Power or Peace? Restoration or Emancipation Through Peace Processes

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Abstract

Recent critical academic work in Peace and Conflict Studies has concentrated on the agential aspects of peace but has somewhat neglected structural issues and the different types of power that may be an obstacle to peace. Yet, for peace to take root, to be emancipatory and truly transformative, it seems that issues of hard power, geo-politics and the structures of states, societies and economies need to be re-addressed in a new set of contexts. This special issue concentrates on how peace scholarship and agendas can be furthered in an era of realism, hard power, the primacy of geopolitics, nationalism, authoritarianism and unfettered capitalism. This article explores the fluid and multifaceted relationship between power and peace, while also introducing the contributions to this special issue.

Key words: peace, power, emancipation, geo-politics, authoritarianism, technology.

Introduction: Naïve about Power?

To a large extent, the issue of power has been under-played in Peace and Conflict Studies, and International Relations, in recent years.[1] This has partly been related to the assumed ontological dominance of the liberal peace framework since the end of the Cold War, and the now quaint looking notion that the point of Peace and Conflict Studies was to focus on epistemological and related methodological matters within those parameters. Liberal peace claimed to harmonise power, the state, law, and society into a common framework that appeared to turn power to the purpose of a critical, emancipatory agenda for peacemaking. This assumption was so strong in the literature, that consent for intervention from target populations and the wider international community was increasingly questioned.[2] The self-proclaimed normative commitment to human rights, peace, and justice at the heart of international peacebuilding organizations resulted in overriding local consent and legitimacy and thus ignoring local and transnational power dynamics.[3] As much as a victor's liberal peace was dressed up as universal, geopolitics, ideology, nationalism, sectarianism, and the contest over the distribution of scarce resources (i.e. the nature of politics itself) have remained the most crucial forces in determining what kind of peace has been available. Over the years this combination appears to have consigned the emancipatory elements of peacemaking to official and international civil society documentation, whiles states and powerful actor focus on geopolitics (and geo-economics) as normal, thus undermining the legitimacy of peace across local to global scales.

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[1] An honourable exception is Kenneth E. Boulding, *Three Faces of Power*, New Delhi: Sage, 1991.
[2] See Paris's 'Institutionalisation before Liberalisation' approach, for example. Roland Paris, *At Wars End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
[3] Dominik Zaum, *Sovereignty Paradox: The Norms and Politics of International Statebuilding* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

A fear of analysing peace in the context of conservative forms of power has led to this unfortunate outcome.

Such an enormous oversight of the revolutionary and emancipatory potential of the field[4] has meant that important works in the field such as F.H. Hinsley's famous but forgotten study, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace*, have not really been surpassed.[5] This omission has led to a widening gap between discourse and practice in the field (for example, compare international responses to the Syrian civil and regional war with policy documentation, including R2P or the recent Sustaining Peace Framework),[6] and has allowed knowledge and praxis to become the servants of hegemonic power. Hinsley himself pointed out that much of modern peace theory was in fact invented and refined in the Seventeenth Century and had not moved forward by far since, in other words with religious, imperial, civil and inter-state wars in mind.[7]

Much of the canon of political theory and philosophy, going back to the Classics of Plato, Aristotle, Thucydides, and Cicero, was about the nature of the struggle between the weak and the powerful over the control of the city, state and empire,[8] and the evolution of the intervening variable – meaning the political settlements they could agree to while maintaining power structures so that their collapse would not destroy the overall system, state and international.[9] The Enlightenment grappled with such problems on paper, through the medium mainly of a few scholars, philosophers, and activists, providing a script for an international and domestic peace architecture.[10] However, this approach was not taken up until the end of two world wars in the twentieth century.[11]

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[4] Fred Halliday, "'The Sixth Great Power': On the Study of Revolution and International Relations', *Review of International Studies* 16, no. 3 (1990): 207–221.

[5] FH Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 1.

[6] International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), *The Responsibility to Protect: The concept of the responsibility,* 2001; High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, "A more secure world: our shared responsibility", *General Assembly Resolution A/59/565*, 2004; UN Secretary-General Report, "In Larger Freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all", UN General Assembly Resolution A/59/2005, 21 March 2005; Report of the Secretary-General, *Peacebuilding and sustaining peace,* A/72/707–S/2018/43, General Assembly, Seventy-second session 18 January 2018. See also, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A/RES/70/1, adopted by UN GA, September 2015.

[7] FH Hinsley *Op. Cit.,* p.3.

[8] Chris Brown,Terry Nardin and Nicholas Rengger, *International Relations in Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 18.

[9] Aristotle, *Politics,* Pearson (2000 [c.350 BC]): Plato*, The Platonic Epistles* (Cambridge University Press, 2014); Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, Indianapolis, Hackett (1998 [c.431 BC]); translation by Steven Lattimore, Book 1, 21-3 & Book 2, 34-46.

[10] See, for more on this, Oliver P Richmond, *The Grand Design: The Evolution of the International Peace Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021). Built on some of the following works: Hugo Grotius, *On the Law of War and Peace* (Cambridge University Press, (2012 [1625]): Erasmus, *Dulce Bellum Inexpertis* (Callender Press, 2013 [1515]); Kant, Immanuel *Perpetual Peace* (Hackett (1983/2003 [1795]); John Locke, *Two Treatises in Government, Locke* (Cambridge University Press (1988 [1689]); Publius. *The Federalist Papers*, CreateSpace(2016 [1788]); Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws* (CreateSpacem, 2015 [1748]); Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (Penguin (2012 [1792]); Duc De Sully*, Sully's Grand Design of Henry IV*: *From the Memoirs of Maximilien De Béthune* (Wentworth Press, 2016 [1638/ 1662]); Alexis Tocqueville, *Democracy in America: And Two Essays on America* (Penguin (2003 [1832]): Mary *A* Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Men; A Vindication of the Rights of Woman; An Historical and Moral View of the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008 [1792]).

[11] Georges-Henri Soutou, 'Was there a European Order in the Twentieth Century? From the Concert of Europe to the End of the Cold War', *Contemporary European History* 9, no. 3 (2000), 337.

Unpacking Power in Peace and Conflict Studies

Yet, the theories of peace and conflict appeared to have arrived in the twenty-first century caught up in a paradox. They claim and accept that progressive forms of peace should be the instrument of power in coordination with justice and sustainability, or at least this represents a compromise with power (often described as power-sharing). This has limited peacemaking and peacebuilding to a negative form, allowing the historical genealogies of the power of the state and of elites to maintain themselves. In mainstream IR and peace studies circles there has been a reluctance to move beyond a fairly limited, almost Kissinger-like understanding of a basic peace,[12] curtailed by relative power relations between states, ideology and economic power, and long-standing social stratifications. They have, perhaps unwittingly, adopted along the way some of the characteristics of counter-revolution, counter-insurgency, counter-terrorism, and neoliberalism in order to maintain the interests of power within a limited, perhaps even rhetorical framework of peace.[13] The spoilers literature once touched upon this problem of the co-optation of peace.[14] The liberal peace framed peace as the support of a human rights based and democratic, yet hierarchical and unequal political order. The underlying ontology of such an intellectual and policy evolution partially remains a social Darwinist framework, garnished with patriarchal, Euro-centric, inter-sectional (race and class), neo-colonial, and neoliberal epistemologies.[15] The "provincial"[16] early divisions, exclusions, categories and hierarchies were, and are, elements of power, rather than reflecting the inter-disciplinary sciences of peace. Underlying peace praxis inevitably perpetuates power, injustice, inequality, and unsustainability, this being its crippling paradox: the very processes, tools, and dynamics of peace are embedded in powerful historical and structural systems of power relations. Peace maintains power, perhaps more than it opens up emancipatory prospects.[17]

This is an acute problem, one which threatens peace's challenge to war and violence as a mode of politics. Indeed, where interventionary processes and tools are applied in unsuitable contexts shaped by unresolved force-relations, they can turn into their polar opposites. A brief reflection on the potentially adverse effects of the different components of peacebuilding (democratisation, statebuilding and development) illustrates this danger: In the absence of a historically grown societal consensus on its constitutional foundations, democratisation can be used to establish and legitimise authoritarian forms of power.[18] Neoliberal development aggravates social tensions since it represents a form of de-development for workers in terms of working conditions, precarity and wage depression.[19] Yet post-conflict states are not only

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[12] Barry Gewen, *The Inevitability of Tragedy* (New York: Norton, 2020).

[13] See for example, Sandra Pogodda, 'Revolutions and the Liberal Peace: Peacebuilding as Counterrevolutionary Practice?', *Cooperation and Conflict* 55, no. 3 (2020): 347–364

[14] See for example, Stephen John Stedman, 'Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes', International Security 22, no. 2 (1997): 5–53: Edward Newman and Oliver Richmond, *Challenges to Peacebuilding: Managing Spoilers During Conflict Resolution* (Tokyo UNU Press, 2006; Oliver Richmond, "Devious Objectives and the Disputants' View of International Mediation: A Theoretical Framework." Journal of Peace Research 35, no. 6 (1998), pp.707-22:

[15] Gëzim Visoka and Nicolas Lemay-Hébert, *Normalization in World Politics* (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 2022).

[16] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

[17] Sandra Pogodda, Op.Cit.

[18] Shadi Hamid, *Islamic Exceptionalism: How the Struggle over Islam is Reshaping the World* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2016).

[19] Adam Hanieh, *Lineages of Revolt: Issues of Contemporary Capitalism in the Middle East* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2013).

locked into this development model through debt and conditionality, but neoliberalism has systematically dismantled the platforms through which its destructive path could be halted by hollowing out social democracy (the post-WW2, European solution) and changing the institutional configuration of the state.[20] Statebuilding does not tackle this problem, but overdevelops the coercive capacities of the state rather than developing its competence in facilitating peaceful social order.[21] Capital and political economy replaces political government and law, undermining peacemaking and reform depending on rights, law, and constitutional reform. This makes the state fiercer in contexts, in which this alien import had no history of integrating social forces and lacks the structure to penetrate society through mechanism other than coercion.[22] Separately, these adverse effects of peace interventions may antagonise certain groups in society, but combined (as they are currently in the Middle East and North Africa) they are bound to prompt new conflicts. The privilege of deploying such interventions and then withdrawing without accountability if things go wrong is in itself an exercise of power.

There has recently been much work on sociological and anthropological renderings of power, often termed 'agency', but accounts of top-down power have been limited and restrained. Work on the intersectional nature (interrogating issues of gender, class, and race) of peace has been extremely illuminating on the nuanced ways in which power shapes peace and conflict, particularly in relation to structural factors. This work, much of it based on case studies, has given multiple examples of how individuals, communities and others have displayed ingenuity, dexterity and bravery to affect their will in conflict-affected contexts.[23] Here we are aware of indigenous and bottom-up forms of power.[24] This has given us new understandings of the subtleties of power (and indeed a reminder of older understandings).[25] It has also laid bare the limits of local agency for peace in the face of historically accumulated power.

A simple categorisation of power, drawing on the categories available in political theory, sociology and international relations, indicates a number of mechanisms through which power works. These are in atmospheric, direct, structural, governmental and subaltern forms.[26] There is most obviously direct power, which coerces other actors according to its interests. Related to this, there is structural power, where political-economy and geopolitics shapes processes and outcomes. More subtly there is governmental power (or governmentality), through which the power of government in a variety of forms (levels, external and internal, customary and social, economic, political, and legal) shapes the actors and outcomes of subjects without their full consent but also, perhaps, against their interests, or outside of the scientific and ethical basis that the good life or political virtue signifies. This represents a form of discursive power centred around the production of knowledge whose function is to enable and legitimate

[20] David Harvey, 'Neoliberalism as Creative Destruction', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 610 (2007): 22-44; Sankaran Krishna, *Globalization and Postcolonialism: Hegemony and Resistance in the Twenty-first Century* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009); Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demo; Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (New York: Zone Books, 2015).

[21] Oliver Richmond, *Failed Statebuilding: Intervention, the State and the Dynamics of Peace Formation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014).

[22] Nazih Ayubi, *Over-stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle Eas*t (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009).

[23] Oliver Kaplan, *Resisting War: How Communities Protect Themselves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Roger Mac Ginty, *Everyday Peace: How So-called Ordinary People Can Disrupt Violent Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

[24] Diana Francis, *People, Peace and Power: Conflict transformation in action* (London: Pluto, 2002); Alfred Taiaiake, *Peace, Power and righteousness: An indigenous manifesto* (Ontario: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[25] Kenneth E. Boulding, *Three faces of power* (London: Sage, 1990).

[26] For more on these types of power in relation to peace, see Oliver P Richmond, 'The paradox of peace and power: Contamination or enablement?', *International Politics* 54, (2017): 637-658.

certain actions and actors and marginalize and exclude others. Such power governs by setting norms and constructing legitimate and illegitimate forms of acting, being, and seeing the world. It is relational and fluid which focuses on performances, social relations, and unintended consequences of individual actions.[27] Viewed through the lens of relationality and fluidity, the practice of peace is not informed by policy blueprints and neither by learned patterns (represented as lessons learnt or best practices). Rather it is product of situational and relational interactions within certain figurations of power and interdependencies.[28] Power as a 'field of possibility...[that] facilitates and constrains social action'[29] is not only shaped by the deliberate use of power, but also by unintended actions.

Relatedly, and more commonly understood in anthropological and sociological approaches, connected to post-colonialism and to intersectional analyses, there is subaltern agency related to local, ethnographic, weak social agency. Finally, there is a new phenomenon of atmospheric power, related to alliances of new technology, data, AI, and capital, but less connected to the state, military, territory, and grounded populations, or the technologies of liberal government as are the previous versions. In our discussions of power, it is worth noting that power most likely manifests itself in complex assemblages that combine the material and immaterial, the structural and proximate, as well as the coercive and cooperative. Thus power is dynamic and shape-shifting. It can disguise itself in a language of emancipation and liberalism but this might also help keep its more coercive elements well-concealed. Crucially, those who are subject to power are often complicit in their own subaltern condition.[30]

Glimpses of the many types of power and their entanglement with peace praxis are present in the literature on conflict management and transformation, peacebuilding and statebuilding, as well as peacekeeping and mediation. But, power is rarely explicitly analysed, nor is it understood in these more complex ways. Conflict management approaches, including mediation, peacekeeping, and peace settlement approaches, generally work within the balance of power and geopolitics, stabilising, but not challenging them. Direct and structural power thus determine negative peace outcomes. From Cyprus to Kosovo, geopolitics, diplomacy, mediation, and peacekeeping have entrenched power relations among local and international stakeholders which has a negative impact on resolving protracted self-determination claims among disputant communities. International presence has become an instrument of great powers which aim to maintain the configuration of the existing Westphalian system by preventing the formation of new states.[31] With such parameters of peace processes already set by the hierarchy inherent in the international system, postcolonial and post-conflict states have long been a laboratory for the dilemmas emerging from heterogeneity.[32]

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[27] Gëzim Visoka, 'International Intervention and Relational Legitimacy', in Oliver P. Richmond and Roger Mac Ginty (eds) *Local Legitimacy and International Peacebuilding* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 44-68; Gëzim Visoka, 'Norbert Elias and Statebuilding After Violent Conflict', in Tatiana S. Landini and Francois Depelteau (eds), *Norbert Elias and Violence* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 161-182.

[28] Gëzim Visoka, *Peace Figuration After International Intervention* (London: Routledge, 2016).

[29] Clarissa Rile Hayward, *De-Facing Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 30.

[30] Étienne de La Boétie, *The Politics of Obedience: The Discourse of Voluntary Servitude*. Aubern: Mises Institute, 2015 [1552/53])

[31] Gëzim Visoka, John Doyle, Edward Newman (eds) *Routledge Handbook of State Recognition* (London: Routledge, 2020).

[32] Jean Comaroff and John L Comaroff, *Theory from the South: Or, How Euro-America is Evolving Toward Africa* (Londoon: Routledge, 2012).

Conflict resolution and transformation approaches work within the broader, social remit of the liberal state and international approaches relying of different types of governmental power. This means that where geopolitics and the balance of power undermine human rights and civil association, democracy, and free trade, intervention may be broadly designed to remove any blockages to liberal forms of peace. While for much of the last thirty years it was assumed that liberal-internationalism, liberal-democracy, and liberal peacebuilding had overcome the imbalances of geopolitics, more recently, it has begun to appear that the reverse is true. The international peace architecture has come under the control of geopolitical and geoeconomics forces, which have acted to restore much of the hierarchy, power relations, stratification, and hegemony it was designed to check since the nineteenth century. UN peacemaking, for instance, was just developing new mechanisms to tackle the complexity of contemporary civil wars (i.e. in Ghassan Salamé's Libyan National Conference approach of 2019), when even the mandating powers on the UNSCR sabotaged the process. This raises the question, whether the liberal camp remains committed to securing peace while its hegemon is in decline – or indeed whether liberal internationalism was ever meant to provide a bulwark to stem the geopolitical tide. Has the discursive commitment to multilateralism, negotiated consent and human rights blinded us to the darker side of this hegemony, which had never forsaken its prerogative to use military intervention in defence of the international hierarchy of wealth and power (hardly conducive to emancipation or justice)?[33] This would explain why the international peace architecture is caught in never-ending attempts at managing and governing the present and future crisis with little effort at resolving the root causes of many protracted conflicts. Adjusting to these power dynamics, international interventions, including those led by the UN, are becoming fluid without a clear entry point and exit and without a clear measurement of performance and outcomes.[34] Consequently, genuine efforts for peacebuilding and reconciliation tend to disappear in an endless struggle of priority diffusion, mission reconfiguration, and adaptation to changing global and local circumstances. Thus, the history of international interventionism is a history of fluid and unfinished peace initiatives that adapt to new emerging local, regional, and global circumstances. The latest phase is characterised by the rise of 'authoritarian conflict management' or versions of intervention and suppression that have little interest in human rights or representation.[35]

From Liberal to Authoritarian Outcomes

'Old-fashioned' versions of power have not gone away.[36] States, militaries, international organisations, and their proxies still wield enormous amounts of power: much of it coercive and based on sanctions for non-compliance. Counter-revolution and restoration have long been the aim of conservative forms of politics,[37] and they have been deployed as increasingly

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[33] Samuel Moyn, *Human Rights and the Uses of History* (London: Verso Books, 2014).

[34] Gezim Visoka, *Shaping Peace in Kosovo: The Politics of Peacebuilding and Statehood* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

[35] John Heathershaw and Catherine Owen, 'Authoritarian conflict management in post-colonial Eurasia', *Conflict, Security and Development* 19, no 3 (2019): 269-273; David Lewis, John Heathershaw and Nick Megoran, 'Illiberal peace? Authoritarian modes of conflict management', *Cooperation and Conflict* 53, no. 4 (2018): 486-506.

[36] Michael Karlberg, 'The power of discourse and the discourse of power,' *International Journal of Peace Studies* 10, no. 1 (2005): 1-25.

[37] Edmund Fawcett, *Conservatism: The Fight for a Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020).

sophisticated forms of governmentality, and government.[38] Indeed, in recent years there have been new configurations of these realist versions of power. One of the most significant shifts in recent years has been the brazenness of the use of power in the name of 'peace'. During the peak years of the liberal peace (mid-1990s to the mid-2000s), powerful actors were careful to use the language of liberalism (human rights, electoral processes, emancipation, and peace) alongside their interventions. For instance, the humanitarian intervention in Kosovo led by NATO was primarily driven by the desire of United States and European powers to use force in order to prevent recurrence of genocide and large-scale war crimes similar to those in Bosnia and Rwanda, whilst reiterating the reordering capacity of the liberal peace.[39] Despite controversies surrounding the legality of intervention and its role in reinvigorating great power rivalry, international intervention in the Balkans has ended wars and produced a relative peace, albeit not as sustainable or rights-oriented as desired.[40] Thus, in absence of other alternatives, power and use of force can produce relative peace, but with many implications for international order, especially when it is invoked selectively and unevenly.

This era of liberal interventions seems to have ended with the NATO-led intervention in Libya. While the debate over the R2P-intervention in Libya continues to focus on the issue of external regime change, a more telling lesson can be drawn from its failure: Aligning liberal rhetoric and interventionary practice requires a long-term commitment at all levels (e.g. peacekeeping, institution building across all levels, local-level peace processes, social integration, redistribution and mass job creation etc.), which Northern governments are unwilling to support. Yet human rights cannot be protected on the cheap. Peaceful social orders do not automatically emerge from the wreckage of a dictatorial regime and long-suppressed localised conflicts do not subside through standardised interventions such as constitution-making and elections. Unwilling to make long-term commitments to conflict contexts, power has shed its normative cover. In recent years, perhaps emboldened by the one-term Trump US Presidency, there has been no pretence that interventions can be leavened by the language of liberalism. Instead, intervention to protect human rights or life itself has been rejected in places such as Syria and Yemen. This withdrawal has paved the way for authoritarian regimes to replace the liberal model of peace with an illiberal one.

This means that peace processes still reflect the dynamics of the battlefield: a reversion to a failed 17th and 18th Century model. At best the language of stabilisation has been deployed (echoing counter-insurgency models from the 19th Century to the 1950s. aimed at preserving imperial and settler-state power), and stabilisation programmes have been accompanied by development programmes.[41] The ambition, if that is the correct word, is simply to stabilise the context. This subterfuge has meant that both Russia and China, among other BRICS, can also now claim to be involved in peacebuilding, peacekeeping, peacemaking and development in

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[38] Louise Wuiff Moe, 'Counter-insurgency in the Somali territories: The "grey zone" between peace and pacification', *International Affairs* 94, no. 2 (2018): 319-341.

[39] The Independent International Commission on Kosovo, *The Kosovo Report: Conflict, International Response, Lessons Learned* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[40] Edward Newman and Gëzim Visoka 'Kosovo 20 Years On: Implications for International Order', *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 26, no. 1 (2019): 215-231. See also: Gëzim Visoka and Oliver P. Richmond, 'After Liberal Peace? From Failed Statebuilding to an Emancipatory Peace in Kosovo', *International Studies Perspectives* 18, no. 1 (2017): 110-129.

[41] David Keen with Larry Attree, 'Dilemmas of Counter- Terror, Stabilisation and Statebuilding', *Saferworld*, January 2015, 2. See also, Stabilisation Unit, *The UK Government's Approach to Stabilisation*, 2014; International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, *A New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States*, IDPS, 2011.

ways that equate with the UN Security Council's apparent vision, if not that of UN agencies, the Secretariat, General Assembly, donors, or even IFIs.[42] Often this involves supporting supine but stable governments and overlooking human rights abuses. This post-liberal era has little room for the language of emancipation, rights, and democracy, even though it has partly been brought about by the magnification and expansion of subaltern political claims.[43]

This paradox illustrates how power systems are forced to make concessions against subaltern claims (rather than against power complexes that can afford them better), often holding out the hope of a settlement based upon non-violence. This raises the old anti-monarchy and anti-colonial problem of whether non-violent peace agency has the leverage to persuade powerful actors to make concessions in any peace process. To revolt and reform through peacemaking, or to restore? Optimistic assessments of nonviolent resistance may have seen their day come and pass,[44] if judged by ease in which counterrevolutionary forces managed to crush nonviolent attempts at challenging power in the Arab Uprisings. While dictators in Tunisia and Egypt have been toppled, democratisation was immediately captured and in Egypt ultimately reversed. Nonviolent resistance has brought about marginal changes in force relations, but failed to fundamentally transform the coercive apparatus of the state or dismantle its corrupt power and class structures.[45] Crucially, the reluctance of nonviolent resistance to seize power combined with its containment by structural forces has led to its marginalisation.[46] Recent peaceful mass mobilisation in Lebanon, Hong Kong, Chile, Algeria and other places has confirmed this trend. Sudan as a test case for civilian-military power sharing may have more potential, but has so far been overwhelmed by the depth of its economic, political and social crises. Settlements often remain unimplemented, frozen, conflicts are 'refrigerated', meaning that progressive language and indeed peace settlements and processes became a disguise for continuing power relations and regressive innovations in the praxis of war and violence. The grounding of all peace activities upon geopolitical foundations, the state and existing international hierarchy, power-sharing, and majoritarianism means that the theory and the doctrine (as in the UN system) as a scientific body of knowledge associated with peace and which is empirically falsifiable, has substantially diverged from practices. The latter are more influenced by realism, geopolitics, and power, using rights and development as a camouflage for power-structures that remain more or less intact. This divergence has undermined the legitimacy of both the science of peace and its practices, destabilising the international peace architecture it was supposed to stabilise and advance.[47]

Much of what passes as peace in the twenty-first century falls into the category of what Heathershaw and others call 'authoritarian conflict management'. This has involved states,

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[42] See for example, Steven C.Y. Kuo, Chinese Peace in Africa: From Peacekeeper to Peacemaker (London: Routledge, 2020): Oliver P. Richmond, and Ioannis Tellidis. 'Emerging Actors in International Peacebuilding and Statebuilding: Status Quo or Critical States', *Global Governance* 20, no. 4 (2014): 563–584.

[43] Oliver P. Richmond, *A Post-Liberal Peace* (London: Routledge, 2011).

[44] E.g. Gene Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle: 20th Century Practice and 21st Century Potential* (Boston: Porter Sargent Publishers, 2005); Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011); Maciej J. Bartkowski, *Recovering Nonviolent History: Civil Resistance in Liberation Struggles* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2012).

[45] Pogodda 2020, Op.Cit.

[46] For further explanation see e.g. Hazem Kandil, *The Power Triangle: Military, Security, and Politics in Regime Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Maha Abdelrahman, *Egypt's Long Revolution: Protest Movements and Uprisings* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Philip Marfleet, *Egypt: Contested Revolution* (London: Pluto Press, 2016).

[47] FH Hinsley, *Op. Cit*. See also Oliver P Richmond, *The Grand Design*, *Op. Cit.*

usually regional powers, deploying military means to affect their will, meaning a regressive "restoration" of many of the roots of the conflict. As a senior Israeli administrator put it, 'Stability is more important than democracy.'[48] In the Middle East, a number of Arab and Gulf states, all with poor human rights records, have publicly normalised their relations with Israel. There is no pretence that any of this will have a positive impact at the ground level in terms of rights and freedoms. It is a public affirmation of diplomatic and security cooperation that has been on-going for some time. Stabilisation praxis has a long hinterland as far back as the imperial and colonial period, and reflected practices associated with counter-revolution and counter-insurgency, in that it seeks to stabilise the state to maintain the systemic status quo. In this guise, power's relation with peacemaking means that any peace tends to aim at restoring the pre-war order rather than improving it.[49] Consequently, human rights and the condition of peaceful life are reduced rather than augmented (as one would expect with a more positive peace epistemology).

While this rationality might appeal to military elites and political realists, the subject's complicity in the stabilisation praxis is less straight forward. The trauma of recent conflict explains why people may temporarily forego demands for a positive peace in exchange for a modicum of security in this 'conflict management bargain': When weighing their political and economic grievances against the potential upheaval of a fundamental challenge to the status quo, large swathes of conflict-affected societies may opt for stability rather than unpredictability. Accordingly, in Lebanon (2019) and BiH (2014), masses mobilised against power sharing agreements that allowed sectarian actors to capture the peace, but pulled back before creating a liminal revolutionary situation. However, the weakness of the 'conflict management bargain' is that it only offers one benefit which can never be fully secured: feelings of relative deprivation[50] will inevitably tempt new generations to unravel the bargain in exchange for emancipatory possibilities.

Also important in this era of power has been an undermining of multilateralism and international institutions with an interest in oversight and checks and balances. While it is tempting to associate this change with the Trump Presidency, the trend is far more long-term and structural. Liberal peacebuilding, though an advance, reflected Western hegemony and American liberalism (and eventually neoliberalism). It is unlikely to be reversed quickly or easily. Thus we have seen the withdrawal of western troops from United Nations peacekeeping,[51] and the refusal of the United States, China and India to ratify the Rome Statute and the International Criminal Court. In a number of cases, leading western states have shown a preference for operating unilaterally or through *ad hoc* coalitions, rather than through the United Nations. All of this undermines, in a deliberate way, the organisation established to be primary collective security organ. Political will has been fragmented by the withdrawal of the US and the entryism of certain states who would like to control various agencies in order to weaken them, such as Sri Lanka with the Human Rights Council, or China's "developmental

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[48] Cited in Lionel Barber, *The Powerful sand the Damned: Private diaries in turbulent times* (London: WH Allen, 2020): 108.

[49] Fred Halliday, ''The Sixth Great Power': On the Study of Revolution and International Relations', *Review of International Studies* 16, no. 3 (1990): 207-221. David Keen with Larry Attree, *Dilemmas of counter-terror, stabilisation and statebuilding,* Saferworld, January 2015, 2: See also, Stabilisation Unit, *The UK Government's Approach to Stabilisation*, 2014: International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, *A New Deal for engagement in fragile states*, IDPS, 2011.

[50] Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970).

[51] Madhav Joshi, 'An institutional explanation of troop contributions in UN peacekeeping missions', International Peacekeeping 27, no. 5 (2020): 785-809.

peacebuilding ", or Russia's supposed interest in peacekeeping in its region.[52] This reflects their interests in taking over the US' vacant position in the multilateral order because it is a reflection of power and interests.

A prominent trend in recent years has been the rise of populism and nativism in a number of countries, including the US, Italy, Hungary and the United Kingdom. This has been important in terms of a declining interest in international affairs and pro-peace and pro-development initiatives, particularly as it has often represented a direct challenge to everyday and hybrid peace development by diverting local peacemakers back towards exclusive interests and identities. But it has also been important in the sense of reframing foreign policy issues through the prism of nativism and isolationism, connecting new counter-reform social networks to the 'ancien regime' of state and international direct forms of peace. As Zuboff has argued, surveillance capitalism[53] pushes back at human rights and restores an order in which technological and economic primacy displace political claims. In addition, conflicts overseas were becoming regarded as worthy of attention mainly if they had the potential to produce refugees and migrants who would want to move to, or through, Europe. The migration 'crisis' of the past decade only became a crisis when significant numbers of migrants approached Europe.

Important in all of this is the role of China. No longer a rising power, but a fully-fledged economic, military and technological power, China has been playing an increasingly prominent role in international organisations. This role is often subtle, behind the scenes, and does much to suppress interest in democracy and rights.[54] The overall effect is a cooling towards a form of multilateralism that might seriously address issues of inequality and injustice, and a co-optation of the concepts of peacebuilding and development. China's rise has encouraged the US and others in their wariness of multilateral organisations. Other BRIC actors have also controversial - and not fully committed- approaches to peace, development, and multilateralism.[55]

Emancipatory Peace versus Restoration and Counter-Order

A final point to make, and one so obvious that it risks being overlooked, is that the structures of international politics remain stacked in favour of realist notions of power. Despite being repeatedly written off, states have remained remarkably resilient and dexterous, as has geopolitics, with all of its attendant failures. Above all, they have survived, with many perpetuating the essentially colonial origins of their statehood. Liberal peacebuilding can be read as a modernisation of the colonial world order through hegemonic control of the states-system. Neoliberal statebuilding went a step further, as a regressive rather than modernising force.[56] As Halliday once argued, stabilisation strategies (such as followed the failure of statebuilding) shift international order into counter-order,[57] replacing emancipation from violence, conflict, and inequality with power and profit through violence, conflict, and inequality. This reinvents the 19th Century 'restoration' of the monarchy after the counter-

[52] Oliver P Richmond, and Ioannis Tellidis, *Op. Cit.*

[53] Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism* (London: Profile, 2009), p.9

[54] Safal Ghimire, 'Rising powers and security: A false dawn of the pro-south world order', *Global Change, Peace and Security* 30, no. 1 (2018): 37-55.

[55] Charles T Call and Cedric De Coning (eds), *Rising Powers and Peacebuilding: Breaking the mold?* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017)

[56] Oliver Richmond, *Failed Statebuilding.*

[57] Fred Halliday, ''The Sixth Great Power': On the Study of Revolution and International Relations'.

revolution, in other words.[58] Peace theories, tools, and strategies have been somewhat naively caught out by this shift towards their capture by power interests to displace subaltern and emancipatory political claims. The modern states of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Brazil, and India – to name a few prominent examples – have roots in violent suppression that continue to reap dividends for political elites and institutions to this day. On the international stage, the Permanent Five of the United Nations Security Council reflects a world of over seventy-five years ago. Few, if any, attempts are made to justify the perpetuation of an arrangement that singularly fails to reflect the diversity, demographics and economic and political realities of our era.[59]

While the power of inertia is undeniable, we are now seeing signs of new configurations of power aided by technology, the mobility of finance, and the shift to post-liberalism. Richmond has referred to this (as mentioned above) imminent development and its uncertain implications for peace as 'atmospheric power' and related it to a bifurcated digital framework for peace of either new forms of emancipation connected to justice and sustainability, or to digital forms of governmentality.[60] Recent postcolonial scholarship points to the latter outcome.[61]

A hypothesis that emerges from the above analysis is that the liberal version of peacemaking has arisen most plausibly at times when civil society and peace formation processes were aligned with the international architecture, forcing the state into the same line through intervention, reform, and peacebuilding. When international actors remove their admittedly self-interested engagement, this removes the platform civil society pressures the state from, allowing either regional hegemons or state authoritarians to shape political order in often profoundly ambiguous ways. An authoritarian outcome ensues, as has arisen in so many cases across the world. This can be seen most notably in the rejection of peace processes by groups in society or by political elites, and in particular of the liberal model of state, as recently in Colombia. Contributing to authoritarian praxis are the international community's tendencies to maintain unsuccessful peace processes or peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions over a long period to time, such as in Cyprus and Kosovo or local elite's partial reform syndrome in Liberia and Bosnia, and the collapse of the rule of law, the undermining of civil society, corruption, rejection of state reform, and rise of authoritarianism in many of the Middle Eastern and North African countries. In the case of the complex and protracted conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), a similar mix of entrenched authoritarian structures of political, social, and economic power, combined with exclusionary forms of development have eroded prospects for peace based upon human rights and communal needs.

Yet, an alignment of power across scales may not lead to peace either, promoting instead a hegemonic framework of assimilation. The implausibility of a subaltern-led peace, because the preponderance of state power or the influence of regional or global actors and systems, points to a substantial paradox for peace praxis: it requires an alliance with power that does not collapse into hegemony (and imperialism), but subaltern political claims would tend to

[58] Pogodda, *Op. Cit*.

[59] See Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (London: Penguin, 2012): Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

[60] See Oliver P Richmond, "The paradox of peace and power: Contamination or enablement?", *Op. Cit*: Oliver P. Richmond, 'Peace in Analogue/ Digital International Relations', *Global Change Peace & Security*, 32, no.3 (2020): 317-336

[61] Nick Couldry and Ulises A. Mejias, 'Data Colonialism: Rethinking Big Data's Relation to the Contemporary Subject',*Television & New Media* 20, no 4 (2019): 336-349.

disaggregate power and apply it for micro interests. Similar dilemmas over strategy, means and ends currently also constrain revolutionary agency as a potential pathway to emancipation: While avoiding the fiercely violent forms of rule generated by the violent power-grabbing revolutions of the past,[62] nonviolent resistance in the 21st Century is in danger of removing itself so far from power that it constitutes no meaningful corrective to it. This leaves little plausible space for an emancipatory peace to emerge in politics and international order, expect from perhaps a more substantial engagement with scientific and scholarly work (a remedy Plato and Aristotle might have recognised), and the acceptance that different forms of international, state, local order and stable inter-relationships might be a better basis for peacemaking. This is something that the Non-Aligned Movement has long argued, as well as important scholars such as Fred Halliday.[63] Yet what Bleiker described as 'mediating across difference'[64] remains marginal to the rationality of the UN system as well as great power foreign policy.

However, the reality of the international peace architecture (IPA),[65] once expected to be a homogenous 'grand design' leading to a cosmopolitan world order and commensurate peace, is actually a historical jigsaw puzzle in which many of the pieces do not fit.[66] The dilemma for the relationship between power and peace is whether to force the pieces to fit, and whether to prop up the result unstable system, or to search for a systemic approach with more symmetry in vertical and horizontal forms. Both versions, a homogenising system or a system of mediated difference, produce peace praxis that may omit the substantial problem of the conditions of everyday life and the legitimacy it may or may not generate for political order founded on a peace agreement or process. At different points in time, the relationship between power and peace has been used for both purposes, and both versions have led to an IPA upon which domestic and international peace depends, but which remains under acute stress. The IPA is always focussed responding to the last war, underfunded, ill coordinated, partly abandoned, lacking political will, yet resting on innovations hidden in scholarship and civil society, and under attack from many sides. These dynamics tensions in the relationship between power and peace (eg pre-existing political order associated with war, practices of intervention and mediation associated with reform, subsequent political order and local forms of legitimacy) have also come to characterise peacebuilding, peacemaking, processes, and agreements. However, they are skewed to reflecting the interests of powerful actors in practise covered with a veneer of subaltern discourses.

If in its long history, power cannot be trusted to support peace, and in their emerging history subaltern actors cannot effectively script or create political reform necessary, does this mean a refreshed liberal peace remains a suitable compromise? This would be to prevent hegemony and counter-revolutionary tendencies and peace's co-optation by power, and to prevent emancipatory and subaltern engagements be relegated to unimplemented documentation and reports (which in cases such as Cyprus now span several generations).

An outline of the Essays in the Special Issue

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[62] Arno Mayer, *The Furies: Violence and Terror in the French and Russian Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

[63] Fred Halliday*, Op. Cit.*

[64] Morgan Brigg and Roland Bleiker, (eds). *Mediating Across Difference: Oceanic and Asian Approaches to Conflict Resolution* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011).

[65] OP Richmond, *The Grand Design, Op. Cit.*

[66] Duc De Sully, *Sully's Grand Design of Henry IV: From the Memoirs of Maximilien De Béthune* (Wentworth Press, 2016 [1638/ 1662]): Cited in Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace*, pp.25– 29 and p.33.

All of this is by way of introduction to this Special Issue on how power is narrated, utilised, hidden, repurposed and circulated in relation to peace and peacemaking. Peace praxis is under constant pressure to emancipate disputants, subalterns, and claimants who might otherwise turn to violence or become victims of war, as well as to conform to the special interests (and failures) of powerful actors. Taken together, the contributions to this Special Issue illustrate that there is no neat summation of power and peace, but that this relationship is so far little understood and offers fertile ground for critical investigation. Instead, power can be analysed from a variety of perspectives, is often difficult to capture, and is in constant flux. A particular difficulty that we face is making comprehensible the connection between structural forms of power and the everyday minutiae that constitutes life in peace, war, and all states in between. Nikolas Kosmopoulous reminds us that immaterial and material power are very much connected. The power to frame a problem or a conflict comes from a prior material power (in this case by external 'experts'). A 'techno-moral' power is wielded whereby the power of technocracy linked to the international peacebuilding architecture melds with the language of peace to reinforce hierarchies and othering. Through this power, post-conflict subjects can be formed and controlled. It allows 'experts' to frame a conflict, its actors and the threat posed in accordance with the willingness of the peace industry to get involved, diverting peace processes away from societal (and global) demands for justice.

These epistemological impositions are echoed by Juan Daniel Cruz in his account of how the narration of peace in Latin America represents, in many cases, the over-writing of local experience. The adoption of Euro-centric peace language, concepts and (best) practices has meant that in many Latin America have reproduced Euro-centric peace intervention. As Cruz argues, these versions of peace can become part of a colonial logic. The power of western actors and structures means that this colonial inheritance is difficult to overcome and we have the spectacle of some Latin American scholars and peace activists using a largely western script on how to be indigenous and authentic. Cruz offers a way out through a deep and critical learning and critical contextualisation that shakes a dependence on external modes of thinking. Kate Paarlberg-Kvam continues with a critique of the language and lenses open to us to understand contemporary peace and conflict. She uses a feminist decolonial perspective to unpack the political economy of peace, with a focus on post-accord Colombia. Contributions to the Special Issue shows how the peace accord fuelled mineral extraction and reinforced existing power inequalities. What becomes clear is that different types of power are in the mix in encounters between communities, mining conglomerates, and states. The types of power used by communities are often important but immaterial and so risk being overlooked and overwhelmed by the material power wielded by others.

Josie Gardner provides us with the very useful reminder of the importance of conceptualisation and reconceptualization. Just as power itself is never static, nor should our conceptualisations remain still. Her contribution to this Special Issue encourage us to think about issues of scale, complexity, and relationality. This is very much in keeping with perspectives that see power as systems and assemblages. Such perspectives encourage a decentring of Eurocentric ways of knowing. Crucial in this is a move away from autocratic conflation of power with force. The conflation neatly masks more emancipatory and networked forms of power such as 'power to' and 'power with'.[67] It also neatly side-steps immaterial forms of power – such as the sacred that matter a great deal to many people but not be on the radar in technocratic mindsets.

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[67] Peggy L. Chinn and Adeline Falk-Rafael, 'Peace and Power: A Theory of Emancipatory Group Process', *Journal of Nursing Scholarship* 47, no. 1 (2015): 62–69.

Samer Abboud illustrates how the rise of authoritarian powers as peacemakers is changing the instruments, norms and outcomes of contemporary peace processes. In such processes, the actors emphasise stabilisation and have stripped 'peace' into a bare bones form of political order that is uninterested in rights and emancipation. Violence becomes the main instrument to achieve peace, while a new state and society are engineered through coercion. Abboud's contribution reminds us that traditional forms of power are very much current. They have been able, with considerable ease, to sidestep the liberal peace architecture that was constructed in the post-Cold war world. The authoritarian conflict management that Abboud examines poses important questions for liberal internationalism, especially in relation to its disconnect from shifting conflict dynamics: Can the UN remain relevant, if powerful actors can not only block the international peace architecture but foster illiberal forms of peace in its place?

Emma van Santen asks us to look afresh at the notion of inclusion in peace processes. She provides a critical analytical framework that allows us to critique narratives of inclusion that often mask structural power - much of it resting on exclusion and a framing that marginalises some actors. Key here is the ability of some actors to delineate acceptable forms of politics, to securitise particular actors and stances, and to frame a peculiar version of 'inclusion' as liberal and sensible. She advocates a more sociological approach that is alert to structural sources of oppression that are hard-wired into dominant narratives about peacemaking and the international institutions that support them. This 'social inclusion' lens is able to look beyond securitised frames to foreground issues of social justice and ask questions about peace processes hierarchies that privilege governments and armed groups.

The thinking behind commissioning this Special Issue was to 'bring power back in' to our analyses of peace, conflict, and situations in between. To a certain extent, power has slipped from view. Partly this has been because the outward manifestations of power have been changing. Traditional forms of interventions are being replaced by new technologies. Partly it is because other manifestations of power are often subtle, multifarious, and difficult to capture. And partly, because much of the research gaze in peace and conflict studies has been focused elsewhere, perhaps somewhat aspirationally at state-level, internal and ethnographic sites of legitimacy and authority. What this Introductory essay, and the essays in the Special Issue, hope to demonstrate is that power should be at the front and centre of our analyses. While power is constantly changing and updating itself in its nature and articulations, it is worth remembering that 'old' versions of power still persist and we ignore them at our peril. Peace needs to keep pace and even move ahead, given scientific advances. In the international peace architecture power is shifting from agents of the liberal peace to those who want to replace it with an illiberal alternative. Hence, peace in the 21st Century evolves in an antagonistic relationship between emancipatory agency and counter-peace forces[68] and theorizing will have to develop new critical lenses to capture it.

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[68] Oliver P Richmond, Sandra Pogodda, Gëzim Visoka, *Counter-Peace: Blockages to Peacebuilding and Social Movements* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

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