

## INTRODUCTION

# Post-Conflict Spaces in International Relations

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But the state, no more probably today than at any other time in its history, does not have this unity, this individuality, this rigorous functionality, nor to speak frankly, this importance; maybe, after all, the state is no more than a composite reality and a mythicised abstraction, whose importance is a lot more limited than any of us think. [...] It is the tactics of government which make possible the continual definition and redefinition of what is within the competence of the state and what is not, the public versus the private, and so on; thus the state can only be understood in its survival and its limits on the basis of the general tactics of governmentality.

(Foucault 1991: 103)

### Introduction

Post-conflict spaces are particular fields of international relations. They represent the purest empirical expression of a post-Westphalian world order. In this order, individuals and communities, societies and states are increasingly internationalised and globalised as *de facto* and at times *de jure* sovereignty is conspicuous by its absence. However, it is in post-conflict space that a range of parties, for contrasting reasons and with varying degrees of conviction, begin their quests to build state and civil society. On the one hand, international actors make intrusive interventions into the sovereign space of a given state. On the other hand, local actors will engage in their own para-diplomatic, transnational practices to obtain political and material support from outside parties. Moreover, detailed empirical studies, such as those elaborated in this collection, indicate that the influence of international actors is inhibited by the resilience of local informal institutions of governance.

In such circumstances, where authority and sovereignty are forever under question, the informal politics of governance is intense. Practices of domination and resistance complicate our frames of reference. Conventional concepts of "states", "insurgents" and "terrorists" fail to capture the political and economic subjectivities and diversities of actors. The boundaries between these groups may be more about the discursive act of naming than any real practical separation between the two. Here international relations can be as much about inter-personal rivalries as about state-to-state diplomacy. Nevertheless, despite the highly politicised nature of post-conflict intervention, most analyses by academics and policy-makers continue to ignore or simplify these dynamics in the search for fixed categories - for objects of, and partners for, intervention. Such policy-prescriptive accounts are not without worth but they lack substantive theoretical reflection and thus overlook or distort significant practical

developments. In such circumstances the discourse and practices of intervention, and the making and building of a community of interveners (the "international community"), can become more important than either the ostensible goal of state-building or the practical realities of individuals and communities scratching out a living under conditions of violent political conflict.

The collection of papers which constitutes this special issue of the *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* was initially brought together for a special section of the International Studies Association in Chicago in February 2007.<sup>2</sup> Based on recently conducted fieldwork, authors explore case studies via approaches based both on orthodox political science research methodologies such as interviews and surveys, as well as ethnographic insights gleaned from living and working in the country. The list of in-depth case studies - of post-conflict spaces from Kosovo to Kabul, from Ituri to Transdnestr - immediately indicates that many discrete post-conflict spaces have little or no prospect of recognised statehood in the foreseeable future. Moreover, the *de facto* or *de jure* statehood of other polities remains a production of local-global relationships of governance. Together these relationships provide material and ideational resources and complex structures of authority and legitimacy. Despite lacking the classical criteria of sovereignty, elites in these places seek international recognition and aid in order to bolster their particular faction. These 'tactics of government' are less about building strategically towards the idealised endpoint of statehood and more about the day-to-day politics of making space for regime survival and consolidation. Our authors sought to tackle these puzzles of post-conflict politics through an analysis of the role of space, place and locality in their particular cases. However, they were not content to leave their cases as free-standing examples of the importance of space but sought the implications they offer for theory. Together they offer no unified theory or policy framework, yet they make significant contributions to both.

This introductory article sets out the contribution of this collection to the field. Throughout we will speak about *post-conflict space* (single) as the contested field of international intervention. We will however focus our analysis on *post-conflict spaces* (plural) as the particular empirical manifestations of authority which arise amid and following periods of civil war and political violence. Such spaces might be constituted around authorities and networks which are primarily 'economic' (such as organised crime groups who carve out space for extraction, production and trafficking or migrant communities which make translocal space for the passage of labourers and remittances). They might also be primarily 'political' in the making of space for the 'international community' in post-conflict space where extraordinarily high levels of intervention have become normalised. Yet all such spaces are political in that they have symbolic and instrumental effects on governance, authority and sovereignty, and all are economic configurations in that they create their own systems of livelihoods, production and exchange.

Therefore we do not seek to uncover essential features, attributes or structures of post-conflict space. Rather, we seek to open up the range of spatial possibilities in post-conflict politics. We delineate five major findings from our empirical studies. First, as all papers show, the boundaries of political communities - what is 'internal' and what is 'external' - are constantly re-negotiated, as elites, subordinate and international actors re-appropriate, subvert and co-opt peacebuilding or statebuilding designs to their own interests. The papers make clear that conceptual tools which offer neat divisions between 'the international' and 'the national' or between 'state' and 'non-state' are routinely adopted by policy-makers whilst being of little use to the analyst who wants to make sense how such boundaries of political community come into

being and are contested. Space for international intervention, elite governance and subordinate resistance or avoidance are constituted by the practices of politics. In this sense, the agency of these actors is inter-subjective with the establishment of patterns of political practice. Second, and in some contrast to the above, in many places it is the absence of such patterns and the pervasive impact of uncertainty which is the dominant feature of post-conflict space as Alex Veit shows with respect to Ituri, Congo. The inability to fix boundaries between state and non-state, for example, provides for shifting incentive structures, contingency and unpredictability.

Third, as Florian Kühn shows with respect to political-economic networks in Afghanistan, under certain conditions statebuilding might produce the very opposite of its stated aims. State structures built under international intervention can provide space for the survival and expansion of the very actors whose presence precludes the realisation of the idealised state based on popular statebuilding. Such states should not be dismissed as mere artifices as their discursive construction can have symbolic affects and instrumental effects. In fact, it may allow for the long-term cohabitation and even cooperation of drug traffickers with state officials in a given territory. In the case of Afghanistan in particular we might ask whether in this way international statebuilding is institutionalising state failure. Fourth, in other places statehood in general and the recognition of sovereignty, remain powerful and widely-practised ideals of post-conflict politics which allow regimes to consolidate and legitimate themselves. As John Heathershaw on Tajikistan and Daria Isachenko on Cyprus and Transdnestr show the long-term absence of either *de facto* or *de jure* sovereignty is not necessarily an indication of the decline of "state" as a productive discourse for collective political action.

These first four findings are at least indirectly relevant to the policy choices made by those policy-makers who believe that states can be built via international assistance. Our fifth finding directly addresses the nature of policy. Politics cannot be reduced to policy-making. Policy-making, as Jens Narten makes clear with respect to the strategy of 'local ownership' in Kosovo, is but one expression of politics. Where policy is made according to the fudges, compromises and vague aspirations of the international community - without taking account of local political conflicts and powerful elite interests, let alone the political and economic interests of foreign powers themselves - that policy will flounder and can even lead to further violence. Taken together, what the papers emphasise is that post-conflict spaces are best understood as complex figurations of networks and authorities and shifting local-global relationships.

This introductory article begins with an analysis of the limitations of the contemporary statebuilding literature particularly in its failure to think theoretically about the state and space. We then go on to outline the importance of space (as opposed to territory) as a variable in the study of statebuilding. The case for space is made with reference to the articles of this special issue and relevant literature from political geography, sociology and anthropology amongst other disciplines. We outline three levels of space that provide a basic analytical framework - albeit one which must be adapted to context - for the critical study of statebuilding in post-conflict spaces.

### **Building states after conflict?**

Since the end of the Cold War, international intervention in conflict and post-conflict countries has been a growth industry. At the end of 2006, there were more than 80,000 military and police personnel deployed in 16 different UN missions, not counting those interventions carried out under the umbrella of regional bodies. The purported aims of this kind of international interventionism are: (1) the reconstruction of the core

structures and institutions of the western, Weberian state (often denoted as “state-building”); and, (2) support for the transition from war to peace (“peace-building”). However, the policies pursued by Western nations, the main drivers behind these interventions, go beyond simple organisational reform and the support of reconciliation processes. Instead, a key part of intervention has been the imposition of what has been termed the “liberal peace”, a set of measures designed to liberalise the economy, modernise society, introduce democracy and induce political stability (Paris 1997; Duffield 2001). In recent times major academic studies have sought to provide more comprehensive institutionalist approaches with the merging of peacebuilding and statebuilding (Paris 2004; Doyle & Sambanis 2006). Yet such normative approaches fail to grasp the implications of the larger historical process of the merger of liberal-developmental and security agendas (Duffield 2001).

This increasing international willingness to intervene in conflict-affected countries is reflected in the exponential growth of the academic literature on the topic, of which this journal, and this special issue, is but one outgrowth. Most contributions to the discourse come from within International Relations and, true to this mandate, analyse the issues from a systemic or macro-level vantage point. As a result, current research is afflicted by a persistent bias, in that it approaches post-conflict countries from an outsider’s perspective. Almost inevitably, these countries are understood either as sovereign subjects of international politics, or as structures under which domestic relations are played out. Actors from these countries are analyzed according to the position they take vis-à-vis the liberal peace project, either as ‘spoilers’ (Stedman 1997) or as ‘change agents’ (Mitchell 2006). Yet in these accounts little attention is paid to the resilience of local space; elite-subordinate dynamics of patronage and structures of authority remain a mystery to most international statebuilders. Ethnographic perspectives on post-conflict change are notably lacking from within peace and conflict studies or the discipline of International Relations.<sup>3</sup> The subject of the post-conflict space remains under-theorised and over-generalised.

#### *“Institutionalisation Before Liberalisation”<sup>4</sup>*

The grand narrative of progress, towards an international community of sovereign states, guided by the twin goals of peacebuilding and statebuilding, employing the means of development and security assistance, can be found in two well-known policy reports of the international community. Both *Responsibility to Protect* ([R2P] ICISS 2001)<sup>5</sup> and *A More Secure World* ([MSW] UN 2004) exhibit these discursive mergers and incorporations. R2P blends a cosmopolitan-humanitarian perspective with communitarian principles to explicitly challenge the ambiguity of the UN discourse of the 1990s regarding state sovereignty, represented emblematically in the *Agenda for Peace* (1992) and its supplement (1995). Similarly, MSW seeks to please everyone - both ‘bottom-up’ peacebuilders who demand that the rights of the individuals must be placed above the sovereignty of the state, and statebuilders who believe that juridical sovereignty can be overlooked in the case of ‘failed states.’ It is thus highly interventionist. ‘Today,’ the report notes, ‘we are in an era where dozens of states are under stress or recovering from conflict, there is a clear international obligation to assist states in developing their capacity to perform their sovereign functions effectively and responsibly’ (emphasis added, p.83). Such a maxim shifts the UN further away from principles of sovereign consent and makes the idea of a dichotomy between sovereignty and intervention altogether meaningless. Ironically, in its advocacy for the

importance of a single standard of sovereign responsibility - a single ideal-type post-conflict space - MSW amounts to the clearest case for a two-tier system of sovereign states (subjects of intervention and subjects to intervention) since nineteenth century advocacy for colonialism.

Perhaps the strongest indicator of this integration of statebuilding and peacebuilding is how critical works are incorporated by discourse and become the new dogma. As such, apparent critiques can become the new grand strategy for peacebuilding which reflects discursive developments (towards statebuilding) and look not all that dissimilar from its predecessors. In a widely cited article, 'Wilson's Ghost', Paris argued that peacebuilding is guided by the doctrine of liberal internationalism while 'transplanting western models of social, political, and economic organisation into war-shattered states' (1997: 56). In a later paper (2002) he portrayed peacebuilding actors as pursuing a 'mission civilisatrice', making an explicit parallel to colonial claims to legitimacy. Yet while Paris's early work is critical of 'first-generation' peacebuilding, his more recent writings have sought to construct a new model for intervention. He calls for an adjustment of peacebuilding practice in terms of 'institutionalisation before liberalisation' (IBL), thus 'avoiding the pathologies of liberalisation, while placing war-shattered states on a long-term path to democracy and market-oriented economics' (Paris 2004: 235). Paris now argues that peacebuilding must involve 'building liberal *and* effective states' (2006: 425). The governing assumption of all this is that the single sovereign space of the Westphalian state must rise from the ashes of civil war. Paris' work has been extremely popular among students, scholars and practitioners with few significant voices raised in dissent. The author himself outlines and sensibly refutes a number of objections to his IBL thesis including 'endless-mission', 'culture-of-dependency' and 'excessive-costs' (2004: 207-211). Clearly if IBL is really successful in building peace and reaching the elusive endpoint of a democratic and sovereign state in the terms Paris outlines it is likely to be considered worth investing in by international donors.

However, there is a bigger objection to his thesis: the model which Paris advances repeats the ontological and epistemological missteps of the 'liberal peace' concept he seeks to critique and replace. Paris does not seriously question the consequentialist ethics of interventionism - where the ends of liberal statehood justify the often coercive means. Indeed, IBL can be seen as an extension of this consequentialist logic. Nor does Paris seriously question the teleology of liberal peacebuilding; of progress from conflict to cooperation, from anarchy to polyarchy. However, perhaps most importantly he reproduces a Westphalian ontology of politics which is unable to grasp the post-international, post-colonial dynamics of contemporary post-conflict spaces. The mention of these 'posts' is not merely the decorative rhetoric of the critic. It alludes to a disquiet found at the fringes of the literature on interventionism concerning not just the ethics but the ontological, and therefore practicable, basis for international assistance (cf. Weber 1995; Debrix 1999). If post-conflict space cannot simply be divided, sequestered and encompassed in the discrete territories of sovereign states, but is always wrought by resistance to and avoidance of this process, then we must question both the political and ontological claims at the heart of statebuilding. Seen in this light, IBL is an attempt at a new synthesis which, in terms of both its content and synthesising functions, sustains and reproduces empire.

#### *Statebuilding Under Empire: the single sovereign perspective*

Such texts represent a shift from peacebuilding to statebuilding, and something of self-conscious shift from liberalism to 'pragmatism'. Yet how pragmatic is this? This inter-

textual construct obfuscates the distinction between humanitarian aid and military intervention which was at one time inviolable in the International Community. In this sense interventions such as Kosovo foreshadow peacebuilding-cum-statebuilding, as captured in Beck's notion of it as an example of 'militaristic humanitarianism' (Beck 2005; Žižek 2000: 56-57). The irony that war is engineered in order for peace to be built is apparently lost on political leaders who are able to declare peace after embarking on war. Since Kosovo, many liberal commentators have come to the defence of such 'humanitarianism'. Michael Ignatieff, for example, defends the use of military intervention and 'imperial policing', which he observed in Afghanistan, in an explicit advocacy of what he calls 'Empire lite' - another idea which relies heavily on processes of inter-textual relations. He argues:

Imperialism used to be the white man's burden. This gave it a bad reputation. But imperialism doesn't stop being necessary just because it becomes politically incorrect. Nations sometimes fail, and when they do outside help - imperial power - can get them back on their feet. Nation-building is the kind of imperialism you get in an human rights era, a time when great powers believe simultaneously in the right of small nations to govern themselves and their own right to rule the world (Ignatieff 2002: 26).

Such interpellation of discourses, where military-led statebuilding comes to be portrayed as humanitarian, and humanitarianism as necessarily requiring military intervention, should raise questions about the very object of intervention itself: the sovereign state. By 2007, four years into the Iraq war and its 'nation-building' fiasco, 'statebuilding' lives on but is as far from realising its ideal of the sovereign state as ever.

This determination to pursue but failure to reflect and think theoretically about statebuilding is not necessarily an intrinsic product of interventionism, but is surely driven by the merging of the academic and policy world of peace studies/operations. Consequently, problems must be solved rather than solutions problematised. There is nothing new to this identification of conflict and peace studies' problem-solving bent, having been made by numerous scholars from Schmid (1968) to Fetherstone (2000). However, the realisation of this state of affairs has not led to its attenuation. Indeed, the opposite seems to have taken place. Today most of the literature of the field reads like a "How To" manual for would-be state-builders (Nieminen 2006: 264): Under which conditions should an intervention take place? Which policies should be pursued after the intervention? In which order of priorities? How should intervening powers deal with parties to the conflict and local elites? However, as Barnett Rubin rightly points out, post-conflict reconstruction is not a benign and neutral activity, but a highly political endeavor: 'Studies of state-building operations often try to identify "best practices" without asking for whom they are best' (2006: 184). The hubris of such 'high modernist' social engineering has been critiqued by social scientists in other disciplines (Scott 1998), but is rarely acknowledged by advocates of peacebuilding and statebuilding. In the face of such a communion of silence, satire seems appropriate (Megoran 2005).

Others have sought to acknowledge this imperial over-stretch and imbue the conceptual framework for peacebuilding and statebuilding with less demanding aims. Keith Krause and Oliver Jütersonke, in a recent volume, develop a 'critical approach to [post-conflict peace-building]' (2005: 448). They rightly assert that 'Post-conflict operations are not minor "insertions" of another actor into a complicated field of forces, but represent major breaks in state formation, often attempting to redistribute

political, economic or social power and reshape the institutional terrain on which political competition occurs.' (2005: 449) At the same time, they speak out against the reification of local culture, denying the intractability of post-conflict societies and warning against disengagement from these countries. Instead, they advocate a more moderate, 'piecemeal' (2005: 458) social engineering approach that is normatively guided by the notion of human security.

However, while Krause and Jütersonke address some of the defects of present approaches to post-conflict peace-building, especially their overambitiousness, they remain entrapped in the normative monism which characterises current research. Accordingly, they continue to adopt a *single sovereign perspective* which assumes the individuality of the state and fails to capture how international strategies are subverted, appropriated and resisted "on the ground". The implications of such an analysis are profound. Any attempt to reconstitute a single sovereign and inscribe a single path to development is at best futile and at worst takes the form of collusion with re-emerging structures of domination. This is not because of international statebuilding's 'external' origins as suggested in one recent critique (Bickerton 2007), but because of its model of a single sovereign governing a bounded territorial unit. A better approach allows us to explore empirically and interpretatively the multiplicity of authorities (and spaces) that exist across and between given territories. In short, we must acknowledge the multiplicity of sovereigns and spaces - some of which might be territorially defined - at work in a given post-conflict space.

### *Two Points of Resistance*

This special issue undertakes an analysis of the contemporary social practices of space. Contributors address these micro-politics of statebuilding and show how local practices of domination and resistance affect life in post-conflict spaces. As such, contributors challenge the international discourse of "state-building" at two fundamental points. Such an approach is attendant to the particularities, the adaptations and the resistances which take place under empire. It questions the two primary assumptions: firstly, the explicit reference to the building of the single sovereign state as the essential unit of governance; secondly, that this process, rather than being an ongoing practice of governmentality, takes places after conflict.

Firstly, we question the *bounded territoriality and single sovereignty of the state*. Insofar as it is important not to over-emphasise the crisis of the nation-state system it is necessary to view state spaces as providing important arenas for, and claims to, authority. However, the nation-state in itself is an insufficient ontological reference point. It must be seen alongside local, (trans-)local and transnational spaces. In these terms, identifying the "failed state" as the cause of "terrorism" misses the deeper dynamics which are driving such violence (Simons & Tucker 2007: 387). A recent edition of *Third World Quarterly* highlighted the problematic nature of this assumption through analyses of the long history of state crisis under conditions of globalisation and post-colonialism, both of which are acutely displayed in the case of Iraq (Berger 2006; Dodge 2006). 'The US overthrow of Saddam Hussein,' Berger notes,

has come at a time when the nation-state of Iraq is in crisis (arguably it has been in crisis since its creation in 1920), but when the wider UN-centred nation-state system itself has entered a prolonged crisis. This has taken place against a backdrop of the end of the Cold War, the uneven and incomplete transition to globalisation, and the emergence in geopolitical terms of an ostensibly unipolar

world centred on US economic and political primacy and bolstered by overwhelming US military power (Berger 2006: 7).

Such historicizing of "state-building" helps put its discourses and practices in the context of post-colonial, post-conflict space.

Questioning bounded territoriality under a single sovereignty is not the same as denying the importance of territory which we understand as a physical, geographical area which actors seek to control through acts of defending, excluding, or including (Cox 2002: 1-2).<sup>6</sup> According to Berger's critique, the discourse of state-building is merely a regulatory regime introduced by representatives of the core to marshal and police the periphery. This historical approach is revealing yet has its limits, particularly in its general call for a return to 'a notion of social solidarity' (Berger & Weber 2006: 207) which echoes Jabri's calls for a communicative space for peace: 'a zone of peace based on dialogical principles,' not just mere 'intersubjective consent' (Jabri 1996: 166-7). Yet this retreat from the spatio-hierarchical, Westphalian language of territory, nation and the international can go too far if it fails to grasp the endurance of these ontological visions. Through such discourse and incorporative practices, state actors territorialise space and represent the single, individual state despite its *de facto* absence. This single sovereign perspective has captured the imagination of scholars, practitioners and critics of statebuilding alike. Another approach is to explore how spaces are produced as territories through the representations and practices of non-governmental, governmental and inter-governmental agents. Isachenko's study of Northern Cyprus and Transdnestr in this volume looks at such attempts to territorialise space. At the same time it would seek to investigate how these productions are challenged in the dissimulative actions - often hidden from the view of the IR scholar - of local communities, radical groups and transnational corporations amongst others. Each of the contributions below, particularly those of Kühn and Veit, grapple with this tension between the territorialisation of space and the resistance which it dialectically produces.

The second core assumption of statebuilding that we resist is that these practices are taking place *after conflict*. 'Post-conflict' is, of course, a misleading term. For the purposes of this special issue, we use the term similar to the definition of Gerd Junne and Willemijn Verkoren who understand it as 'shorthand for conflict situations, in which open warfare has come to an end' (2005: 1). From this, it should be eminently clear that a 'post-conflict' society will have no shortage of conflicts or violence, it just means that these conflicts and this violence are being addressed in new modalities of internationalised governance. The ambiguousness of these situations has variously been described as 'no peace, no war' (Richards 2005) or 'no war, no peace' (MacGinty 2006). Such descriptors aptly highlight the difficulties of categorizing this state of affairs. They also challenge the notion that post-conflict countries are in a stage of transition between war and peace. Of course, the idea of a clean, unidirectional transition has already been demolished by research showing that the risk of war is substantially higher during the first five years after the end of a conflict than it is in comparable countries (Collier et al. 2003: 83). Nevertheless, the idea that post-conflict countries find themselves on the path from the horrors of war to the promises of peace underpins much of the literature. In contrast, the contributions to this special issue are guided by the argument that post-conflict spaces cannot be understood as a process (whether positive or negative) but need to be conceptualised in terms of space - a field of power relations where multiple 'sovereigns' negotiate rule across multiple spaces of political authority.



### **Making space out of conflict**

The processional and state-centric assumptions of statebuilding stifle meaningful analysis of the kinds of hybrid polities emerging in post-conflict spaces. They are problematic in that they fail to contend with how authority often exists in multiple spaces beyond and across the bounds of the state, denying a single dominant or single subordinate group. In post-conflict spaces localising and globalising tendencies are both prevalent, as the boundaries of the state may be called into question by both ethnically-based irredentist claims and cosmopolitan rights-promoting agendas. Both elite and subordinate discourses may posit other objects of legitimacy, such as ethnic groups, confessional orders or humanity, alongside the idea of the national and secular state.

The space-making potential of the cosmopolitan or universalist agenda deserves further examination. Faced with the spectre of Empire, critics of various hues strongly argue that state-centrism must be transcended by post- or trans-national discourse in order to achieve peace (Jabri 1996; Kaldor 1999). Such accounts challenge the powerful differences between communities of space and identity which tend to persist in post-conflict settings. This discursive move clearly represents a political claim, albeit one which is often left implicit in much writing on 'civil society'. For example, Kaldor's hope for a 'robust peacekeeping' with mandates driven by the transnational people power of global civil society demands the taming of power politics for cosmopolitan ends. The key question, she argues, is 'whether the capacity for regulating violence can be reinstated in some way on a transnational basis and whether barbarism can be checked by an alert and active cosmopolitan citizenry' (Kaldor 1998: 107-109). The space-making potential of transnational actors is worthy of analysis yet it is often shorn of this potential by these actors' unwillingness to be political - that is, recognise their own reliance upon global and national elites, with their single sovereign perspective, and their unwillingness to challenge this - in their places of intervention (as Heathershaw and Narten in this issue explore).

#### *Thinking Theoretically about (Post-Conflict) Space*

Within the context of International Relations, thinking in terms of communities which compete over and make space brings us rapidly to the spatio-hierarchical notion of levels. However, it is difficult to theorise levels without reifying them. Classical models of levels of analysis in International Relations take for granted territorially-defined spaces and fail to grasp how states and systems can inter-subjectively constitute one another (Singer 1961; Waltz 1959). Thus, rather than adopting a traditional levels of analysis approach common in IR, we understand 'levels' in their inter-subjectivity (Buzan 1995). Levels, to be of any use, must be defined in terms of contingent spatiality rather than fixed territoriality.

Therefore, to understand space we conceptualise them not in terms of geopolitical, territorially defined entities but in terms of critical geopolitics or Derrida's ontopolitics. We must study the discourses which reproduce or challenge identities which themselves lie at the base of a legitimate claim to occupy or administer political space (Derrida 1994: 82). The political geographer Ó Tuathail's path-breaking work charts the 'ambitious redrafting of space around the principles of empire and state sovereignty', producing 'the territorialisation of space.' The state has become over time the key container of geo-power in a 'power struggle between different societies over the right to speak sovereignly about geography, space and territory' (Ó Tuathail 1996: 6, 11). This battle over space is inherently linked to the production of *identities*. It is

identity which enables space, and space which enables identity (Shapiro 1997). As Ó Tuathail argues:

The struggle over geography is also a conflict over competing images and imaginings, a contest of power and resistance that involves not only struggles to represent the materiality of physical geographic objects and boundaries but also the equally powerful and, in a different manner, the equally material force of discursive borders between an idealised self and a demonised Other, between “us” and “them” (Ó Tuathail 1996: 15).

The study of post-conflict spaces demands, in Ó Tuathail's terms that we chart, ‘the power to organise, occupy and administer space’ (1996: 1).

The study of intervention and statebuilding has seen few empirical accounts by the spatially literate. Campbell's work on US foreign policy (1992) and on Bosnia (1998) stand out as examples. More recently, Hansen (2006), in her analysis of the debate around Western intervention in Bosnia, develops a methodology which considers the production of spatial, temporal and ethical dimensions of ‘self’ through foreign policy discourse. Bosnians and Serbs, the people of Srebrenica and those of Belgrade, appear in Hansen's study in the way they are imagined by Westerners. Space here is made and remade both through discursive relations and local practices of violence, be they verbal or physical. Yet this is a single self study of ‘the West’ which, as Hansen herself admits, may be inappropriate to the study of domains where multiple ‘selves’ are inextricably intertwined. Post-conflict spaces of intervention and statebuilding are surely such domains where, if one is to understand the nature of that space, one must grasp the spatial imaginaries of intervener and intervened, of international and local, of elite and subordinate in the many forms and communities they might take. Multiple communities or selves remake the boundaries between them as they negotiate these barriers. An answer to this question can only be meaningfully pursued through detailed, contextual study.

The framework offered here is inspired by, but a significant adaptation of, Joel Migdal's (1994, 2001) ‘state in society’ approach to internationalised, post-conflict space. It is based on three ‘levels’ of space (categories of ‘selves’): *local* (subordinates existing ‘under’ various authorities, local, national and translocal); *elite* (including local, national and regional elites in authority over popular social spaces); and *global* (including ‘the International Community’, but also radical and moderate transnational movements). The interaction of local, elite, and global selves is inter-spatial in that it takes place between their spaces of authority. We start from the assumption that post-conflict space is characterised by an intersection of these spaces (or selves) which leads to the emergence of structures of governance and domination that are different from what the international community might have envisaged. However, rather than a fixed separation of these spaces, the focus was on their interaction and the hybrid character of post-conflict spaces, their societies and states. Of course, any ontological frame necessitates a degree of essentialism which imposes, for expediency, an order to inconsistent and contingent processes. Consequently, identifying selves is no easy task. Both the elite and local may exist beyond the bounds of the state; moreover, such shorthand categories can conceal more complicated arrangements where authority is differentiated. For elites, there may be several layers of political authority from internationally-instituted power such as those of the Bretton Woods institutions or specific transitional administrations in a given territory, to regional peacekeeping forces, to national governments, to sub-national *de facto* political authorities based

around region, ethnicity or religion. For locals, resistance, quiescence, resignation or consent may take place transnationally in non- or anti-state political movements in diaspora communities. Moreover, there is a significant blurring of these two categories in discursively constructed identity groups which constitute imagined communities binding and differentiating elites and subordinates.

However, this framework doesn't in itself solve the fundamental problem with which the critical IR scholar must grasp: how to interrogate hierarchical forms of global governance without reifying the very ontological frameworks which legitimate and reproduce these hierarchies. It is assumed here that each inter-subjective level is produced in the context of multiple spaces and selves and yet under conditions of hegemony. But it not clear that such a conception overcomes the ontological obfuscations present across much of the IR literature (Wight 2006). Moreover, the notion of spatial levels continues the spatio-hierarchical language which is so deceptive in the case of normative statebuilding and the single sovereign perspective. In defence of our pragmatic decision to organise the papers in a manner which would appear intelligible to a wider IR audience we would make two points. Firstly, despite being offered a spatio-hierarchical framework our authors were encouraged to be analytically pluralist; to excavate the multiplicities or divisibilities of sovereignty. Secondly, and crucially, this project was primarily conceived as an inductive exercise where empirical and ethnographic cases of space-making would inform a re-conceptualisation of our (spatial) frames for understanding the post-conflict. This is reflected in the six findings from the case studies which were outlined above. In the following paragraphs we will briefly introduce the levels and demonstrate how our authors have shed light on their dynamics in their specific empirical cases. All studies speak to more than one of the levels of space which we outline here. Moreover, it must be emphasised that the theoretical frameworks adopted by the authors are their own and the conceptual language adopted here may be different from that which they utilise themselves.

#### *Local-subordinate space*

For the majority, local places (be they villages, markets or religious institutions) provide the basis for social or societal life. The way in which groups and individuals resist the state, and the way social forces are co-opted by the state, can 'change [the state's] social and ideological underpinnings' (Migdal 1994: 12). How might we characterise this kind of 'societal' interaction with the state? In order to conceptualise state-society relations, Migdal shuns categories such as class or ethnic identity which can obfuscate as much as they explain. However, 'society', understood as existing under a given state, is not the only expression of local or subordinate space; local spaces can take subnational or transnational forms. Such 'translocal' spaces (Kaiser 2003) can take the form of cross-border networks of seasonal labour migrants or long-term relations between diaspora and the homeland. Alternatively, one or more of these cleavages may provide the vehicle for conflict, mutual stigmatisation and inter-spatial violence - thus pitting 'selves' against one another. In the case of Alex Veit's study of Ituri (in this issue), local space is fractured by local militia groups and demarcated by their rivalries, a differentiation of local space far too complicated for UN forces to comprehend.

Local-subordinate spaces and discourses have a great deal of autonomy from elite and global actors due to two special features: the particularity of community or 'self' and the locality of practice. Particularities of community can serve to bind local actors against elite and global forces, perhaps in terms of class or some other form of identity, or they can form the basis for cleavages in identity. The study of local spaces and discourse can illustrate to what extent contention or cooperation occurs between

societal and/or (sub/trans)-national spaces. At times of civil war or political violence we can expect that local discourse will be contested between fighting groups. Minor differences would be stigmatised, and popular transcripts would be produced in part in a response to contrasting elite discourses of local ethnic, religious or regional 'selves'. On the other hand, in cases of statebuilding, where the nation-state or some other wider-political community remains symbolically and normatively powerful, subordinate transcripts may inscribe both a common interest with, as well as differentiated positions from, elite and global actors. John Heathershaw's study shows how subordinate resignation to local elite discourse made Tajik villages especially infertile ground for the democratic reformist agenda of community peacebuilding programmes.

The second feature for the autonomy of local-subordinate spaces is the specificity of local knowledge and practice. Scott characterises the special genius of the local as 'practical knowledge' or *mētis* (cunning intelligence, the know-how or knack). In his later work, he has illuminated how 'high modernist ideologies' of the state, and with them 'various schemes to improve the human condition', often fail when they confront *mētis*. Such local knowledge is represented through the 'hidden transcript' of resistance which remains inaccessible to interveners and hegemonic powers. The power of this *mētis*, once again, is derived from its sequestering of space - its 'localness' or 'practical knowledge' which differentiates it from the state, the region and the world. 'Any formula,' Scott notes, 'that excludes or suppresses the experience, knowledge, and adaptability of *mētis* risks incoherence and failure'. Like language it is best learned by daily practice and experience in context (Scott 1998: 319). 'An institution, social form or enterprise that takes much of its shape from the evolving *mētis* of the people engaged in it will thereby enhance their range of experience and skills' (p. 359). The degree to which elite or international interventions become transformed in context constitutes the nature of the subordination of locals in the order of things. In John Heathershaw's study, the lack of *mētis* in an international NGO ensured that foreign programme officers were only vaguely aware of how programme resources were being re-appropriated by local elite networks in the far-flung villages and towns of Tajikistan. Similarly, in Jens Narten's paper on Kosovo, peacebuilding was co-opted by local actors as UNMIK's programmes' were resisted in local space.

### *Elite space*

A second set of post-conflict spaces are those of the elite: the spaces of the sub-national, national and regional political leaderships which can make some claim to sovereignty over localities. These are elites who are not seen as outside 'interveners' but leaders accepted as 'internal' or 'ours' (those at or near the top of a larger 'we' group) by a particular constituency. At times of war, as discussed above, one can expect elite discourse to be fractured by the violent articulation of difference, and the contestation of 'inside'/'outside' and 'us'/'them'. Violence, Jabri remarks, is based on a 'discourse of exclusion' between groups with 'exclusionist identities' along the boundaries of highly demarcated spaces. Thus, it invokes 'articulations of separateness, of limitations to access, of strict boundedness' (1996: 130-131). However, a form of discursive boundedness is essential to the functioning of hegemonic governance. In Kosovo, it was the militant Kosovar elite that emphasised separation from Serbia who usurped a more moderate faction who were willing to compromise after the NATO attacks of 1999. This, as Jens Narten discusses, had profound implications for post-conflict institution-building which, consequently, became statebuilding.

The degree of discursive consensus among an elite coalition made up of opposing factions will remain limited, although, as Daria Isachenko shows in both the cases of

Turkish Cyprus and Transdniestr, competing factions may feel bound to a public consensus of statehood (even where such statehood is *de jure* absent or even unclaimed). Dominant groups too can have multiple identities and territorial claims - both 'below' and 'above' the state. Whilst sub-national and nationalist discourses have been investigated in studies of ethnicity and nationalism, inter- or trans-national regional identities are remarkably under-explored. Adler, in a well-known exception, has argued that 'Imagined (Security) Communities' are formed as 'cognitive regions' of international relations where elites and even citizens of states, 'imagine sharing a common destiny and *identity*' (1997: 253). Regional space raises the question of how domination becomes enhanced (integrated) or dispersed through international ties. Regional communities may provide elites with a solidarity group to resist global governance, or alternatively better facilitate the forces of globalisation. Again, in Daria Isachenko's study, region-ness seems to be integral to the Turkish-Cypriot and Transdniestrian elite claims to stateness through resistance to international overtures facilitated by the support of a regional sponsor (Turkey or Russia). In the case of post-conflict space, as these examples may show, regionalist understandings can provide the basis to oppose liberal-reformist peacebuilding in favour of a statebuilding deemed more 'traditional' or 'culturally appropriate'.

### *Global space*

The significant silence within Migdal's analysis of 'state in society' (2001) is the lack of an elaborated international dimension.<sup>7</sup> Post-conflict space is given its special character partially by the intervention of international and transnational actors which might affect the kinds of domination and resistance taking place. The extent to which international actors are able to alter local and national political relations is the key question for a study of international intervention. Equally, however, elites and locals may adapt or re-appropriate international interventions. In this respect it is necessary to investigate the effect of global political spaces and actors on the elites and subordinates of a given local context, and vice-versa. For example, Florian Kühn's study shows how space for the state in Afghanistan is produced via international intervention which, at present, shows no sign of completion. Rather than building a sovereign state, it creates international space for an elite whose position remains weak across large parts of Afghan territory. This space provides room for both the international security assistance of NATO and the counter-terrorism operations of the United States armed forces on the one hand and the expansion and consolidation of drug trafficking on the other.

When the inside/outside or domestic/international dichotomy is demythologised, contemporary processes and transformations can be understood as contestations of claims by state actors that politics must exist either within or between states (Walker 1993: 13). These processes can challenge who 'we' are and begin to alter or transform 'Us'/'Them' images. While denying absolute cosmopolitanism it is important to recognise that spaces and an identity of the "International Community" is emerging in contemporary world politics, alongside transnational corporations and pressure groups in the world economy (Ong 2006). Although, in the manner of Scott, one can doubt the direct impact of such discourse in terms of "peace" and "the democratic state", the global space-making implications of the "International Community" are profound. The legitimation of this idea opens up new territories for international intervention and the creation of autonomous spaces of international administration. The governance dynamics of such entities can be driven primarily by global actors in cases where local elites are excluded yet, as Narten discusses, this inevitably provokes a reaction. Some elite factions seek accommodation with and the largesse of the International Community

whilst others oppose international strategies and are often denoted as 'spoilers'. We must look at how the increasing involvement of international organisations and transnational companies in post-conflict spaces may help produce new forms of governance and resistance, both locally and globally.

In such a way the spaces of the International Community are increasingly dispersed with mini-centres of power in post-conflict places from Kabul to Kosovo. In the hot-spots of the global economy it may be cities or special economic zones that accrue sovereign power or, at least, a high level of autonomy; in the realm of peacebuilding it can include the transnational inter- and non-governmental organisations of donors and their implementing partners. 'The oscillation between neoliberalism as exception and exception to neoliberalism,' Ong notes, 'has also engendered ethical geographies, emergent spaces of would-be NGO administration' (2006: 21). In some post-conflict spaces it is the International Community that, however effective or ineffective, is often the first port of call in the protection of rights or provision of services; this in turn challenges traditional, state-based patterns of citizenship. Yet external actors as governors by proxy, as the case of Iraq seems to show, risk being the facilitator of a return to a precarious ethnopolitics that may produce further armed conflict in the future.

#### Final remarks

So what is left of the state in an analysis of post-conflict space in international relations? Two conclusions may be made. Firstly, to view the state as a unitary actor is an analytical misstep which conceals the various forms of 'state' under conditions of international intervention. Secondly, state actors are but one group of elite actors who must be considered in their relationship to other local-subordinate, elite and international groups. To exclude other forms of political community and political-economic networks from our analysis, make them matters of secondary consideration or consider them to be mere obstacles and artifices of 'spoiler' factions obfuscates analysis and often leads to unworkable policy. Post-conflict space - at local-subordinate, elite, and global levels - may or may not be (informally) recognised, formalised, and territorialised as a state or autonomous region of a state. Our post-conflict spaces are all problematic when identified as territorial entities. Even the informal existence of Northern Cyprus and Transnistria is tenuous. Kosovo is informally recognised but the expected formal recognition of its statehood might prompt a return to conflict in the future and remains highly vulnerable to the regional politics of Europe and the international politics of the wider world. Afghanistan, the DRC and Tajikistan are amongst many formal states which incorporate and accommodate political-economy networks as much as they claim to represent the general will. Such states rely to a great degree on international security and development assistance in order to practise statehood and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. At the same time their elite factions re-appropriate or subvert this assistance for the purpose of economic benefit and political control. Whilst a 'single sovereign' perspective promotes simplistic conceptual dichotomies (independent state or dependency, imperial power or colony, protector state or protectorate), attention to the spatialisation of territory and the territorialisation of space reveals the complexity of these hybrid forms of governance. According to such dynamics a given post-conflict space is an arena for the constitution and re-constitution of multiple communities, networks and authorities. Statebuilding is pursued, subverted and resisted in post-conflict spaces.

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<sup>1</sup> We wish to thank David Chandler, Madeleine Reeves and Alex Veit for their comments and questions. John Heathershaw acknowledges the support of the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies of the University of Notre Dame where he was based whilst he conducted most of the work for this project. Daniel Lambadh wishes to thank the German Institute for Global and Area Studies, Hamburg, to which he was affiliated during this project.

<sup>2</sup> The special section also included papers by Katia Papagianni, Philip Cunliffe, Berit Bliesemann de Guevera, Yukari Ito and Dennis Dijkzeul, as well as a roundtable with presentations by David Chandler, Lene Hansen, Mark Hoffman, Anthony Lang, and David Mutimer and chaired by Susan Woodward. Francois Debrix was also involved as a discussant. Our thanks are due to all these participants.

<sup>3</sup> Ethnographic studies of conflicts and post-conflict spaces are however emerging from anthropology. For example, see Richards (2005) and Nordstrom (1995).

<sup>4</sup> The following two sub-sections draw on material from a paper by Heathershaw (2007)

<sup>5</sup> ICISS was established by the Canadian Prime Minister, Jean Chretien, in September 2000 in response to Kofi Annan's challenge to the UN General Assembly to unite on the question of 'humanitarian intervention' following the Kosovo military intervention of 1999. See Chandler (2004: 60).

<sup>6</sup> We thank Madeleine Reeves for her insightful comments on this paragraph.

<sup>7</sup> Migdal has (2001: 135-142), however, suggested that constructivist international relations theory is a 'state in society' approach writ large into global politics.