down” the wine offered by the authors in terms of alternative approaches, i.e. fostering hybrid solutions. On the basis of the realities of sub-Saharan Africa such solutions are in danger of bringing on more of the same – neopatrimonial instability and inefficiency – unless they are carefully monitored.

2. The African Path toward State Fragility

From a historical perspective there is nothing particularly noteworthy about state weakness in Africa. Power was rarely ever absolute power and different power holders shared responsibilities, and therefore authority, in most African communities and states.

It is tempting to compare this situation with medieval Western and Central Europe and the competing authorities of, say, bishops and counts. This would include the variation in the intensity of power exerted and felt depending on the proximity of those authorities. Another comparable detail is the existence of a reference model of a better governed public sphere – the ideal of the Roman *res publica* was for medieval Europe what the good governance models advocated by international organisations are for Africa today. The colonial experience and its legacies may still have some further comparable consequences, now and then, here and there. But the trajectories of history are different and the analogies should not be overemphasized.

When looking into modern African history, some authors stress that a legitimate monopoly of the use of violence did not exist at all (Bangoura 1996) or had only limited reach (Herbst 2000; Kopytoff 1987) – the pre-colonial state was a weak one. Some authors even argue that oligopolies¹ of violence, and therefore a high level of actual violence, were the historical norm in Africa (Trotha 2000). Every attempt to “historicize” a country’s specific condition, though, runs the risk of creating false inevitabilities and perhaps becoming too static. It should be acknowledged that actors using violence, security entrepreneurs, self-help groups, etc. emerge and win or lose influence in a dynamic process. This is also true for the state and its security apparatus, which is never just a given that remains unchanged over time. Even the colonial state had trouble proving its ability to maintain the monopoly of violence. It delegated authority to ‘traditional’ leaders who often were or became local despots (Mamdani 1996) – endowed with their own security forces and prisons. But it did so frequently only as a response to a perceived crisis in security provision owing to a limited number of colonial troops.

In accordance with the norms governing the international system, the postcolonial African state elites have, on the other hand, constantly *claimed* to have a monopoly over the use of violence. In the post-Cold War context, this claim has been heard and believed, even if it has never truly been implemented. Even today, more often than not and aided along by political correctness, this claim is not only upheld by state elites in Africa, but also by their main counterparts in the ‘developed’ world. It is obvious that most donor organisations have somewhat more sober assessments about the capacities of the partners on their files, but these rarely inform policies directly. Only when states have completely vanished, as in the case of Somalia, is there a willingness to openly doubt all (state) capability. In some African cases, arguably for example in the Central African Republic, there was never a lot to be lost in terms of a monopoly of violence. Other countries have gone a long way from relative (colonial) order to a state of disorder – Côte d’Ivoire or Sierra Leone may be such examples.

Ulf Engel and myself (2005, 92-93) have argued that monopolies of violence can be lost in three ways. Firstly, by deliberate transfer of authority, where functionally and spatially defined areas of delegated authority are established: large mining concessions or plantations in West, Central and Southern Africa may come to mind. Secondly, monopolies can be abandoned or deserted, either due to underperformance or lack of capabilities. Here, the inability of states to fulfil core functions – like the provision of core (public) goods including security – is the main field of underperformance.

¹ An oligopoly is a situation where there are only a few providers of a product or service.

Whenever states abandon social space, it becomes possible for alternative actors to claim authority by occupying this space and performing the core functions that the state is no longer able or willing to perform; one may think of the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo here. Thirdly, monopolies of violence can be lost through a slow process of eroding legitimacy, which is caused by illegitimate state action. Empirically, monopolies of violence erode whenever states display high levels of despotism and their claim to hold the monopoly of violence is no longer regarded as legitimate by the people being ruled. Ultimately, state claims on the monopoly of violence can then be contested by violent means (“politics as violence” according to Allen 1999). In some cases, there is little alternative legitimacy to replace the state; in others, new forms of legitimacy or accountability emerge. The Casamance area in Senegal may serve as an example of the latter.

Given this backdrop, there are several problems associated with the current practice of outside assistance. First, these processes themselves and the difference in trajectories are not usually taken into account by policies from outside. The uniform answer to a detected deficit in core functions of the state is ‘state reconstruction’. ‘Deep’ intervention seems to be allowed in post-conflict countries, so the argument goes, as they have displayed their ‘failure’ by falling prey to widespread conflict. In the security field, this is translated into ‘security sector reform’ (SSR) which more often than not follows technocratic blueprints informed by normative assumptions about what the state should be. External support for promoting change in the security sector is delivered primarily by officers of the armed forces and police of Western countries. These actors know their profession, but usually little about the dynamics at play in the host country. Related development-type activities are increasingly left either to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or to the implementation agencies of donors. They may have a clearer view on civil society needs and invest more in capacities for monitoring security policies, but at the same time have other normative and professional ‘distortions’, which often get in the way of applying lessons and conclusions from sober analysis. Outside experts work with their state-labelled partners in implementing these reforms. The following questions, though, are quickly put aside in order to come to quick results: who are those ‘partners’, i.e. who do they represent? What are their interests? What is their record in security provision? And what legitimacy can they claim? Only in rare cases is a fresh start with new and fairly elected elites actually possible.

A second problem is related to the implementation phase of major reforms. The theory of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes, which often mark the start of the SSR exercise, may be compelling – getting rid of superfluous, too young or too old members of an armed group in the preceding conflict, building new security forces, a ‘republican army’ and a ‘democratic police’. The practice of such processes calls for scepticism, though (see for example Hoffman 2004; Jennings 2007) – not least because of informal rules and the continuing existence of highly hierarchical authority patterns. Often, the wartime commanders decide who is to be disarmed, who is allowed to hand in a weapon and get some donor-funded reward in return (probably to be shared with the commander). This all tells us how much more realistic international actors have to be when engaging in state-building.

3. Oligopolies of Violence: The Liberian Case

Thus, the more or less symbolic presence of a repressive (security) apparatus and the application of accepted rules in the ‘ideal’ European state is far removed from the African reality, at least in countries in crisis. Instead, there are oligopolies of violence that (by definition) comprise a fluctuating number of partly competing, partly cooperating actors of violence of different quality (Mehler 2003). Some of these actors are public, others private and still others are community-based actors. All are subject to important changes over time. “Functional” and “territorial” oligopolies of violence each follow a different logic. While the former include different types of actors charged with protecting, for example, markets, private property, border towns, etc., the second can result in a split of the national territory into smaller zones more or less exclusively controlled by rebel movements, warlords, traditional authorities or others. It is not unusual to find a constellation that can be labelled an “oligopoly with a dominant market leader” (Lambach 2007) – the official state army of a rump state or a strong peacekeeping mission can take the role of such market leaders. This form of oligopoly can lead to relative peacefulness (at least in the short term).

Let us take Liberia as an example of an oligopoly of violence with a high number of violence/security actors.² Liberia is a good example for a dynamically changing oligopoly of violence, as many state and non-state actors have controlled means of violence over the last three decades, some of them barely analysed with regard to their protective capacities. A number of actors with no clear ‘mandate’ in the security field, who could be described as having secondary security functions, are regularly mentioned in conversation (e.g. secret societies and market authorities, who mainly have other regulatory functions but clearly interfere in the security field). At the same time, the state was for a long time more of a source of insecurity than security.

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In Liberia the state security forces, who were largely behind Samuel Doe’s coup in 1980 and turned into a predominantly Krahn ethnic force in the following years of his regime, had collapsed during the first civil war (1989-1996). A proliferation of state actors could be observed from then on. Beginning in 1997, Charles Taylor used some formally state-based services – for example the State Security Service (SSS) – but also his dreaded Anti-Terrorism Unit (ATU) as a parallel force. An entire part of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in Accra in 2003 was devoted to security sector reform, not least because of the multiplication of state actors in the sector over the past decades. Besides the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), the Liberian National Police (LNP), the Immigration Force, the SSS, custom security guards and other statutory security units were to be immediately restructured.

The ‘state’ was hence never considered to be a homogeneous actor in that field. Charles Taylor’s armed movement, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) started as a broad-based anti-Doe rebel organisation in the late 1980s, but quickly became the warlord’s personal instrument. When Taylor and the party originating in the NPFL (the National Patriotic Party, NPP) won elections in 1997, the organisation took on a slightly different role again: it became a parallel structure to the state, which was in a chaotic state anyhow.

The two new rebel movements of the second civil war (1999-2003), Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), were rather successful in conquering territory, advancing on Monrovia quickly. They did not have the time, and maybe neither the ambition, to become a para-state in their area of domination (or “stationary bandits” in Mancur Olson’s (1993) terminology). When LURD and MODEL (as well as

² I use both terms interchangeably as my assumption is that many actors are protecting one part of the population while threatening others, i.e. there are no ‘good’ or ‘bad guys’ as such.



NPFL) became part of a transitional power-sharing government after the 2003 peace agreement, they turned into something close to a political party.

For the security sector, it was in fact ex-combatants from all three organisations that continued to play a role after the peace agreement. Some of them were employed by political parties to take care of their security concerns. Arguably this is one explanation for the short violent post-election contestation in 2005 by followers of defeated presidential candidate George Weah. Yet those were quickly brought under control by peacekeepers belonging to the comparatively large UN mission for Liberia (UNMIL). UNMIL rapidly became the most important security provider (i.e. the “dominant market leader”) in the country, but was still unable to control more than the main roads on a permanent basis.

In some parts of the city of Monrovia, efficient self-help mechanisms emerged, often called community-watch teams; these offered important protective functions. In the countryside, a number of additional communitarian actors played a role. While people in Monrovia did not seem to attribute a big role to the Poro and Sandee secret societies, this was different for the secondary towns of Buchanan and Tubmanburg. *Table 1* below gives an overview of the multiple actors on different levels of ‘the’ security sector in Liberia. It cannot capture its fluid character described above, but should serve to remind any external actor of the complexity of the field of intervention.

TABLE 1: The Security Tableau in Liberia (2000-2007)

	Primary security / violence function	Secondary security / violence function
Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AFL • LNP • SSS • International peacekeepers: ECOMIL, UNMIL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market superintendent
Private	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebel movements: LURD, MODEL • NPFL • Private security companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political party militias • Street Boys, etc. • Ex-Combatants
Collective / communitarian or traditional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vigilantes, area teams, neighbourhood watches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poro, Sandee, Kendewo, Sendewo, Bodio (secret societies) • Traditional authorities • Zone leaders

In sum, it is important for outsiders and policy-makers to know who is effectively protecting which group and build on this, while simultaneously exploring ways to reduce the negative and threatening aspects. Sometimes it would help to acknowledge and ‘certify’ actors of violence as security actors in exchange for their subscribing to a code of conduct, but this will not be easy to achieve everywhere.



As a first step in the direction of gaining a better understanding of the security field in Liberia, we asked focus groups about *their* perception of actors in the security arena in the context of a research project focusing on oligopolies of violence in post-conflict societies.³ Additionally, we conducted a quantitative survey in the urban context. (Some results are shown in *Table 2* below.) Two and a half years after the end of the war, the opinion poll revealed a very positive appraisal of the UNMIL mission's protective capacity by inhabitants of Monrovia, Buchanan and Tubmanburg (Basedau et al. 2007).⁴ One further interesting result is the attribution of importance and positive ratings both to neighbourhood watch groups and to private security companies. Obviously most striking is the preponderant role attributed to the peacekeeping mission, calling into question how it could be replaced by 'the state' at short notice.

TABLE 2: Importance of Security/Violence Actors

This actor... ⁵	...is very / somewhat important for my personal security	...does not affect my personal security at all	...is a big / somewhat of a threat for my personal security
UN Peacekeepers (UNMIL)	96,5	2	1,4
Liberian National Police (LNP)	92,5	4,6	2,9
Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL)	66,1	24,3	9,5
Vigilantes/Area Teams/ Neighbourhood Watch	62,9	19,9	17,2
Private Security Companies (e.g. Dyncorp Intl., Inter-Con Security)	40,7	55,4	3,9
Poro/Sandee (secret societies)	17,9	52,6	29,5
Political Party Militias	8,3	42	49,7
Ex-Combatants (MODEL, LURD, Taylor Government)	3,4	7,1	89,5
Street Boys	0,5	7,4	92,1

We were surprised that Liberians rated state structures like AFL and LNP so well, as the former was undergoing restructuring and the latter was in a training phase. This can only be interpreted as wishful thinking. And the wish can be spelt out: "give us a republican army and a service-oriented police in a near-to-perfect state context."

³ The project "Legitimate oligopolies of violence in post-conflict societies (Liberia, Sierra Leone)" was run by the Institute of African Affairs/German Institute of Global and Area Studies. Funding came predominantly from the German Foundation for Peace Research. For more information see www.giga-hamburg.de/index.php?file=fp_gewaltoligopole.html&folder=fsp2.

⁴ The survey was conducted in November 2005.

⁵ The survey question was: "For each of the following actors, please state whether you feel protected or threatened by them?" "Is very" and "is somewhat" categories were added for this compilation. The options "don't know" and "no answer" are not reproduced here.

4. The African Experience with Hybrid Regimes, or: The Neopatrimonial State

This perfect state is not in sight, neither for Liberians nor for most other African countries. So what is the real-time alternative? There is a danger that the hybrid regime which Boege et al. advocate will not be the kind of functional mix of ‘modern’ and ‘customary’ institutions of the Somaliland type, but rather ‘more of the same’, i.e. a neopatrimonial regime (Erdmann/Engel 2007): where there is no division between the private and the public sphere, where clientelism dominates vis-à-vis formal procedures, but there also exist rational-legal facades which could function well in selective areas – last but not least in the repression apparatus. Elite accommodation in neopatrimonial regimes is a function of the distribution of sinecures. The well-embedded economic deficiencies, the dynamics of the education system (multiplication of elite aspirants) and unfavourable world market conditions for major export commodities moved many such regimes close to implosion in the 1980s. The incapacity to maintain the logic of distribution led to conflicts – and partly to violent ones.

Neopatrimonialism has proved structurally unstable. In the words of Ian Taylor and Paul Williams (2008, 139): “daily government in a neopatrimonial regime thus resembles a balancing act to maintain a degree of political stability by satisfying the regime’s supporters and weakening its opponents. Since the end of the Cold War, those regimes that failed to persuade their external (mainly Western) creditors they were committed to democratic reform saw their external funding channels dry up, making their balancing act even harder.” A second argument against neopatrimonialism is inefficiency: the general trend after independence was a growth of the state apparatus only in numbers and not in its problem-solving capacity, with more locals filling the ranks of the different services. In many states, the official security forces were not exempt from the general tendency to disregard merit as the main criteria for employment. The number of soldiers and policemen grew, but this did not make their services more effective.

Talking about state-sponsored security in such circumstances means very different things for the elite and for the ordinary people. Elites may turn to state-services with comparatively more success and they usually have the means to take care of their personal security by additionally using private providers of security. Ordinary people lack that opportunity, they receive little state support in their search for protection; in some countries they are constantly asked to pay for this service even though they are entitled to get it for free. Neopatrimonialism therefore is not the only, but certainly a specific problem in the security field in many African states. Could it really also be part of the solution?

In most of Africa the inefficient state cannot justly be described as a provider of security. It is instead regularly circumvented and replaced with more viable alternatives by its citizens. But it has nonetheless preserved its appeal and some of its power. Official security forces continue to play an important role, but certainly not as the sole relevant actor. And most of the time they are manipulated by a fraction of the elites or a president who wants to safe-guard his personal rule – and not to protect more or less ‘neutral’, ‘service-oriented’ or ‘republican’ state institutions. It may therefore be advisable to look at the provision of security in a different way, i.e. by analysing which main actors do deliver, and what they deliver. We should also always analyse their actual constellation, which is often rather different from what can be called a “monopoly of violence”. The state’s role in providing security has, however, remained a mental reference point, not only for its elites but also for the population, as was shown for the Liberian case above (see *Section 3*). Supranational bodies – be it the sub-regional organisations (e.g. the Economic Community of West

African States, ECOWAS) or the ever-growing security architecture on the level of the African Union – uphold an equally prominent role for the African state in security provision. This leads to a paradox situation where facade and substance have little in common.

What Boege et al. propose may therefore not be exactly (or just partly) the answer to the problem. It is rarely what ordinary people on the ground would advocate. If a ‘hybrid solution’ in the African context could turn out to be identical with the familiar neopatrimonial system – which has historically been a part of the problem rather than a part of the solution when it comes to security provision – little would be won. There is no reason to be quite so optimistic as to state that “generative processes, innovative adaptation and ingenuity” (Boege et al. in this volume, 30) would automatically be the local response, leading to more peaceful societies if ‘the West’ would only let them. It might not be necessary to advocate an entirely different system, but just an openness for deviations from an ideal. This is what Boege and his colleagues claim, too. In my view, it might additionally be necessary to do two things: 1) constantly analyse the efficiency of individual local security actors (state *and* non-state) in providing security, and 2) care more about local perceptions (because they matter). Opinion polls are a useful instrument in this context. Their results can suggest the acceptance of a given hybrid order, but also produce additional reasons to alter it.

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“Prêt-a-Porter States”: How the McDonaldisation of State-Building Misses the Mark in Afghanistan

A Response by Susanne Schmeidl (with Masood Karokhail)

1. Introduction¹

The lead article’s question of whether it is states that are failing or those who are trying to (re-) build them sparked my interest, as I have been trying to understand the utility of a top-down approach to state-building ever since I got involved in the ‘Afghanistan project’ (Schmeidl 2007a, 2007b). While it may be impossible to eliminate biases completely, I want at least to make my own transparent.

From the onset I would like to highlight that I am commenting on state-building from the perspective of a social worker and sociologist who has spent most of her career working with people at the grass-roots level. Secondly, at least in the Afghan case, I am not at all a detached observer but an involved practitioner, who may have been inadvertently promoting and developing “hybrid state-building” without thinking of it as such. I have been working on peacebuilding in Afghanistan – which, according to Susan Woodward, *is* essentially state-building² – since 2002. Between 2002 and 2005 I worked with the Afghan Civil Society Forum on giving civil society a voice and role in the peacebuilding process, among others in the constitution-making process and both elections (presidential and parliamentary). In 2003, I also helped

¹ This article has been informed profoundly by my work in Afghanistan, especially with The Liaison Office, which I helped co-found in 2003. I would like to acknowledge in particular that conversations with Masood Karokhail have greatly influenced my own thinking. In addition, I have greatly benefited from insights gained while conducting research with several TLO researchers, notably Shafiqullah Ziai, TLO’s Head of Research. Most of TLO’s research findings are not yet published, but should become available to the public in 2009. Nevertheless, the arguments in this article are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of The Liaison Office, other than *Box 1* which is based on internal TLO documents and contributions by Masood Karokhail.

² Statement during a panel she chaired at the International Studies Association, San Francisco (2008). Boege et al. also seem to use state- and peacebuilding interchangeably.

develop the Tribal Liaison Office (TLO, nowadays The Liaison Office), which I have since worked for in an advisory and development capacity (Karokhail/Schmeidl 2006). The TLO's mission is somewhat akin to the hybrid state-building proposed by Boege and his colleagues, proclaiming "to differ from state-building that directly or indirectly only emphasizes modernity" by aiming at "facilitating the formal integration of communities and their traditional governance structures within Afghanistan's newly emerging governance, security and reconstruction framework".³

In light of the above, this short comment focuses on lessons drawn from Afghan state-building from the perspective of a hybrid scholar-practitioner looking at states from the bottom-up, rather than from the top-down. The focus on Afghanistan is not only fitting due to my own experience, especially while working with The Liaison Office. The country also seems to provide some perfect examples of hybrid political orders, albeit ones that have been frequently associated with state failure (i.e. when the communist government fell in 1992 and when the Taliban fell in 2001; see Stahel 2007, 42).

2. The State of Afghanistan

According to the "quantifiable" index of state failure tracking the performance of 177 countries – linked to four social, two economic and six political and military indicators – Afghanistan was recently ranked as the seventh-least stable country in the world, coming in high above the warning range for imminent failure (Fund for Peace 2008). A state that actually provides services (and controls the means of violence and territorial integrity) – something that we take very much for granted in the west – does not currently exist in Afghanistan. The average Afghan citizen's lack of trust in his/her state is most easily illustrated by the reluctance (even resentment) to pay taxes to an entity that seems to be neither representative nor able to provide security or other basic needs (such as electricity, employment, education or health care).

Unlike the Afghan public and some Afghan experts, it took many international actors several years to realize that the Afghan state, which is mostly limited to Kabul and a few other major cities anyway, was not doing so well; something I have previously compared to Hans Christian Andersen's fairytale of *The Emperor's New Clothes* (Schmeidl 2007a). Today, seven years into the Afghan state-building project, everybody seems to agree on one thing: the Emperor has caught the flu, and it might prove to be fatal. Yet, instead of trying to objectively diagnose the causes of the illness and search for a possible cure, the blaming game has started. While successes are readily claimed – even if they are short-lived – failures are always seen as the responsibility of somebody else; be it the neighbours of the Afghan government, the insurgency, poor governance and corruption, ill-advised external state-building efforts or the backwardness of rural Afghanistan, which is presumably simply too pre-modern, wild and unruly to come together into an orderly state project.

One of the conditions (or ailments) of the Afghan state seems to be an 'infestation' of what Boege et al. call hybrid political orders, accompanied by a mismatch between *de jure* and *de facto* state power (Wilder/Lister 2007). The latter is currently not only exercised by localised strongmen but markedly also by the Taliban insurgency (see Schetter 2007; ICOS 2008). According to Andreas Wimmer and Conrad Schetter (2002, 8-9) this is not a new development, as the Afghan state historically was largely restricted to cities, with the vast rural areas lying under the control of non-state power holders. Amin Saikal (2005) calls the phenomenon "Afghanistan's weak state and strong society". Yet it begs the question how the modern state in Afghanistan can be considered to be failing if it historically never really existed outside the country's cities to begin with.

³ TLO DRAFT Constitution (2008; first drafted in 2003, first revised in 2007 and currently under review).

It is here that the lead authors' argument comes into focus: the source of state failure possibly does not lie within the states (or societies) themselves, but rather in the western-centric Weberian ideal-type *model* of a state, which hardly exists outside the west (or more narrowly the OECD region), but which the international community nevertheless tries to sell to the Global South with a 'prêt-a-porter' mentality.

2.1 State-Builders' Blindness or Bankruptcy?

Even if there are debates on what to call it, a lot of attention and resources have been spent on the post-2001 international engagement in Afghanistan, which is clearly marred by a conflict of interests (building peace vs. fighting terrorism, cf. Schmeidl 2007a). Both Astri Suhrke (2006) and Andrew Wilder and Sarah Lister (2007, 85) consider it to be state-building, albeit largely top-down and without a coherent overarching strategy. Ashraf Ghani and Clare Lockhart (2008, 12), frequently cited experts on state-building who both worked on the Afghan project between 2001 and 2005, on the other hand, argue that "the international community was resistant to the concept of state building" in Afghanistan, focusing instead on "old approaches [...] wrapped in the language of state building". These old approaches or state-building 'clothes', whether invisible or ill-fitting, are what Wilder and Lister (2007, 85) call manageable technocratic solutions rather than coherent strategies. I would call it a 'McDonaldization' of state-building (Schmeidl 2007a).

This McDonaldization emphasizes not so much the quality of the end product but the speed in production (fast vs. slow food). While western states have had decades, if not centuries, to form, new states are expected to shape up essentially overnight. Yet "building state and security takes *time*, and it is not clear that the wider world is prepared in all cases to make the commitment" (Maley 2007, 12; original emphasis). Lakhdar Brahimi (2007, 17) contends in retrospect that the "'light footprint' never meant for us a 'rushed footprint'". The international community must understand that state-building efforts require long-term commitments of human and financial resources". Nevertheless, as Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, a post Brahimi held from 3 October 2001 to 31 December 2004, he not only assisted in crafting the Bonn Agreement, but also oversaw the race to complete it: constitution (2003), presidential elections (2004), parliamentary elections (2005) – to mention just a few milestones. Such a speed may not only lead to burn out among some of the hard-working aid workers, but also exhaust the population that has to sprint through a societal formation process.

'Prêt-a-porter' state-building also seems to take little pride in exporting the kind of state that those delivering it would likely prefer themselves, rather settling for second or even third best (the fine difference between *haute couture* and *prêt-a-porter*). Boege et al. (in this volume, 19) point out that colonial authorities acted by and large in an authoritarian manner abroad, even if they themselves came from democratic states. The constitution-making process in Afghanistan is a fitting current-day example. Those involved judged it as "reasonably successful" in retrospect (Brahimi 2007, 8; Rubin 2004; Brandt 2005), but had been far more optimistic at the time of involvement. Observers were more critical all along; and one particular Crisis Group report (2003) drew intense criticism by Brahimi, who later on conceded: "in hindsight, I strongly believe that it would have been much better to keep that [i.e. the 1964] constitution for a few more years rather than artificially decide (as it was done under strong external pressure) that a brand new constitution had to be produced barely two years after the adoption of the Bonn Agreement" (Brahimi 2007, 8). In hindsight, Brahimi also argued that "*elections* are not the ultimate aim of a peace process and must be used as a mechanism

to engender deliberation, participation and national reconciliation; they should not be turned into a superficial and hurried public demonstration of doubtful democratization” (Brahimi 2007, 4; original emphasis). Still, while treating elections as a logistics exercise rather than a democratic process only reached its peak after Brahimi had left (during the 2005 parliamentary elections run by Peter Erben), it was Brahimi who oversaw the (hastily called) 2004 presidential elections.

Furthermore, there seems to be some disagreement on the final vision of the ‘ideal state’ to be built, leading to rather diverse assistance models and possible contradictions. The pillar approach adopted for Afghanistan, where “different donor countries were given lead responsibility for reform of different sectors”, has painfully illustrated this point (Nixon 2007, 9). More profoundly, there might even be disagreement within pillars. Thus, Afghanistan was modelled according to the presidential system of the US (organised around the figure-head of President Karzai), when in fact its regional and cultural diversity may perhaps rather have called for a parliamentary system à la federal Germany or canton-orientated Switzerland. Similarly, the European engagement in Afghanistan (EUPOL) has tried to emphasize civilian policing, while the US has been happy to have military and private security contractors train the police force.

Finally, there has also been a strong focus on modernity (Suhrke 2007) and urban centres, arguably creating “one of the most highly centralised states in the world” (Wilder/Lister 2007, 86). The East Timor case presented in Boege et al. (in this volume, 25/26) as “misguided ‘state-building from scratch’” creates a chilling feeling of *déjà vu* in Afghanistan, giving the impression of state-building as an exercise where lessons seem neither to be observed, learned nor transferred. This gives some merit to the argument that peace and state-building are being McDonaldised: how else can one explain the similarity in misguided approaches between Afghanistan and East Timor? Here are just a few examples of what could be observed in both countries:

- Centralized state-building in the capital cities – the islands of Kabul (and Dili) – ignoring the vast rural areas, which leads to a marginalisation of local culture and rural communities: “the vast majority of Afghans interact with the state institutions at the provincial and district levels, yet the near exclusive focus of state-building efforts from 2002-2005 was to strengthen central government” (Wilder/Lister 2007, 85);
- Crucial misperceptions of external actors and political elites who had spent a long time in (western) exile about issues such as the importance of rural communities, traditional structures, tribal police and sub-national governance;
- Ignoring the existence and functioning of ‘traditional’ governance institutions and assuming that state-building could start from scratch (only because the Taliban system had been toppled).

The outcomes are rather similar as well: in both countries there is now a difficult security situation, leading some to interpret that democracy and the local culture are antagonistic (with a condescending undertone of “they just don’t get it”). Democracy appears imposed, far from what had been promised to the Afghan people (what respectable democracy allows warlords to be elected into parliament?). The state which the international community propped up – and which is considered to be failing again – is not seen as inherently Afghan (or East Timorese). Hence many Afghans now feel caught in a war between two entities who do not represent them (the insurgency vs. the Afghan government in Kabul), but who still expect the population to pay the bill (in taxes and casualties). Finally, there has been a resurgence of customary practices that were initially repressed (in Afghanistan both the communist government and later the Taliban tried to do this and failed). Currently about 80-90

percent of all disputes are resolved through informal mechanisms (Barfield et al. 2006; Centre for Policy and Human Development 2007).

2.2 The Difference between Traditional Customary Institutions and Warlords

While I am in general agreement with Boege and his colleagues, I would like to ensure that the idea of hybrid political orders does not end up being adopted as an uncritical fad, where the pendulum swings from one extreme (“modernise everything”) to the other (“embrace everything that appears even remotely traditional”). The discussion so far has demonstrated that Afghanistan actually serves as a good case for questioning whether hybrid state-building in itself is *always* a desirable outcome, especially in the judgement of the country’s citizens, or whether in certain situations a ‘new state’ indeed needs to be created.

The biggest issue might be how to deal with strongmen and warlordism. Boege et al. could come across as inadvertently endorsing hybrid models with warlords in the ‘driver’s seat’ by arguing that “warlord systems are embedded in the local societal structure of clans and tribes (as witnessed in Afghanistan or Somalia)” (in this volume, 23). This is an extremely tricky issue in Afghanistan, as I have met no Afghan whose preferred choice is to live in a state run by warlords (cf. Wilder/Lister 2007). While Afghans initially looked to the Taliban for security, they only reluctantly do so nowadays, as the insurgency itself has changed to comprise more arbitrary and criminal elements that seem to impose highly skewed governance in their own favour.⁴

Furthermore, a clear distinction needs to be made in Afghanistan between what was there before the war, when indeed “tribal and religious leaders created ‘micro-societies’ that related to central and other powers on the basis of negotiation and patronage” (Lister 2007, 3), and what exists now. It is crucial to understand that tribal structures have been damaged and fragmented through the years of wars. In particular, the leadership has changed: tribal actors who gained their legitimacy through being supported by communities and linked to customary institutions have been slowly supplanted by *jand salar* (gunmen, warlords) who tend to be powerful because of their military might (ibid; Wilder/Lister 2007). Apart from some cases where traditional leaders have become strongmen, warlords have mostly risen to power more arbitrarily than tribal elders, who either inherit or achieve their status through specific qualifications. Warlords thus often disregard (or go against) traditional law (*pashtunwali*) and are hence often considered to be criminals within customary systems (Schetter et al. 2007; see also Guistozzi 2005; Guistozzi/Noor Ullah 2006). In such a situation it is very difficult to simply ‘rebuild’ what once was when looking for hybrid political orders, although this is advocated by some in a desperate attempt to find a solution for Afghanistan’s plight (Johnson/Mason 2008).

The rule of strongmen in Afghanistan is associated with near anarchy, as it was post 1992 when the Communist government finally fell: *mujahideen* factions were unable to reach power-sharing agreements, with most commanders running their area of influence as private fiefdoms. Infighting and the elimination of competition were common, as were extortion and human rights abuses. Only direct clients of warlord patrons stood to benefit from the hybrid political orders during these times, and not the general population, which was one reason why the Taliban was initially warmly welcomed. They effectively put an end to the rule of *mujahideen* factions in 1996, pushing them further and further north until they only held about ten percent of Afghanistan’s territory. At this point, rural areas were ruled once again by hybrid political orders that had existed prior to the war and tended to be based on customary institutions. Similarly to Afghan kings, the Taliban had

⁴ Ongoing research by The Liaison Office in Southern Afghanistan, to be published in 2009.

power-sharing arrangements with these hybrid political orders, which allowed them to provide relative peace and security nation-wide, albeit as an authoritarian regime (that nevertheless had regional variations due to this arrangement).

The post-2001 intervention changed this, when the US army utilised the Northern Alliance as a ground-force to oust the Taliban (Andres et al. 2006). A new period was ushered in, where the international community arguably handed victory not to the Afghan people, but to a minority of armed militia. William Maley (2006) describes how the 2001 Bonn agreement accommodated strongmen by handing out ministries as war bounty to different factions, starting the new “‘big tent’ approach to government” (Wilder/Lister 2007, 88) which inadvertently endorsed hybrid political orders that most ordinary Afghans would have opposed.⁵ International military actors also strengthened *de facto* power holders in their war against terrorism (ibid). Wilder and Lister (2007, 85) argue that the failure to develop a state-building strategy, which would have attempted to systematically engage subnational institutions and “bring them back under the authority of central government”, created the current impasse. A vicious circle thus began, where a weak central state relied on co-opting *de facto* power holders to run its affairs in the provinces (largely without checks and balances or any reprimand for human rights violations), allowing these power holders access to development resources that in turn increased their control and status.

Considering how Afghanistan has inadvertently emerged with strong hybrid political orders of this kind while the small central state appears to be failing does indeed call for “more research [...] on the potential capacities (and limits or deficiencies) of hybrid political orders, to determine in more detail how hybridity can be utilised for peacebuilding, good (enough) governance and development” (Boege et al. in this volume, 30/31). Such research may also help to identify actors within hybrid orders that should be treated as absolute spoilers and hence neither be accommodated nor co-opted, but sidelined.

3. Finding Appropriate Forms of Complementarity and Interaction: A Role for Civil Society

Boege and his colleagues state that “the best outcome of the novel approach to state-building [...] would be that new forms of governance emerge: combining state institutions, customary institutions and new elements of citizenship and civil society in networks of governance which are not introduced from the outside, but embedded in the societal structures on the ground” (in this volume, 31). Figuring out how to achieve this, however, means reaching out into the ‘great unknown’, something many are afraid of. In Afghanistan, the assumption that it would be better to deal with the ‘devil you know’ (by co-opting warlords) than the ‘devil you don’t know’ (customary institutions) turned out to be wrong. In the end, warlords and strongmen seem to have hijacked the international agenda for their own purposes, rendering the embryonic central state powerless.

Working out organic approaches to hybrid state-building necessitates the involvement of civil society, both modern and traditional. But while abundant lip service is being paid to participatory approaches (see for example Brandt 2005 on the constitution-making process), civil society engagement in the Afghan state-building process so far can be considered symbolic at best, and a fig leaf approach at worst. Even though civil society has played a role throughout the past years, it has never been meaningfully engaged in the state-building exercise (Schmeidl 2007a, 2007b), with both the Afghan government and the international community in fact trying to control and instrumentalise civil society, even seeing it as a threat to a strong state. In the constitution-

⁵ One of the questions raised most frequently during nation-wide civic education outreach campaigns by the Afghan Civil Society Forum and its partners during 2003-2005 was when there would be an end to warlord rule.

making process, for example, civil society involvement was seen as a potential threat to a modern constitution – or the kind of constitution that external actors and Afghan elites found appropriate. In this instance, a true opportunity for arriving at a hybrid social order was missed.

The experience of The Liaison Office⁶ (TLO), which started work in late 2003, illustrates further the difficulty of endorsing hybrid political orders (Karokhail/Schmeidl 2006). In the beginning, a lot of work had to be done to convince donors to support a project that did not deal with modern structures but engaged with traditional institutions, attempting to link them to the emerging modern state. There was great resistance for three reasons. First, there was a fear of generating processes that ran parallel to the modern state-building effort – international actors seemed unable to envision the existence of hybrid state forms. This continues to date: working with traditional tribal *shuras*, for example, is seen as competing with (or even contradicting) the National Solidarity Programme's approach of working through the newly set-up community development councils (CDCs).

A second source of resistance were fears that structures violating international human rights law (especially the rights of women) would be strengthened. Indeed, traditional customary structures are all male and tend to treat women as secondary citizens, which goes against a modern outlook. Such opposition, however, was voiced far less when it came to accommodating strongmen, although their treatment of women is similar. Nevertheless, if we try to work with organic hybrid political orders, we may need to accept that their ethics system differs from ours, emphasizing community over individual rights. Yet engagement does not necessarily mean endorsement, as long as one enters into dialogue with existing structures on the different views regarding individual and women's rights, which TLO has done. And with continuing development and education, the 'modern' in hybrid political orders is likely to win the upper hand.

The third reason was that traditional structures were equated with the Taliban; this issue was largely raised by USAID representatives, who ended up not providing funding. This is an intriguing objection from a country that had no problem with arming militia elements in its fight against terrorism and that is currently considering arming tribal elements in its fight against the insurgency.⁷ Nevertheless, one has to broach the issue that in Afghanistan the search for a hybrid political order could include elements that may at one point have been part of the insurgency. This is because the cost of exclusion may be even greater, as the current situation shows (the Taliban were excluded from the Bonn Agreement). The Liaison Office's approach promotes dialogue that tries to encourage linkages; such an inclusive approach should encompass all parties that are interested in a peaceful future for Afghanistan. Currently this includes, among others, communities that have been alienated and disenfranchised by the Afghan government, and often associate themselves with the insurgency due to grievances and for lack of better options.

Despite these early criticisms, however, donors have started to see The Liaison Office as a viable partner for engagement in rural Afghanistan, especially in less secure areas. At times it appears as if the pendulum has swung from a fear of too uncritically embracing collaboration with traditional structures to literally 'leaping' onto the tribal bandwagon. While this has assisted TLO in increasing its work beyond the southeast, where it originally emerged from, it has also raised it to a level where the Afghan government has started showing concerns about competition, nearly closing down the organisation in mid-2008.⁸

6 The Tribal Liaison Office was recently requested by the Afghan government to drop the word 'tribal' from its name, which was considered inappropriate.

7 "US may rely more on Afghanistan's tribal militia: report", in: AFP, 11 October 2008 (available at http://rawstory.com/news/afp/US_may_rely_more_on_Afghanistan_s_t_10112008.html); "To fight Taliban, US eyes Afghan tribes", in: *The Christian Science Monitor*, 16 October 2008.

8 The Afghan Civil Society Forum had a similar experience during the constitution-making process, although this fell short of attempted closure, when it was barred from doing consultations due to the government's fear of losing ownership of a politically sensitive process (Schmeidl 2007b).

Box 1 – Some Lessons from The Liaison Office on the Search for Hybrid Political Orders

- TLO bases its work on the understanding that traditions in rural areas, although affected by three decades of war and social upheaval, still matter more than external actors may be willing to admit (cf. Boege et al. in this volume and Hagmann/Hoehne 2009). Networks built on traditional structures, among others, have functioned as an important survival mechanism and point of reference for the Afghan population during the long years of war. Understanding the Afghan experience acknowledges that introducing accelerated change while systematically eroding traditional structures runs into an impasse at best, while igniting long-lasting conflict at worst. Thus, TLO looks for linkages between customary and modern institutions that can ease a transition period – or possibly lead to an organic hybrid political order.
- The Liaison Office itself emerged out of research (Karokhail/Schmeidl 2006) and accordingly, research has become one of its core activities underpinning all others. TLO works within the do-no-harm framework and uses evidence-based programming calling for research prior to any engagement in order to increase knowledge and understanding of traditional structures, their decision-making processes and customary structures. This research especially tries to identify conflict-generating factors between communities (conflict mapping) and the major actors involved (stakeholder mapping), but also local capacities for peace.
- TLO emphasizes a participatory and non-judgemental approach to peace- and state-building, which means including traditional civil society structures and rural elites just as much as modern structures, women and minorities. This means entering into dialogue with traditional leaders without judging their different set of ethics, while nevertheless being aware of such differences and working with them to mutual advantage (e.g. community orientation can help with mobilizing ideas). In such dialogue, one can remind traditional leaders that external actors they wish to engage with have different sets of standards and that collaboration may mean that both make concessions.
- An important element of TLO's work is consultation, which means listening to people's needs and views, but also their solutions. This approach focuses on identifying areas of community contribution and resilience that could be strengthened by external efforts, while trying to fill gaps that may exist as well.
- TLO focuses on working with traditional communities that do not neatly overlap with existing administrative boundaries. This may necessitate some flexibility among donors to collaborate across the geographic spaces they concentrate on (e.g. the Dutch on Uruzgan, DFID in Helmand, the Canadians in Kandahar). TLO has worked on coordinating donor engagement across district and provincial borders. Understanding that geographic spaces of traditional communities are often different from those of states (and, for example, adopting the smaller *wand* or *mantega* system instead of districts) can help development actors channel funds more effectively and with more equity.
- Assistance and development is crucial for addressing community needs (both modern and traditional). In instable regions, however, where local complexities are not understood, development funds may not be channelled adequately and may strengthen alternative power holders (military ones), reinforcing their power (cf. Wilder/Lister 2007).

Here, TLO has tried to ensure linkages between donors and traditional institutions that can prevent a sidelining of funds. This, however, may also endanger TLO, as *de facto* power holders may come to see them as a nuisance.

- A negative experience of TLO has been that its work with existing traditional structures can be and has been seen as a threat to a weak and controlling state. This is especially pertinent when national programmes, such as the National Solidarity Programme with its newly established community development councils, compete for political space with traditional customary structures. If the Afghan state-building approach would allow for hybrid state-building, such a threat would be minimized. Interestingly, the Commission on Conflict Mediation shows that some aspects of hybridity may be acceptable (e.g. in the justice system), depending on the architects of the system.
- A successful example of a small hybrid political system, developed by TLO, is the Commission on Conflict Mediation (CCM), which was facilitated in Khost Province at the request of the provincial governor of Khost in 2006 (TLO 2008). Composed of six respected tribal elders, the commission provides an alternative dispute resolution mechanism akin to western out-of-court arbitration, and effectively serves to include the authority of tribal elders into the formal conflict resolution architecture at the provincial level (the CCM is authorised and supervised by the provincial governor, who selects and refers the cases for the council, signing off on the final decision). Experiences so far demonstrate that the CCM mechanism enables mutually supportive relationships between formal and informal justice systems. In cooperation with the provincial governor, the CCM has so far resolved 23 protracted land disputes, and proactively deescalated emerging conflicts (inter-tribal as well as conflicts involving district-level government bodies). Funded by the US Institute of Peace since late 2008, the activities of the CCM in Khost are going to expand and a new CCM is to be established in Paktia upon the request of the governor.

4. Conclusion

By ignoring local realities, state-builders in Afghanistan (and elsewhere) are setting themselves up for failure, not only due to unrealistic expectations but also due to models that were never likely to succeed in the first place (cf. Boege et al. in this volume; Hagmann/Hoehne 2009; Suhrke 2006, 2007; Woodward 2006). One can only hope that the ideas suggested by Boege and his colleagues may create a paradigm-shift in how state-building is approached in the future. However, international actors need to understand that research is crucial for understanding how best to support hybrid state-building, as it would be unwise to uncritically shift from one extreme to the other. After all, state-building is never conducted in a controlled laboratory environment, but affects the lives of real people, people that can suffer and die.

The Afghan case illustrates the irony (or tragedy) that even though hybrid state-building was never promoted, at least not consciously, it nevertheless emerged out of the weakness of the new administration and ill-conceived actions of the international community. By shying away from some hybrid political orders (e.g. customary institutions) while accommodating others (e.g. military

strongmen, warlords and drug lords), the international community and the Afghan ruling elite enabled the latter to capture the Afghan government, creating a situation “where those with a vested interest in keeping central government institutions weak and ineffective, and their own personal power and regional fiefdoms strong, were placed in positions of authority over the very institutions that needed to be strengthened” (Wilder/Lister 2008, 88). In contrast to a modern state, patronage systems still run strong throughout the current Afghan government (Lister 2007). In addition to strengthening potential spoilers to the state-building project, customary institutions that in the past worked alongside the state (e.g. under the monarchy) have been sidelined, making it much harder now to bring them back to the (hybrid) state-building table.

This may lead to the conclusion that some hybrid models are more successful than others (e.g. Somaliland, cf. Boege et al. in this volume; Hagmann/Hoehne 2009). The key to success could lie in how each of the two systems was achieved: Somaliland by an organic state-building process largely left alone; Afghanistan by an artificial process where external actors reinforced certain power holders over others. Nevertheless, the resources and attention of international actors and neighbouring countries probably also play a role, as next to Somaliland lies Somalia – a country with similar problems to Afghanistan. The tricky part may well be to sort out how to support hybrid political orders without strengthening the wrong actors. Further research, however, is needed to verify this and extract other lessons. Part of it will be to simply listen to the general population: what do they think of existing hybrid political orders? In Afghanistan, a listener would have heard one message early on, loud and clear: that a *warlord* hybrid political order is *not* the solution to Afghanistan’s problem. Other hybrid political orders may be; and these will likely differ for the various regions and social groups in the country.

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Are Hybrid Political Orders an Appropriate Concept for State Formation?

Timor-Leste Revisited

A Response by Bjoern Hofmann

1. Introduction

Developing appropriate approaches to externally supported processes of state formation in the context of fragility is a formidable challenge. Volker Boege and his colleagues critically review the state-building discourse and suggest a way forward by introducing the terminology of “hybrid political orders”. The authors stress that effectively addressing so-called fragile or failed states is currently one of the most important foreign policy tasks, and will likely continue to be so into the near future. After reviewing the development of nation states in Europe as well as the current state-of-the-art of state-building, the authors propose to reconsider the label “state” and to think instead of fragile or failing states as hybrid political orders. This terminology intentionally avoids judgement that something is failing or any association with the concept of state. According to the authors, this concept reflects in our mindset the Weberian/Westphalian liberal state model, some of whose characteristics have been drastically simplified in the definition of the former Washington Consensus.¹ They argue that labelling states as “failed” or “fragile” implies that this ultimate, Westphalian model is the normative reference by which all states are categorised, along the broad spectrum of “strong” or “collapsed”. Yet this model – common within the OECD world –

¹ According to John Williamson, he “[...] invented the term ‘Washington Consensus’ to refer to the lowest common denominator of policy advice being addressed by the Washington-based institutions to Latin American countries as of 1989” (Williamson 2000, 251). Williamson summarised the measures in which he could see a consensus in ten points: (1) fiscal discipline, (2) public expenditure priorities, (3) tax reform, (4) interest rate liberalisation, (5) a competitive exchange rate, (6) trade liberalisation, (7) liberalisation of inflows of foreign direct investment, (8) privatization, (9) deregulation and (10) secure property rights (ibid., 252/253). Since its proclamation, the consensus has been criticised, abolished, revived, reinvented and rejected. For a critique, see Stiglitz 2003.

might prove to be an inapplicable reference for thinking about political order in the rest of the world, and especially in what are commonly referred to as fragile or failed states. More importantly, the tendency to approach state formation with a Weberian mindset possibly accounts for several failed attempts in the past, in which powerful international external actors and western-educated elites have imposed ‘our’ state concept. The authors suggest that understanding fragile or failed states as hybrid political orders allows for more unique, legitimate and creative forms of governance to emerge in the process of state formation and peacebuilding and opens new roads for international actors to make state-building more legitimate in the eyes of those with whom states, or peace, are being built.

The article by Boege et al. is a valuable contribution to the state-building discourse. Some aspects, however, should be elaborated in more detail. In particular, the underlying understanding of ‘order’, the implications which the argument has for peacebuilding and the presentation of Timor-Leste as an example of a misguided approach to state formation warrant closer inspection. These aspects will be examined in the following sections, specifically with regard to the claim that adopting the proposed terminology might change current approaches of state-building in the context of peacebuilding.

2. A Contentious Impression of Order

In general, it is crucial for academics and practitioners alike to discuss approaches to state-building, notably to explain its failures and develop improved ways and models in order to be more successful in the future. However, I have some concerns regarding the choice of words in the terminology suggested by Boege et al. The term “hybrid political order” carries the connotation that some kind of order exists. According to the Oxford Dictionary, order can be understood as “a state in which everything is in its correct place; a state in which the laws and rules regulating public behaviour are observed”. Yet even though examples from Afghanistan to Timor-Leste show that traditional or cultural practices of conflict management, security provision and social cohesion continue to exist during and after war, and also in the absence of formalised state institutions, the mere existence of such traditional institutions does not, in my opinion, justify the use of the term “order”. This is especially important when violence and suffering continue unhindered and create a situation characterized by disorder and lawlessness. Labelling these situations on a given territory as hybrid political orders might be misleading, giving the false impression to the world that order does indeed exist. Of course, if one philosophically assumes that there is order even in anarchy, violence and chaos, the use of this terminology might be justifiable and might not appear problematic.

Furthermore, the authors do not specify whether the adoption of this terminology allows for a categorisation of order, however difficult a precise definition might be – are we witnessing a weak order or some form of stable order? If the authors assume that such a categorisation should not be applied, it seems in my opinion problematic to refer equally to all fragile, failing or failed states as hybrid political orders without any possible indication of whether they have collapsed, are weak and volatile or comparatively strong. Indonesia, Afghanistan and Venezuela would simply be hybrid political orders without distinction. If, however, the authors allow for a categorisation of order along the spectrum mentioned above, some further elaboration would be helpful. Otherwise one is led to assume, based on the international power structure and dominant scientific discourses, that the understanding of order in OECD states would serve again as the reference point, in which case there would be no additional value in adopting the terminology of “hybrid political orders”. Boege et al. argue that the latter choice of words would eventually lead to the insight that “it is important to stress

the positive potential rather than the negative features of so-called fragile states [... and focus] on hybridity, generative processes, innovative adaptation and ingenuity” (in this volume, 30). I doubt that the proposed change in terminology alone can achieve the authors’ ambitions.

3. Top-Down and Bottom-Up Peacebuilding: A Discourse Rephrased

The authors clearly acknowledge that simply leaving states like Timor-Leste to evolve organically – with Australia and Indonesia, and indeed the rest of the world, relaxing in the role of a spectator – is not an option in the 21st century. The question then needs to be asked whether the proposed terminology has the potential to change state-building efforts by “shifting the focus from narrow models of state-building to understanding and engaging with hybrid institutions” (Boege et al. in this volume, 29). Introducing the idea of hybrid political orders, which according to the authors needs to be taken into consideration by any actor engaged in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, appears to me to be merely reframing the top-down versus bottom-up debate among academics and peacebuilders – especially regarding its applicability in practice. Speaking in general terms: the top-down approach focuses on building centralized state institutions which then would be gradually enabled to extend their administrative reach to the local community level. The rather traditional assumption of this model is that positive effects of a centralized, state-led peacebuilding effort will eventually trickle down to the local level (Richmond 2005, 197).

According to the bottom-up approach, on the other hand, supporting local initiatives and focusing on cultural institutions will lead to more sustainable and legitimate institutions of governance. This approach warns external actors to be aware of their own dominance and their hegemonic position in the process of state formation. Sceptical of coercion as well as conditionality, the bottom-up approach accentuates its discursive, consensual and negotiation-based requirements and has a more emancipatory and participatory character. In fact, in order to bolster their argument, the authors themselves refer on several occasions to successful bottom-up initiatives which in the absence of state institutions have led to more sustainable forms of governance and peace. I would argue that most scholars, and notably practitioners, agree that one approach cannot do without the other and that any peacebuilding process requires a structure to set the framework and rules of the process in which bottom-up initiatives can be supported, flourish and result in a more genuine form of governance (Richmond 2005, 221).

Of course, circumstances on the ground or preferences of donors and peacebuilders might lead to the adoption of policies which tend to lean more towards one side than the other, consequently constituting some form of dominant approach or consensus among these actors. But the large variety of actors with different ideologies and capabilities engaged in the politics of peacebuilding suggests that several approaches coexist, resulting in an overall balance of top-down and bottom-up initiatives. The existing plurality of actors with different approaches and philosophies also raises interesting questions for further research regarding the identification of a dominant peacebuilding consensus among these actors. This research would need to focus on the questions of whether a consensus can be identified, what this consensus encompasses and how the consensus changes in the course of one peacebuilding mission.

Analysis of past peace operations by Richmond (2005), Ramsbotham et al. (2006) and others illustrates that traditional state-centred approaches implemented in the early stages of operations shift towards more bottom-up emancipatory approaches over the course of time, since a successful implementation of the latter facilitates the gradual disengagement of external actors. Getting the

balance between the approaches right is what Boege et al. demand when concluding that “engaging with communities and non-state customary institutions is just as important as working with central state institutions and governments” (in this volume, 30). If the interdependent coexistence of a top-down and bottom-up approach can be thought of as representing the realities on the ground as well as a shared understanding in principle among scholars and practitioners, Boege et al.’s argument would fall into this already existing line of thought and therefore re-state familiar arguments in support of a balanced approach to peacebuilding. Arguing for hybrid political orders would consequently lack novelty and thus might be limited in its potential to generate new insights.

4. Peacebuilding in Timor-Leste

The authors’ analysis of the top-down approach adopted after the independence of Timor-Leste, with a strong focus of all initiatives on Dili as the capital, does in principle reflect the realities on the ground. However, it should be put into context. The idea of a unitary state was imposed on the Timorese people first by the Portuguese and then by the Indonesians. After independence, the newly established government and international organisations continued in these footsteps, while acknowledging and supporting the development of local forms of governance. This ‘centrist’ approach can justifiably be criticised – as is regularly done by national and international staff working in Timor-Leste – but there are promising signs that, similar to the patterns observed in other state formation processes, a more emancipatory and participatory understanding of state formation is now complementing the initial institution-centred approach.² In my opinion, the focus on Dili in itself does not lead to instability. Neither does it necessarily reflect an ideologically entrenched centrist, top-down approach, but rather a practicality when considering existing infrastructure, means of transport, available resources as well as possibilities to exert political influence. Moreover, customary forms of community organisation, decision-making and conflict mediation are used in rural areas as well as in the capital precisely because the government does not yet have the overarching administrative reach. The government, the administration and international organisations acknowledge these forms of self-governance and work alongside them, while at the same time aiming to strengthen the new administrative structures staffed by elected representatives.

Even though it is correct that the constitution does not mention traditional cultural institutions explicitly, it nevertheless demands that the governments of Timor-Leste have the obligation “to assert and value the personality and the cultural heritage of the East Timorese people”.³ Furthermore, with regard to local government, the constitution states that “the organisation, competence, functioning and composition of the organs of local government shall be defined by law”,⁴ therefore theoretically allowing traditional forms of local government to be incorporated into the new state structure by law (with the restriction that the legislation regarding local governance does not violate the principles enshrined in the constitution). Despite these constitutional provisions, Boege et al. identify that “there is a widespread feeling that the new state has marginalised East Timorese culture and customary life as sources of governance” (in this volume, 25). However, one must acknowledge that the diversity of cultural practices and symbols in Timor-Leste presents a challenge to any political process or culture-sensitive project planning, consequently demanding input and advice from national/local experts as well as consultation with national/local organisations.

² Discussions among peacebuilders and with government representatives often centre around the issue of the focus on Dili and developing possibilities to engage with the communities in rural parts of Timor.

³ Constitution of Timor-Leste, Section 6 (g), available at www.etan.org/etanpdf/pdf2/constfnen.pdf.

⁴ *Ibid.*: Article 72 (2).

The identification of the Timorese with their village and region remains strong, reinforced by varying cultural practices, family ties and lack of knowledge about their fellow Timorese's customs. Timor-Leste is characterized by a weak sense of shared identity among all Timorese, which barely goes beyond being proud of the successful resistance to foreign occupation and believing in 'One Timor'. Based on these findings, the authors rightly question the viability of creating a unitary centralized state on the territory of East Timor following independence, which would need to be built on one single Timorese identity. It is not surprising that in the absence of the uniting forces of an occupying power as the common enemy, the process of finding a new shared identity, identifying other existing uniting factors and taking responsibility for one's own future has sometimes been accompanied by violent conflict, as happened in 2006/2007.⁵ Even though cultural commonalities do exist between the different cultural centres, these need to be clearly defined by the Timorese people in order to function as a basis for a shared Timorese identity.

I would argue that the government and international organisations are aware of these challenges. They consider the potential that these different identities and cultural practices embody and reflect on how they can contribute to the ongoing peace process in Timor. Practically, there is no other possibility for the government and international organisations than to work with communities and local institutions and respect cultural traditions, if sustainability of conflict management and development assistance is what they are aiming to achieve. Communities are increasingly being included in the planning and implementation of projects and, more importantly, in the monitoring of progress and management of facilities and infrastructure. For example, the process of reintegrating the approximately 70,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) living in camps in Dili and Metinaro since the political/military crisis in 2006/2007 clearly shows that most (international) actors concerned have some understanding of traditional customs of conflict management. This process was initiated by the Timorese government in April/May 2008. It was accompanied by dialogue and mediation processes organised by the Ministry of Social Solidarity and supported by several international actors such as the United Nations Development Programme, the International Organisation for Migration and other (inter-)national organisations. Community dialogues, which facilitated the return and reintegration of the IDPs in the receiving communities, are embedded in Timorese culture and therefore widely accepted. Furthermore, attempts are being made by the government as well as international organisations to reach out to the rural parts of Timor-Leste, where 74 percent of the population live, respecting their culture and traditions and strengthening local initiatives.

The general development in Timor-Leste since independence does seem to follow the pattern observed in other state formation processes, in which a more state-centred approach was adopted in the early stage and a shift occurred over time to a more inclusive bottom-up approach. The observer needs to follow closely whether enough space in this process is granted – by all actors concerned – to these traditional and cultural forms, whether creative and genuine forms of governance can be established and whether a common identity can emerge. Based on current trends and discussions with peacebuilders and government officials, I am optimistic that this political process does exist in Timor-Leste and will even be strengthened over time. This is not to assume

⁵ In April/May 2006 political and east-west divisions within the security forces spilled onto the streets of Dili, reinforcing the polarisation of people along these lines and resulting in eruptions of violence. Clashes between police and military in Dili, as well as violence by gang members against civilians, forced many easterners and westerners to flee their houses and seek refuge in camps. Up to 38 people were killed and at least 1,650 houses destroyed in the events between March and June 2006. Approximately 150,000 persons were displaced in the face of widespread arson and looting. The violence resulted in a political crisis, when the then Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri resigned. Outbreaks of violence continued well into 2007, sparked by several different factors such as rice shortage or mishandling of the crisis by the police. Opposing the formation of a government by the Alliance for a Parliamentary Majority (APM), the FRETILIN party, which had won a majority in the parliamentary elections, threatened further violence, resulting in continued house burning, looting, crime and an increased number of displaced people. For further analysis of the crisis and the situation of internally displaced persons, see Crisis Group 2008.

naively that the process will go forward without (violent) conflict or to negate the marginalised role of Timorese culture and identity, or indeed its instrumentalisation in building the state of Timor-Leste (Trindade/Castro 2007). But if this process is conducted and accompanied prudently by all actors concerned, the chances of violent conflict can be reduced significantly, making Timor-Leste an example for a successful locally-driven peacebuilding and state formation process after all.

5. Conclusion

This response has aimed to illustrate that referring to fragile or failed states as hybrid political orders will not significantly change current approaches to peacebuilding. Existing concepts already provide enough space for recognizing the importance of genuine, legitimate forms of governance which might be *sui generis* forms and not correspond to the Westphalian state model. One question remains with regard to future research: how do we think about the state and what impact does this understanding have on peacebuilding? If we think of a state predominantly in terms of its administrative institutions and its powers, then state-building in the context of peacebuilding focuses primarily on the establishment of these institutions and invites us to adopt an institution-centred, top-down approach. We could, on the other hand, accept that a state is a rather abstract concept that encompasses more than mere institutions. After King Ludwig's exclamation "l'état c'est moi", the depersonalisation of the state concept that followed, and the re-conceptualisation of the state as a Leviathan, we could today convincingly argue "l'état c'est nous". The state manifests itself in the sum of the people on a given territory. The people form this state and delegate responsibilities and powers. Such state formation is based on trust and identity – trust among the people and trust in what is then perceived as the state. If we accept this concept of a state, then state-building can be seen in a much broader perspective, leaving enough political space for "generative processes, innovative adaptation and ingenuity" (Boege et al. in this volume, 30), while still speaking of state formation processes. In this context, state-building assistance would ideally find the balance between a top-down and bottom-up approach by responding to the demands of the people, valuing their inclusion in the process, respecting and strengthening cultural traditions and institutions while at the same time supporting central political state formation processes and institutions.

Building on past peacebuilding and state formation experiences, we should attempt to define in more detail the approaches that have proven to be successful, similar to the analysis presented by Boege and his colleagues for Somaliland and Bougainville. Rather than simply replacing the notion of state with the misleading notion of a hybrid political order, we should attempt to refine our own understanding of what constitutes a state and hone our own capacity to support state formation processes.

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Undressing the Emperor: A Reply to Our Discussants

Volker Boege, Anne Brown, Kevin Clements and Anna Nolan

Our colleagues' responses to the lead article are very helpful and encouraging. Each one provided us with further food for thought, and we are thankful to the Berghof team for initiating this stimulating debate.

Strikingly, both Trutz von Trotha and Susanne Schmeidl refer to Hans Christian Andersen's *The Emperor's New Clothes* and acknowledge that our lead article has taken on the child's role in the fairytale by pointing out the deficiencies of the currently fashionable discourse on state fragility and state-building. When reading the five comments, we were impressed by the clear-sighted assessments of the discourse's flaws, and we were equally excited about the abundance of empirical material that our discussants provided – from the Balkans, Afghanistan, East Timor, through to Liberia and Somaliland – which strengthen our main lines of argument. There are also disagreements, of course, and perhaps misunderstandings. Sometimes we may not have been clear enough in presenting our approach. We are therefore grateful for this opportunity to make clarifications and sharpen our arguments by discussing the points of disagreement. Given the limited space we have to confine ourselves to a few selected points of particular interest.

All the discussants take issue – more or less – with our concept of “hybrid political orders”. We are aware that several other concepts are being used in the social sciences that cover similar issues and try to analytically grasp the socio-political phenomena that we try to understand by using the concept of hybrid political orders. Our discussants themselves refer to concepts of “quasi-statehood”, “para-statehood”, “neopatrimonialism”, “oligopolies of violence” – and there are more concepts out there, among them clientelism, legal pluralism, institutional multiplicity, informal institutions or areas of limited statehood.¹

¹ For a comparison of some of these concepts with the concept of hybrid political orders see Kraushaar/Lambach 2009 (forthcoming).

Von Trotha's concept of "para-statehood" or Andreas Mehler's concept of "oligopolies of violence" (which we briefly refer to in our lead article, see in this volume, 23) are without doubt valid and helpful. In our lead article we give some reasons why we think that for our research purposes "hybrid political orders" is more appropriate as a conceptual framework. These other concepts usually are more limited in analytical scope; the concept of hybrid political orders is broader (perhaps too broad) and thus allows us to encompass different non-state forms of order and governance and at the same time to focus on the crucial point, namely the combination, interaction and mutual penetration of institutions of governance which are of socially-historically distinct origins and which – in the process of combination, interaction and penetration – constitute new "hybrid" forms of political order.

Bjoern Hofmann is right in asking for more differentiation of hybrid political orders (e.g., are they weak or stable?). In a way we are confronted with the same problem as the protagonists of the fragile states approach – it is too broad and needs further refinement. As it stands, our paper is an effort to take a different approach towards political community, state formation and political and cultural difference than those approaches which drive the state-building and much of the development agendas. Many places, often profoundly different from each other, are relevant to this analysis, not only those classified as fragile states. Working to gain a clearer and much more detailed picture of different 'types' of hybrid political orders, and the different historical, social and political processes that have given rise to their similarities or differences, will therefore be a useful and necessary next step in elaborating the concept. We do not agree, however, with Hofmann in his assumption that a typology of hybrid political orders should take the OECD states as point of reference. The concept of hybrid political orders overcomes the notion of the state as being the superior and ultimate form of political order *per se* and frees the debate from its current state-centric bias, thus widening the narrow horizons of conventional political science. It is not normative in the way the mainstream discourse on fragile states is. Instead of focusing on the deficiencies of existing states in the Global South and measuring them against (a contestable set of representations of) the ideal Weberian/Westphalian OECD-type of state, it serves as an analytical instrument designed to grasp and understand how "the real world operates" (Woodward, in this volume, 47).

In fact, we understand hybrid political orders as an analytical rather than a normative concept (contrary to how Mehler and Hofmann seem to have read us). Hybrid political orders in our view is not an 'ambition', a normative goal that has to be achieved. Rather, it is *what is the case* in many so-called fragile states and situations. Our intention is not to present states as 'bad' and hybrid political orders as 'good' (or hybrid orders as an alternative to states), but to draw attention to the institutions and processes of governance on the ground that actually determine the political order (which can be more or less orderly or disorderly).² We have found several cases in which hybrid political orders work (reasonably) well for the people; but we take the point – made for instance by Mehler with regard to neopatrimonialism and by Susanne Schmeidl with regard to warlordism – that there can be massive problems in hybrid political orders, and we have no easy solutions for these problems. We do not neglect the negative dimensions of hybrid political orders. On the other hand, however, we want to raise awareness of their positive dimensions and potentialities, identify their workable elements and try to make proposals for the realization of those potentialities, for instance by processes of dialogue between non-state informal communal and customary actors and formal state actors. The basic question is in what direction developments go – whether hybrid political orders, which are *not* simply "non-state orders" (cf. von Trotha), can constitute a political

² Hofmann treats the term "order" in the sense of "orderliness"; orders can be more or less orderly or disorderly, but that is another issue (the current 'world order' or 'international order' that political scientists and politicians talk about does not seem particularly orderly to us).

community that provides security, peace and a framework for the nonviolent conduct of conflicts. This kind of a political community is our normative orientation, regardless of its form as a “state” or – for that matter – a “non-state order”.

We think that this freedom from normative state-centrism can be a valuable strength of the concept, not least an enabling and sensitising one (as von Trotha notes). We have to admit, of course, that we are at an early stage of elaborating the concept; much more empirical-analytical work has to be done in understanding the complex dynamism of different manifestations of hybrid political order, as well as developing our theoretical approach.³

We would argue strongly against Hofmann’s position that the hybrid political orders approach boils down to “merely reframing the top-down versus bottom-up debate among academics and peacebuilders” (in this volume, 81). Rather, our approach lies outside this debate and does not take sides ‘in favour’ of bottom-up and ‘against’ top-down. It challenges the understanding of statehood that the notions of “bottom-up”, “top-down”, “civil society” and “traditional cultures” inevitably refer to. It is our impression that Hofmann does not do justice to the relevance of non-state customary and communal institutions.⁴ We also do not agree with Hofmann’s observations that customary governance values and practices have been seriously engaged with and incorporated into national governance in East Timor, although there has of course been some engagement. In our view, the respect for cultural traditions that is mentioned is abstract rather than concrete, consistent and practical. The government and the international community acknowledge the existence of customary mechanisms, but as Hofmann’s paper implies, only because the government “does not yet have the overarching administrative reach” and while it is “aiming to strengthen the new administrative structures staffed by elected representatives” (in this volume, 82). The introduction of local (*suco*) level, party competitive elections in 2005 is an example of efforts to incorporate bottom-up participation entirely along the lines of western states, with little sensitivity to widely prevalent, cross-country customary mechanisms that were already in place. Primary research has indicated, however, that the introduction of party-based electoral competition at the local level has acted to project political division at the elite level into grass-roots politics and to undermine local, largely customary mechanisms for maintaining social peace and cohesion (Brown/Gusmao 2009).

Susanne Schmeidl rightly points to the similarities between the cases of East Timor and Afghanistan. She shows how in Afghanistan, similar to East Timor, customary institutions were and still are sidelined in the externally driven state-building exercise. Her account of developments in Afghanistan – which she captures in the telling phrase of the “McDonaldization” of state-building – very much corroborates our general critique of donor approaches to hybrid political orders. Speed and ‘short-termism’ instead of long-term commitment, treating elections as a technocratic, logistical exercise rather than a socially embedded democratic process, focusing on centralized state-building and urban centres at the expense of rural communities and local culture, taking a *tabula rasa* approach instead of engaging with functioning customary institutions of governance – all of this strikes a chord with our research (see also Richmond/Franks 2008).

Schmeidl also raises a very important issue by asking “how to deal with strongmen and warlordism” (in this volume, 71). (Mehler has similar concerns with regard to neopatrimonialism.)

³ So far our empirical-analytical work has been confined to Southeast Asia and the Pacific. We intend to expand our work to include regions of ‘fragility’ in Africa, Latin America and other parts of Asia, in collaboration with colleagues from other continents.

⁴ By contrast, it is worth noting that the OECD-DAC most recently has come to acknowledge the positive role local non-state actors can play. “A growing interest in and willingness to work with local institutions of governance – such as *shuras* in Afghanistan – is also welcome. Traditional systems, which may not be recognisable in western states, may still perform the same functions and generate the same outputs as formal state institutions. Respect and willingness to accommodate such systems [...] can be helpful in restoring governance” (OECD-DAC 2008, 36).

In fact, here lies a crucial challenge for our approach: what to do in situations where customary structures and institutions of governance have been severely damaged or even completely destroyed (as seems to be the case in parts of Afghanistan and as is definitely the case elsewhere), where warlords and their followers or criminal leaders and their gangs have taken control, where social breakdown leads to raging cruelty and widespread despair? We do not have a straightforward answer to Schmeidl's (and Mehler's) question. Each specific context requires a very specific analysis in order to assess whether there are avenues to influence 'spoilers' and reconstruct social cohesion by working with non-state informal actors and institutions from the customary and communal sphere. Our impression is that sometimes it is assumed too rapidly that traditional communal structures have been destroyed and customary institutions have ceased to exist. Often they survive in somewhat hidden or altered forms or have adapted to new circumstances and still exert influence. Traditional authorities from a rural village context and traditional social networks that originally are rooted in locality, for example, can be transferred to a completely different (peri-)urban environment and shape the everyday life of people there.

We very much like Schmeidl's call to reach out into the 'great unknown' (meaning institutions of governance that are alien to western perceptions and experiences). Similarly, we are advocating taking the local seriously, and building on local practices and institutions (where possible). Schmeidl's own experiences and those of her colleague Masood Karokhail with The Liaison Office and the Commission on Conflict Mediation are fascinating examples for such forms of engagement.

We are thankful for Schmeidl's admonition not "to uncritically shift from one extreme to the other" (in this volume, 75). Our focus on the potential and capacities of non-state indigenous customary institutions might be (mis)interpreted as romanticised and idealised tradition. On the contrary, we do not suggest that customary actors and institutions are better than state institutions *per se*. We acknowledge that they *are there* in many of the so-called fragile states, that they have to be reckoned with, and that external actors should look for constructive and informed ways to engage with them.

Andreas Mehler shares Schmeidl's concern that we should avoid over-estimating or romanticising the positive potential of non-state informal institutions and hybrid political orders. While Schmeidl points to problems with warlordism, Mehler stresses the dangers of neopatrimonialism. He intends to "water down the wine" in our approach. We do not have a problem with that, all the more so as his analysis of fragility in sub-Saharan Africa and of the shortcomings of external assistance strongly supports our critique of the mainstream fragile states discourse. His brief analysis of the Liberian situation is fascinating reading in this regard. The findings of his survey among Liberians about their perceptions of actors in the security arena are very interesting, showing that people on the ground have state institutions as their primary mental reference point when it comes to the provision of security. Mehler concludes that therefore people would not advocate hybrid political orders but 'proper' state institutions. As stated earlier, we understand hybrid political orders as an analytical concept, and not – as Mehler seems to assume here – as a normative concept; we have no intention to 'persuade' people in Liberia that hybrid political order is better than state order. On the other hand, Mehler concedes that the positive attitude of the people towards state security providers has to be interpreted as "wishful thinking". So might *hybrid* provision of security then be the second best, but more realistic, option? In any case, Mehler is right to stress the importance of local perceptions. It would be interesting to conduct similar research in other countries and compare the results to Mehler's findings on Liberia, particularly if such opinion surveys could be augmented by other contextualised data collection. A more detailed differentiation within countries, in particular between urban and rural areas or core regions and peripheral ones, would be also helpful.

Mehler strongly speaks out in favour of “much better, locally-grounded analysis” (in this volume, 57) which takes due account of the historical dimension. We could not agree more, and we ourselves are calling for thorough and detailed qualitative case study research that acknowledges the specifics and the singularity of each case. We strongly believe that this kind of historically well-informed analysis that leads to a deeper contextualised understanding of the situation on the ground has to be the real bedrock of any attempts for external assistance aimed at peace and development.

We read Susan Woodward’s text as an exciting companion piece to our lead article. It adds a new and in fact indispensable dimension to the debate, shifting the focus and addressing the interests and aims of those external actors who actually do the ‘fragile states talk’ and the practical state-building. Given those interests and aims, she suspects that our contribution “will fall on deaf ears” (in this volume, 47). Using the example of former Yugoslavia, she reveals the political utilisation of the state-failure label and the interest-driven implementation of state-building strategies which do not follow one model (the Weberian/Westphalian model, as we posit in our lead article), but differ considerably according to the interests and aims of the external actors who unscrupulously impose state-building in a very pragmatic fashion, not so much concerned about ideals of good governance, but about trade and monetary liberalisation, property privatization and other interventions advantageous to external actors. Accordingly, what characterizes external state-building endeavours is not ignorance with regard to the local traditions of governance (as we assume), but – even worse – deliberate suppression and transformation of those traditions. Fortunately, Woodward also can present examples of successful local resistance against the self-serving external interventions, thus giving some credit to the resilience, capacity and ingenuity of local communities. She also points to the ineffectiveness and lack of domestic legitimacy of imposed political orders, confirming our view that hybridity “makes for greater stability, development and legitimacy” (in this volume, 54). She remains fundamentally sceptical, however, about the possible returns of our research and suggests that instead of focusing (as we do) on countries labelled as fragile states there is the need to redirect research “onto *those doing the judging, labelling and intervening* – to identify their goals, their actual policies and their openness to listening” (ibid.). Our suggested compromise would be: let us do both. A more thorough analysis of the political interests behind the fragile states discourse and the realities of externally driven state-building is no doubt a desideratum (some work has been done in this regard already, see for example the contributions by Morten Boas and Kathleen Jennings and by Shahar Hameiri quoted in our lead article); but we also need more detailed and comprehensive analyses of how – to use Woodward’s words – “the real world operates” out there, in the regions labelled ‘fragile’. We need to do this not least in order to be able to put forward a valid critique of the dominant approach of external actors and to demonstrate that alternatives do exist.

Even more sceptical than Woodward is Trutz von Trotha, although for different reasons. We wholeheartedly agree with his critique of today’s technocratic state-building industry and join him in shaking our heads about the “surreal historical amnesia” (in this volume, 39) which expresses itself in the idea that one could “learn” state-building. He criticises us, however, for sacrificing the consequences that one would have to draw from our critical stance. Yet, a comparison of his take on Somaliland and ours might illustrate our (profound) accord and (slight) difference. Like von Trotha, we stress the importance of customary institutions and procedures and their capacity to adapt to new challenges, and we highlight the absence of a monopoly of violence and the resilience of local communities and segmentary order. We differ from von Trotha, however, when it comes to assessing the relevance of emerging state institutions. He presents Somaliland as “a segmentary order in the garb of the modern state” (in this volume, 43). According to von Trotha, the state form merely “veils” the segmentary order to please the outside world – a world that adheres to “the strict rulebook

of international law and international relations” (ibid.). Hence, in his view, Somaliland “certainly is not [...] an example of state-building” (ibid.).⁵

We entertain a more dialectic view, and suggest that the ‘etatist clothing’ actually re-shapes the segmentary order. Today’s political system in Somaliland is modelled along the lines of western statehood and its legal-rational notion of legitimacy, with an elected parliament and president. These state institutions were formed with the approval of traditional authorities, who saw state formation as another means to build and maintain the socio-political order that encompasses the different clans. The endorsement of state institutions by traditional authorities and the meaningful inclusion of these authorities within state structures decisively contributes to the legitimacy of the state in the eyes of the people. To a large extent, state and customary institutions in Somaliland today play complementary roles, with a tendency of increased decoupling of state institutions from customary institutions. The complementarity finds an expression, for example, in the Somaliland parliament which comprises of a House of Representatives (*golaha wakiiladda*, elected) and a House of Elders (*golaha guurtida*, selected and appointed by the clans). Indeed, these “experiments in governance are a hybrid of Somali and Western democratic styles” (Bradbury 2003, 17). The point of difference between us and von Trotha then is: we see Somaliland not as “a segmentary order in etatist clothing” (von Trotha in this volume, 43), but as a hybrid political order in which segmentary and state aspects co-exist and intertwine. Hence we talk of Somaliland as an “emerging state grounded in a hybrid political order” (in this volume, 27). Far from being ‘pre-modern’ aberrations from the ‘proper’ western model state, Somaliland (and Bougainville, the other example we are using in our lead article) might well become models of future ‘indigenised’ types of statehood. We use these cases to demonstrate the need for and the possibility of positive mutual accommodation of legal-rational and traditional institutions in hybrid political orders.

We agree with von Trotha again in his position that the state-centric view of peace and order has failed and needs to be overcome by a shift of focus from state-building to peacebuilding, which means: forming a viable political community.

These insights, however, do not lead us to an all-out rejection of the notion of the state (and this seems to be another point of disagreement with von Trotha). We do not wish to question the juridical importance of the state in the international realm. States will continue to be the foundation of the international system, and in the current era of globalisation the international system of states will inevitably impact on even the most remote corners of the globe; internal political order everywhere will be involved in exchange processes with the outside world (which not least is a world of states), and this exchange will impact on the internal order. The international system of states provides the context, and this context shapes the features of the internal order, at least to a certain extent. In this context, areas of non-statehood will be perceived as voids, and these voids will be in danger of being filled by other states – most probably by means of force, intervention and occupation (hence the desire of Somaliland’s political elite for Somaliland to become a state *de jure* and be recognized by other states). Our intention is to confront the western concept of the state in the domestic realm with some deeper awareness of what processes actually deliver peace, order and stability in many regions of the Global South (this is the analytical dimension of our concept), and we want to draw attention to the possibility and necessity of the emergence of ‘indigenised’ forms of statehood, or – to use a more general term – political community by means of positive mutual accommodation of introduced state and indigenous non-state institutions (this is the normative aspect of our approach).

5 Others posit exactly the contrary. Pierre Englebert and Denis Tull present Somaliland as “(p)erhaps the most successful recent instance of state building in Africa” (Englebert/Tull 2008, 137).

In concluding, we would like to turn to a more general problem of ‘applied’ research. Our discussants raise the issue of how to ‘sell’ or promote the concept to the people that matter (or whether to bother at all about ‘selling’ it). Von Trotha is critical about our “desire to search for middle ground” (in this volume, 43) in the state-building debate because this desire, he says, will inevitably lead us to abandon the Andersen principle. He might be right. It might be the case that our rather cautious terminology at several points is influenced by the aspiration to ‘sensitise’ an epistemic community of political decision-makers, development assistance practitioners and academics from development and security studies ‘with influence’. And Woodward suspects that the audience that we are trying to reach “is not listening” anyway (in this volume, 48). She might be right too. Nevertheless, in the same way that we advocate the need for engagement and the need for communication between the actors in hybrid political orders, we also advocate this dialogic approach with regard to our own working environment. The problem that we are confronted with is doing research according to the criteria that we have found to be the most appropriate and being true to the findings of our research on the one hand, while at the same time presenting our findings in ways that are digestible for the Emperor and his entourage. To do this is to walk a fine line – which has been and will always be a challenge of critical applied peace research, which intends to make a difference in the real world of politics in order to make our planet a more peaceful place.

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(All other references can be found in the lead article.)

List of Acronyms

ACPACS	Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies
AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
AFP	Agence France-Press
APM	Alliance for a Parliamentary Majority, East Timor
AREU	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
ATU	Anti-Terrorism Unit, Liberia
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (UNDP)
BIGSAS	Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies, Germany
CCM	Commission on Conflict Mediation, Afghanistan
CDC	Community Development Council, Afghanistan
CIFP	Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (Carleton University, Canada)
CIGAD	Centre for Indigenous Governance and Development, New Zealand
CPHD	Centre for Policy and Human Development, Afghanistan
CSCE	Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe
CUNY	City University of New York, USA
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DFG	Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft [German Research Foundation]
DFID	Department for International Development, UK
DIIS	Danish Institute for International Studies
DRC / DR Congo	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DSF	Deutsche Stiftung Friedensforschung [German Peace Research Foundation]
ECOMIL	ECOWAS Mission in Liberia
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECSSD	Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development (World Bank)
ESI	European Stability Initiative
EU	European Union
EUPOL	European Union Police Mission (in Afghanistan)
FDFA	Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung [Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation], Germany
FRIDE	Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior [Foundation for International Relations and External Dialogue], Spain
FRETILIN	Frente Revolucionaria do Timor-Leste Independente [Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor]
FSG	Fragile States Group (OECD-DAC)
FU Berlin	Freie Universität Berlin, Germany
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GIGA	German Institute of Global and Area Studies
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit [German Technical Development Agency]
GTZ/IS	GTZ/ International Services
IAK	Institut für Afrika-Kunde [Institute of African Affairs], Germany
ICAR	Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, USA
ICG	International Crisis Group / Crisis Group

ICOS	International Council on Security and Development
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFI	International Financial Institution
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INEF	Institut für Entwicklung und Frieden [Institute for Development and Peace], Germany
INEP	Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisa [National Research and Investigation Institute], Guinea-Bissau
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
LICUS	Low Income Countries Under Stress (World Bank)
LISD	Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination
LNP	Liberian National Police
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
MODEL	Movement for Democracy in Liberia
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NPP	National Patriotic Party, Liberia
ODI	Overseas Development Institute, UK
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD-DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
PCIA	Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (led by Australia)
SFB 700	Sonderforschungsbereich [Collaborative Research Centre] 700 on Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood, Germany
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General (UN)
SSR	Security Sector Reform
SSS	State Security Service, Liberia
SWP	Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik [German Institute for International and Security Affairs]
TLO	The Liaison Office (formerly Tribal Liaison Office), Afghanistan
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNMIL	UN Mission for Liberia
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force (in former Yugoslavia)
UNTAES	United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium
UNU	United Nations University
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWS	Woodrow Wilson School for Public and International Affairs (Princeton University, USA)
WZB	Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung [Social Science Research Center Berlin], Germany
ZEF	Zentrum für Entwicklungsforschung [Center for Development Research], Germany
ZIF	Zentrum für Internationale Friedenseinsätze [Centre for International Peace Operations], Germany

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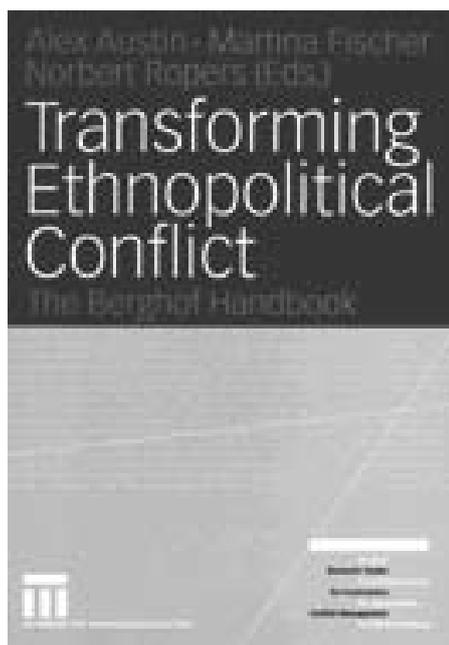
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