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**The local-turn critique and its implications:
A case study of Cambodia and East-Timor**

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Abstract

Inspired by recent criticism of liberal peacebuilding and the academic debate revolving around the effect of the local-turn on peacebuilding operations, this thesis aims to leave the general realm of the debate behind and demonstrate how all this manifested in two particular peacebuilding operations. Through the case of Cambodia and East-Timor the thesis demonstrates, that even though the overall strategy adopted by the United Nations was heavily top-down structured, on many instances they made significant efforts to cooperate with local actors, and thus the criticism of liberal peacebuilding on the lack of cooperation with the local are exaggerated. In the post-conflict setting both countries showed the inherent potential of the so-called local-turn and frequently it also successfully contributed to more sustainable peace, yet the thesis reveals that the theory supporting the local-turn also has its limits. Understanding and evaluating critiques of liberal peacebuilding and the implications of the local-turn is a crucial step towards conducting more efficient and successful peacebuilding operations in the future.

Research problem, purpose of the study

After the Cold War due to increasing number of conflicts in mostly the Global South, the United Nations launched peacebuilding operations to democratize countries through the establishment of a new institutional framework, to help the transformation of post-conflict states trying to recover from civil wars. The liberal peace model appeared first in the 1980's, after democratization efforts in several developing countries. Not much later, by the early 1990's, the "Western liberal conception of democracy had become the only legitimate model of government."¹ And given the dominance of Western states in peacebuilding, liberal peace also became the dominant form of peacebuilding, especially during the 1990's.² Peacebuilding forces aim to suspend fighting long enough to 'convert those places into law-abiding democracies' so that they become peaceful actors of the international scene and their citizens are not abused anymore.³

Peacebuilding operations are generally perceived unsuccessful if they fail to create self-sustaining, long term peace in post-conflict states, but it does not mean there is no peace established at least on a fundamental level. Unfortunately judging by the criteria mentioned above, many liberal peacebuilding operations turned out to be unsuccessful in the past decades. The results were unpredictable on many occasions, with situations more difficult to handle than originally expected. There was a need to 'gain better understanding of the underlying tensions and contradictions of peacebuilding.'⁴

¹ Belloni (2012) pp. 22.

² Mac Ginty (2010) pp. 391;393.

³ Roeberts (2012) pp. 366.

⁴ Paris (2010) pp. 338.

Consequently, many critical approaches to liberal peacebuilding appeared. ‘Hypercritical’ schools even started to see liberal peacebuilding as fundamentally destructive or illegitimate. Critical literature on the matter provide arguments for abandoning liberal peacebuilding in exchange for a hybrid, or even post-liberal counterpart.⁵ The principles and methods of the missions and the implications of critiques have to be analyzed; after all it is adaptation to constructive criticism that can make peacebuilding more successful in the future.

The critical school I specifically focus on throughout the thesis is the so-called local-turn.^{6 7} As I am going to address later, compared to liberal peacebuilding, the local-turn stands for a fundamentally different approach to peacebuilding. Consequently, liberal peacebuilding in general received overwhelming critiques from local-turn theorists who present seemingly convincing arguments for how the UN’s approach had been flawed in the past decades. Given the strong disagreement between the two schools, there is a risk that at least some of these critiques are exaggerated.

It is important to distinguish between justified and unjustified criticism so that the international community can learn from its mistakes, improve and handle conflicts more efficiently on the long run. In order to achieve this, implications of the local-turn have to be understood more thoroughly. As I am going to address in the next chapter, previous research mostly focused on comparing liberal peace and the local-turn in general, finding the pros and cons of the two approaches.^{8 9 10} There is however less research conducted on the actual manifestation of the local-turn in specific peacebuilding operations. That is the research gap I focus on in the thesis.

My twofold research question is:

- Are local-turn critiques towards the UN justified?
- How can the local-turn contribute to better peacebuilding, and does the theory have limits?

With this work, I aim to contribute to the ongoing academic debate, by learning more about the implications of the local-turn, and show that despite strong disagreements at first sight, liberal peacebuilding through the local-turn could build a more efficient, hybrid process. In this context, the outcome is a hybrid peace, where the introduced Western liberal values and local governance practices coexist. I argue that the UN has to find the right balance between applying liberal and local perspectives to reach a positive hybrid peace. That is why it is also necessary to spot exaggerated critiques from the local-turn’s side and discover the theory’s potential pitfalls, so that the UN can more easily find this fine line to walk on. In the next chapter, I am going to introduce the notion of liberal peacebuilding, the local-turn critique, the academic debate revolving around them, and set up the theoretical framework I am going to rely on when conducting the analysis of my two case studies.

⁵ Paris (2010) pp. 338-340.

⁶Jarstad (2012)

⁷Wolff (2015)

⁸Mac Ginty (2013)

⁹Belloni (2012)

¹⁰Richmond (2015)

Liberal peacebuilding and the local-turn

Liberal peacebuilding

Contemporary peacebuilding frequently has been referred to as liberal peacebuilding. The underlying theoretical assumption of liberal peacebuilding is the liberal peace theory. It argues that liberally constituted societies tend to be more peaceful than illiberal states.¹¹ Mostly because of this theory, peacebuilding and democratization are considered two processes reinforcing each other, and generally democratization is believed to support peacebuilding. This liberal peace paradigm serves as bases for internationally assisted peacebuilding, where the focus is almost exclusively on the relationship between peacebuilders and the central government.¹² Liberal peacebuilding works with a standardized blueprint, generally applied to all operations. It is based on Western liberal ideas and values, promoting political and economic liberalization,¹³ which was framed in the UN's Agenda for Peace document.¹⁴ Liberal peace is based on legitimate democratic institutions paired with free and fair elections. It's most important actors consist of civil servants, politicians, open civil society, free media, police and judges. It constitutes of liberal values like rule of law, meritocracy, human rights and transparency.¹⁵

Operations thus do not solely aim at managing conflicts in conflict affected states but they also seek building peace on the basis of liberal democracy and market economics, which is a contested approach.¹⁶ Accordingly, the democratic peace theory itself, and this linkage between peacebuilding and democratization is criticized in the academic world. Scholars argue that the ideological decline of the liberal peace theory is the main reason for the struggles of liberal peacebuilding.¹⁷ Like Burnell, for instance, who also claims that conflicts frequently emerge even under democracy's watch and that sustaining peace and democracy at the same time is sometimes mutually exclusive, so choice has to be made between the two.¹⁸ According to Paris, liberal peacebuilding efforts seem to have hard time finding both effective and legitimate ways of promoting peace. The interveners are usually forced to prioritize short-term needs, but this rules out the possibility of establishing institutions providing long-term solutions.¹⁹

Opinions amongst researchers still do vary whether liberal peacebuilding should only be altered or totally dismissed. Normatively only the model of liberal peace is accepted, on the other hand this model does not seem to work in the era of new challenges, cannot serve citizens' interests well on the

¹¹ Newman (2009)pp. 11.

¹² Lemay-Hébert (2013) pp. 242.

¹³ Belloni (2012) pp. 22.

¹⁴ Leonardsson (2015) pp. 826.

¹⁵ Belloni (2012) pp. 3.

¹⁶ Newman (2009) pp. 3-4;7.

¹⁷ Hameiri (2014) pp. 328.

¹⁸ Burnell (2006) pp. 21.

¹⁹ Paris (2007) pp. 4;8.

long run. As Paffenholz claims, the liberal model in general "has lost its connection to the real world".²⁰

On the other hand, Paris is one of the authors supporting the idea of only altering and improving liberal peace processes rather than completely removing it from the repertoire.²¹ But if the basic attributes of liberal peacebuilding have to be preserved, the main challenge is to alter the existing framework without moving beyond liberal values. Because in the current framework the local factors like cultural and historical background are left out of consideration.²²

In spite of all this, liberal peacebuilding model still seems like the only game in town as of now. As mentioned before, the basic idea of liberal peacebuilding is promoting liberalization both in the economic (marketization) and political (democratization) realm.²³ This is done through quick establishment of a democratic political framework, economic reforms and security, which is -due to failures- is now considered as an orthodox process by critical scholars.²⁴ Alternatives to liberal peace started to emerge with claims that a so-called hybrid peace could mean more stability. Hybrid variants of peace are created by the cooperation of external and local actors of peacebuilding.²⁵ It is supposed to prove that there are actually alternatives to mainstream liberal peace conceptions. In this thesis, I am interested in the local-turn critique and its inherent potential when it comes to improving the efficiency of international peacebuilding efforts. Accordingly, in the following I am going to introduce the local-turn critique in detail. And then, after getting to know the local-turn mentioned so many times already, I introduce hybrid peace as a potential new alternative to liberal peace.

The local-turn and the definition of 'local'

The local-turn emerged as a part of critique to liberal peacebuilding processes. In the first part of this chapter I present the arguments of pro-local-turn theorists before moving on to its downsides. Scholars supporting the local-turn believe that central agents of peace are local people. Arguments for this point of view mostly highlight how most peace agreements are arranged by the West in the light of Western values and only inclusive to a few local elites whose right to represent regular citizens can also be questioned. This approach is unsustainable without including a pluralist model and see peace as a reward of cooperation between the local and the international. Both actors have different understanding of how peace should be maintained in the country. In many cases events on the local level are more important for peace, but it is less researched and understood. In this sense the local-turn

²⁰ Paffenholz (2015) pp. 861.

²¹ Öjendal (2015) pp. 929.

²² Öjendal (2015) pp. 932.

²³ Wolff (2015) pp. 282.

²⁴ Paffenholz (2015) pp. 858.

²⁵ Wolff (2015) pp. 279-281.

is an opposition to liberal peace and rejects the idea of the Global North intervening in the political transformation of the South without taking the needs of the local in consideration.²⁶

This Western top-down model according to critical theorists ignores the local level, thus it is ineffective in handling local conflicts. Just to demonstrate how much it does, it has to be mentioned that interestingly the term 'local' is even absent from the 'landmark 1992 document Agenda for Peace.'²⁷ According to these critical authors the way we think about peacebuilding should be altered, since it is not a one-sided process where the international actors can do all the work, but should instead continuously cooperate with local actors. Until this does not happen, international peacebuilding is going to produce mixed results even furthering the conflicts on some occasions.²⁸ In sum, there are limits to externally assisted peacebuilding. Top-down, state-centric peacebuilding approach seems outdated and it is proved by the continuously inefficient results.²⁹ In what follows I introduce the more detailed arguments of local-turn theorists, taking into account what the local-turn has to offer liberal peacebuilding.

As we have seen above, the mixed records of peacebuilding make it questionable whether or not the international actors alone are able to establish and more importantly maintain peace on the long run.³⁰ Peacebuilding thus should aim for the restoration or establishment of a political framework by being as inclusive as possible. If they only focus on state institutions but not the local, there is a chance that 'regular' citizens of a country might feel 'alienated' and feel like strangers in their own country.³¹ No wonder this leads to an increasing likelihood of protests and resistance.

The term 'local' is flexible and there is much debate involved what it exactly means. According to the definition of Leonardson, the local "refers to the everyday acts of a diversity of individuals and communities that go beyond elites."³² 'By 'local' we mean the range of locally based agencies present within a conflict. Many of these are able to identify the processes necessary to promote peace. Peace in this context refers more to the everyday life of people. Given the complicated nature of local conflicts, on many occasions not only some cities, but even different parts of the cities need extra attention in order to defuse the causes of conflict.³³

Being local is allowing people with 'cultural appropriateness' to have their voices heard. The local are usually whose voices are least likely to be heard in a liberal peacebuilding process. An effective peacebuilding model has to take into account that interveners decide about lives of people who they know nothing or extremely little about.³⁴

²⁶ Mac Ginty (2013) pp. 763-764.

²⁷ Mac Ginty (2013) pp. 771.

²⁸ Leonardson (2015) pp. 833.

²⁹ Mac Ginty (2013) pp. 774.

³⁰ Paris (2007) pp. 9.

³¹ Brown (2009) pp. 61.

³² Leonardson (2015) pp. 833.

³³ Mac Ginty (2013) pp. 769.

³⁴ Hughes (2015) pp. 818.

It can be assumed in most cases, that local communities know the causes and nature of a conflict better, than international actors. Consequently they might be good resource to use, when trying to find solution to these conflicts. Leonardson used the example of the peace process in Nepal to demonstrate this.³⁵ Furthermore if the interveners do not have any connection with a particular community or subculture, this can give justification for the local to resist to interventions of the international community. If the local feel threatened to get suppressed in terms of their everyday life, traditions, it can also serve as a reason for organizing protests against interventions.³⁶

One of the reasons for the upswing of popularity of the local-turn is the increasing number of employees in senior positions in international organizations. These employees often come from post-conflict or conflict-affected societies, thus raising the 'cultural and historical awareness of different identities' on the international scene.³⁷ This growing importance of the everyday life and local people is slowly altering the nature of liberal peacebuilding processes. As Öjendal understands this process, the development is heading the right direction.³⁸

Local-turn pros

Many researchers and even leaders of organizations responsible for peacebuilding have already claimed necessity for this turn. Ledarach, as well as Kofi Annan saw the local people and their knowledge as a key to sustainable peacebuilding. The latter openly announced it in a new approach to peacebuilding efforts, emphasizing the importance of letting local people take part in these processes more than ever before.³⁹

This kind of decentralization involved in the local-turn can help with maintaining a stable and secure environment through increased levels of 'legitimacy, accountability, inclusion and participation.' And even though there are of course objections to this, just like matters of raising sufficient funds, resources to carry out these processes, or the danger of the elites capturing the local, Brancati's empirical research proves pretty much the opposite. Decentralization has indeed positive effects on peacebuilding and handling the local.⁴⁰ The empirical evidences yield strong support for the local-turn. As the case of Cambodia also represents, more inclusive peacebuilding process with a thorough communication that allows international and local actors to achieve mutual interests and objectives.⁴¹ Several qualitative researches also proved that reforms towards a better cooperation with the local earned good results. The previously fearful local environment is now more open towards the

³⁵ Leonardson (2015) pp. 832.

³⁶ Hughes (2015) pp. 819.

³⁷ Mac Ginty (2013) pp. 776.

³⁸ Öjendal (2015) pp. 934.

³⁹ Leonardson (2015) pp. 826-827.

⁴⁰ Leonardson (2015) pp. 828.

⁴¹ Öjendal (2015) pp. 933.

international community and that allows authorities to be able to take care of 'people's concerns and demands'.⁴²

There is another upside for promoting the local-turn which is simply based on logic. If the local are also a part of the peacebuilding process, the incidental failures cannot simply be blamed on the international community. The global and the local now could equally be held responsible for suboptimal outcomes. And it cannot be refuted that the local also have the incentive to build sustainable peace in their own region.⁴³ In what follows I analyze the nature of hybrid peace which is argued to replace contemporary liberal peace if the local-turn succeeds.

Hybrid peace

Along the continuum between the liberal and local approach there are many different types of hybridity. On the liberal side there is the Westphalian state, often used as a yardstick to peacebuilding as well. At the other end, it is the illiberal/authoritarian state.⁴⁴ It is beneficial to explore hybrid forms of peacebuilding, involving a mixture of liberal and local practices.

The term 'hibridity' gains more and more prominence in contemporary peace and conflict studies. It is part of the critique on liberal peace interventions especially conducted in the second half of the 1990s and the early 2000s.⁴⁵ Several scholars visualize hybrid peace as a new form of liberal peace, but this version is still more like a hybrid. As we have seen above, the key of sustainable peace is a plan which is 'context-specific', where every case is treated as different and it is accepted that a universal model cannot build peace in every country successfully. This means peace is partly built by the local and the process is more like bottom-up instead of the liberal top-down approach.⁴⁶ Hybrid peace is basically sustained by the constant bargaining relationship between local and international, both trying to defend their own values and interests. It could suit domestic institutions with the locally rooted legitimacy, what liberal peacebuilding never really achieved to do.

If international actors enable local actors who are the most marginalized to engage in the discussion of peacebuilding and state rebuilding, it could lead to an increase of participation in democratic processes as well as accepting democratic institutions in general by citizens. And this is inevitably a great development for liberalism also.

Hybrid peace seems to have more legitimacy in general, since it takes local knowledge into account as well as state-based approaches. A plausible critique however is the assumption, that international actors are presumably going to be more influential than the local, and these power differences would

⁴² Öjendal (2015) pp. 939.

⁴³ Leonardson (2015) pp. 830-831.

⁴⁴ Belloni (2012) pp. 1.

⁴⁵ Dinnen (2015) pp. 1.

⁴⁶ Leonardson (2015) pp. 834.

be hard to mask and defuse throughout the peacebuilding process. There are risks that even though local are involved in the process; international actors are going to repress them in the end.⁴⁷

Furthermore, international liberal values are still apparent, but are mixed with traditional values of a specific country. Basically, it is the result of the cooperation of outsiders and insiders through the local-turn. In this hybrid form neither the local nor the international have superiority. This kind of hybrid peace could very well be an alternative to the unsuccessful top-down structure. But what limits and difficulties does the local-turn theory face according to the academic debate? The last part of this chapter reveals counter-arguments from other scholars to provide solid theoretical base for the upcoming analysis in the thesis.

Limits of the local-turn

Meanwhile there is even strong empirical support for the local turn; many objections can be raised from a liberal perspective. One of the main problems with the local turn is the struggle when defining and understanding the term local, and to decide on which local entities it is worth focusing on. There are low and mid-level actors as well as elites. It is problematic to prioritize between the needs of these layers. They all can help in peace processes, but not without a support coming from the international community through training, providing resources in order to build the necessary infrastructure and framework promoting peace. That is probably why most of the time the outsider's ability to build sustainable peace is overestimated. Local forces supporting peace and causing conflicts will always be apparent, the question is whether or not the international community will be able to differentiate between them, and decide which local entities it is worth cooperating with.⁴⁸

There are objections based on the argued heterogeneity of the local also. According to this logic, the 'hard to catch' nature of the local does not allow to catch their voice easily.⁴⁹ But the belief that the structure of the local is too complicated to be involved in peacebuilding is not a strong argument though. It only proves that planning of peacebuilding processes have to be more unique, and that the same scheme cannot be applied to all countries.

Secondly, too much trust towards local agencies also has its dangers. It is claimed that many of them could be 'influenced by soft power'. Thus despite the local-turn, international actors should be careful when being overly optimistic about the local and presume they are a 'good society' not having personal interests and unable to get influenced.⁵⁰ The selfish and evil self of the local cannot be left out of consideration. The local might be corrupt, weak, or not even 'local' at all through the networked world.⁵¹ Furthermore local actors can also be 'partisan, discriminatory, exclusive and violent'⁵² just as

⁴⁷ Dinnen (2015) pp. 1-2.

⁴⁸ Paffenholz (2015) pp. 860.

⁴⁹ Öjendal (2015) pp. 937.

⁵⁰ Paffenholz (2015) pp. 862.

⁵¹ Mac Ginty (2013) pp. 765.

⁵² Mac Ginty (2013) pp. 770.

much as international actors. It is naive to believe the local level does not involve hierarchies or power relations. It is also claimed that most of the actors on the local level are conflict-oriented over being peace-promoting. Mafia-like criminal elite for instance is an actual hindering factor, as empirical data shows for Afghanistan as well as Lebanon.⁵³ Not only are the elite threatening these values though. NGOs might as well be elitist or business oriented. Different unions or student organizations are unorganized, community based organizations are occasionally held in hands by a few influential people.⁵⁴ All of the above shows how the local might also carry unacceptable norms⁵⁵ to liberalism. This is after all what makes the inclusion of the local a cumbersome process full of debate.

Another simply understandable but highly problematic factor in the local turn is the process of globalization. In this more and more globalized world with modern transportation as well as communication we cannot assume the local is still local. They could very well be transnational or even global based on different values in this interconnected era. This makes it even more cumbersome to determine who should speak for the local culture and community.⁵⁶ But despite this value loss, academic scholars in support of the local-turn argue that it serves peacebuilding efforts better than a purely liberal version that has failed so many times before.⁵⁷

As we can see above, there are of course objections to the local-turn's strong potential to enhance peacebuilding operations. It will be interesting to see if the case studies reveal similar limits of the theory.

Conclusive remarks

Liberal peacebuilding has experienced a backlash in the past two decades it is not hard to admit. Interventions do not deliver the expected results. The local-turn critique promises a more sustainable system and outcome, even though several elements are incompatible with the idea of liberal peace. But by the local-turn, liberal peace opens up the way for the local, and peace can be internalized in the society rather than just conflicts being suppressed by international forces in the country, which is only a short term solution.⁵⁸

Critical scholars argue that liberal peacebuilding will never be efficient and provide a long-term solution unless the local are allowed to act as political subjects and can decide about changes in their own lives during a Western intervention. This would kind of be as Öjendal phrases it, a 'political maturity' achieved, and causing states to be able to handle everyday conflicts much better. Just like according to his study Cambodia was not able to do so just until now.⁵⁹ For national reach and legitimacy it is obligatory for state building process to engage with the local community. Community

⁵³ Paffenholz (2015) pp. 863-864.

⁵⁴ Öjendal (2015) pp. 942.

⁵⁵ Mac Ginty (2013) pp. 774.

⁵⁶ Hughes (2015) pp. 821.

⁵⁷ Öjendal (2015) pp. 942.

⁵⁸ Öjendal (2015) pp. 942-943.

⁵⁹ Öjendal (2015) pp. 940-941.

governance offers flexibility and resources promoting effective state building. Leaving the local out of consideration hinders the restoration of trust amongst citizens, which could lead to further violence rather than peaceful cooperation.⁶⁰

It could be debated whether the local-turn can offer an alternative to liberal peacebuilding but it seems necessary for the greater good to move away from the universal model of Westphalian traditions and state sovereignty. Instead of unilinear solutions the institutional framework should be built in a way to provide 'best-fit' solutions.^{61 62 63}

In sum the United Nations as the biggest organization seeking to establish peace in post-conflict areas, and other main actors of peacebuilding should adapt better to new challenges posed by the 21st century. This is believed to be done through a hybrid model of peace and governance despite all its flaws presented above.⁶⁴ As all the above shows, pro-local-turn theorists have a long list of arguments for why the local-turn and the thus emerging ideal hybrid peace is the answer to the liberal peacebuilding failures, and why the UN's approach had been flawed in the past decades. But in order to reach a positive hybrid peace, the UN and other international actors have to find the right balance between liberal and local approaches which is indeed a complicated task. With the following case studies my aim is to reveal if the criticism towards the UN is justified and shed a light on both the potential contribution and limits of the local-turn in peacebuilding operations in Cambodia and East Timor.

Research design

In terms of methodology I conduct a case study of two particular peacebuilding operations. By analyzing academic literature on the notion of liberal peace, the local-turn and the thus emerging hybrid peace, I get an idea what particular signs I should be looking for in the UN's repertoire during the two operations. Then following these guidelines I conduct the analysis of the two cases and can reach conclusions to answer my research questions. Now that the notion of the study is presented, below I argue for my particular choices made when it comes to overall approach, sampling and data collection.

After posing the research problem and question, the next decision to make was to pick a qualitative genre to conduct the research in. Then after contemplating the pros and cons of each genre, I decided that a case study research would serve my purposes the best. The research question revolves around a contemporary phenomenon and requires in-depth research, thus it relies on multiple sources of

⁶⁰ Brown (2009) pp. 68-69.

⁶¹ Leonardson (2015) pp. 834.

⁶² Jarstad (2012) pp. 4.

⁶³ Dinnen (2015) pp. 2.

⁶⁴ Ponzio (2007) pp. 270.

evidence. These are all basic properties of a classical case study.⁶⁵ An alternative design could be sort of an ethnographic approach where participant observation in the countries is combined with conducting a lot of expert interviews, but I discarded the idea as it does not fit the constraints of a master thesis. Additionally participant observation cannot really report efficiently on events of the past.

Then the next step was to decide upon crucial questions of sampling. In order to produce more generalizable results, it was straightforward I have to conduct a multiple case study; there was however still the question of how many cases I plan to work with. Taking into consideration that case studies generally work with more sources of evidence, and require in-depth analysis I decided to do a comparative study with two cases so that it fits the extent limit of a master thesis. This way I avoid the risk that I have to leave important details out, which was more likely if I worked with more than two cases. Using two cases not only allows in-depth analysis but it is also easier to present the findings and common dynamics of the two cases.

In my view the most sensitive part of this thesis was to carefully pick the two most suitable cases to conduct the analysis with. Since the success of the thesis highly depends on finding the right cases to analyze, I had to be careful not to pick them prematurely and conduct a more thorough research before naming them. These two cases after carefully reading through the academic literature turned out to be Cambodia and East-Timor. It is also frequently referred to as Timor-Leste but for the sake of simplicity I only use East-Timor in the thesis. Below I argue for my two countries chosen.

My first case is Cambodia, which already gained independence after French colonization in 1954, and experienced more than two decades of large scale war and violence. The UN authority started with the Paris Peace Agreements in 1991 that created UNTAC (United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia), responsible for handling the situation and establishing democratic norms in the country.⁶⁶ Based on the empirical evidences of Öjendal, Cambodia slowly but surely became a more inclusive peacebuilding process that allowed international and local actors to achieve mutual interests and objectives.⁶⁷ It will be interesting to see how the local-turn manifested itself in this case, because the UN received harsh criticism for the intervention being ineffective, and I am curious if they prove to be justified.

My second case is East-Timor which was colonized by Portugal just until 1975, when Timorese leaders declared independence. As a consequence, Indonesia invaded its territory and occupied it for almost 25 years. The long and violent fight for independence finished with a referendum, where

⁶⁵ Yin (2014) pp. 16-17.

⁶⁶ Peou (2007) pp. 71.

⁶⁷ Öjendal (2015) pp. 933.

Timorese people could vote on independence. It was in August 1999, and this is the date where the UN authority in the country started, as it was the UN responsible for organizing the referendum.⁶⁸

These two countries make a good multiple case study because they were the most classical cases of attempted liberal peacebuilding operations during the 1990's. Accordingly the local-turn critiques were the loudest in these two cases and they illustrate many of the failings of liberal peacebuilding, according to critical scholars.⁶⁹ These harsh critiques allow me to conduct my analysis and draw conclusions easier, as the strong disagreement between the liberal and the local approach is much more clearly visible this way. Additionally, both countries have experience of colonialism, and more than 20 years of bloody conflict preceding the intervention, in the form of Vietnamese and Indonesian occupation. Furthermore, Cambodia and East-Timor provide examples from approximately the same time-period. The UN interventions began 1992 in Cambodia and 1999 in the case of East-Timor, right when the UN was most optimistic about the results of their liberal peacebuilding interventions. The end of UN authority is also marked during the early 2010's in both cases. Furthermore both countries are located in Southeast Asia, thus are not as fundamentally different as if one of the cases was from the Middle-East for instance.

I aimed to pick two relatively similar cases for the analysis, because as a first step I wanted to examine the local-turn in similar circumstances and make it easier to take note of its implications. Yet, due to the 7 years difference the thesis can also demonstrate how the UN's approach had changed (if it did) from Cambodia to East-Timor, and if they managed to learn from previous experiences. This could later also serve as an additional argument when deciding upon how justified local-turn critiques are. Now that the overall approach, the method and sampling is given, it is time to move on to choices I made regarding data collection, and then the case studies themselves.

Data collection

Unlike other methods, there is no clear cut-off point when it comes to deciding how much case study data to collect especially in the qualitative genre. The goal is to find the amount that serves as confirmatory evidence, where the main points are supported by more than one source of data.⁷⁰

The most suitable sources of evidence for this master's thesis are:

- Academic literature to build the theoretical framework and to evaluate the outcomes of the two peacebuilding processes chosen, as well as their development in the post-conflict setting.
- Archival records about the peacebuilding operations from the United Nations archive. This, combined with academic literature give the most objective knowledge on the processes, which

⁶⁸ Wallis (2016) pp.252.

⁶⁹ Wallis (2016) pp. 252-253.

⁷⁰ Yin (2014) pp. 104.

is vital when conducting the analysis and testing the changing nature of the UN's approach over time.

- Interviews can also serve as good evidence as it allows the researcher to dig deep and stay as focused as possible. However any sort of personal participation, including conducting interviews in post-conflict zones was highly unlikely for the sake of a master's thesis, given its time frame and the additional expenses. But even though archival records are the main focus of the paper, some of my references rely on interviews already conducted by other authors.

During the analysis the most important sources of evidence become what I called briefly archival records above. These include official reports from the UN in the peacebuilding missions. For example United Nations Security Council Resolutions, which sum up the priorities of a particular operation for the upcoming years. For reasons mentioned during the sampling chapter, the time-period for these reports will approximately be 1992-2010 in the case of Cambodia and 1999-2010 in the case of East Timor. Without clear cut-off point I need to collect enough evidence to reach theoretical saturation, an issue is also addressed later on in the thesis.

Conducting the analysis

Now that the two cases are defined, and the data is collected it is time to move on to the analysis. In my paper I follow one of the four general strategies of Yin, as during the analysis I rely on theoretical propositions. These propositions also guided my data collection, now they provide analytical priorities.⁷¹

Usually the amount of data (even if we follow all the principles of data collection) is huge; something needs to guide the analysis to gain the relevant information from the mass. In my case a theoretical framework serves this purpose. Academic literature on the notion of liberal peace, hybrid peace and the local-turn give me the guidelines to follow when conducting the analysis. When processing data on the two peacebuilding operations, I can look for answers to the following questions that allow me to answer my research questions and reach conclusions.

- What signs of liberal peacebuilding did the two interventions show?
 - o focus of the intervention is to conduct elections
 - o focus on the relationship with the central government
 - o establishing liberal institutions
 - o strengthening the rule of law
- What signs of the local-turn did the two interventions show?
 - o decentralization efforts

⁷¹ Yin (2014) pp. 136.

- efforts to cooperate with local actors such as:
 - civil society organizations
 - locally elected authorities (local councils, judiciary)
 - actions aimed at appealing to citizens
- Did those changes contribute to improved peacebuilding?
 - Did the local-turn face any limits?

Once the questions guiding the analysis are answered on both countries, a pattern matching analytic technique can be used to answer my research questions.⁷² This way I can reveal what the local-turn has to offer to improve peacebuilding operations in the future and take notes of potential pitfalls of the theory at the same time.

Scientific quality of the study

External validity (generalizability) is a tricky issue. According to Yin, the generalizability of a case study mostly depends on the original research question. Generally speaking ‘how’ and ‘why’ research questions make generalization easier, which is true for one of my research questions that is interested in how the local-turn can contribute to better peacebuilding. More importantly, data collection and the analysis is led by a theoretical framework from the general peacebuilding literature, triangulating multiple sources of data. These two factors, according to Marshall can tackle the issue of generalizability rather well, thus findings could be used on other instances as well.⁷³

Even though I answer my research question using only two specific cases, understanding the process of the local-turn in general can take the international community one step closer to achieving self-sustaining long-term peace in post-conflict states. The United Nations and other international actors could adapt to such challenges posed by the 21st century once they understand how to make good use of this hybrid model of peace and governance.⁷⁴ This is a mainstream and recent phenomenon, Challenges Forum background paper found in 2007 that "40 out of a total of 54 recent missions were operated in some form of joint, coordinated, or sequenced operation by more than one institution-what has been referred to as 'hybrid' operations."⁷⁵ My aim is to show in detail how this manifests in Cambodia and East-Timor, and what effect the local-turn had on the efficiency of these operations, as well as take note of the limits of the local-turn approach.

Least but not last I'd like to discuss the question of confirmability of my study. Obviously in qualitative research it is also a tricky concept, but that is one of the reasons I chose to conduct a case study research. If I find sound evidence from multiple sources of data (academic journals, United Nations archive etc.) I can with a greater confidence state that the findings of the study are as

⁷² Yin (2014) pp. 143.

⁷³ Marshall (2016) pp. 262.

⁷⁴ Ponzio (2007) pp. 270.

⁷⁵ Tardy (2014) pp. 95-96.

trustworthy and as objective as it can get in qualitative research. In sum, as I argued for them above, the research fulfils criteria for good qualitative research set by Tracy, such as worthy topic, credibility, significant contribution.⁷⁶ Now that I also introduced the methodological approach of the analysis, I finally move on to the case studies.

Case study: Cambodia

Background

Cambodia is one of the classical cases of post-Cold War era UN peacebuilding, and is one of the most debated ones of its time. It is an important part of the academic debate revolving around the local-turn too, because the intervention received harsh critiques, perceiving it as a ‘failure’, with relatively few counter-arguments.⁷⁷ In the following chapters I attempt to shed a light on how the local-turn manifested in my two cases, first in Cambodia. In order to do this, after the short introduction I begin with presenting the local-turn critique of the intervention. I choose to present the critiques first, because even though it seems like an odd order, it is easier to reflect both on the critiques and the implications of the local-turn if I present their point of view first. Then I analyze UN archival data to find out how the UN approached this mission the first place and what were their main priorities. And finally I turn to the academic literature to get to know more about changes in the post-conflict setting. Accordingly, in the first section, following a short historical introduction, I present the local-turn critique of the intervention in Cambodia.

In 1970, a later successful coup against Prince Norodom Shinaouk started. The civil war turned into a military intervention from North and South Vietnam, as well as the United States. The revolutionary forces won and Cambodia experienced war (being no longer neutral in the Vietnamese War) with the US constantly bombing the country. By the time the Khmer Rouge regime was overthrown in early 1979, between one and one and a half million people lost their lives. The invasion of the Vietnamese military did not put end to fighting and Cambodia remained in war until 1998. The democratic transition itself began in 1991, when alongside 18 other state actors, Cambodia signed the agreement to end the war and establish the foundations of liberal democracy. The reliance on international actors and donors was however huge, Cambodia turned into the most aid-dependent country at the time in the world.⁷⁸ I will get back to this issue later in this case study.

The UN intervention in Cambodia began in 1992 and started off as an ‘ad hoc management of a collapsing peace agreement’, through a quasi-immediate introduction of both a liberal political economy as well as the establishment of liberal democracy, with the primary focus on holding national elections. This liberal order and approach from the UN got assistance, significant financial support and

⁷⁶ Tracy (2010) pp. 840.

⁷⁷ Öjendal (2015) pp. 931.

⁷⁸ Peou (2007) pp. 34.

development resources from the international donor community, but due to the fast intervention, friction emerged on the short term between the interveners and the Cambodian society.⁷⁹

The UN faced numerous challenges; it was crucial how they would approach the situation. For instance after the coup in 1970, the genocide of the Khmer Rouge and the civil war during the 80's the legal system experienced a complete meltdown, it had to be totally reformed in order to be able to support the established liberal system.⁸⁰ In the following I draw on the academic literature to get to know the local-turn theorists' critiques. In the light of that I later use documents from UN archive to get to know the overall strategy the UN followed, and then finally have a look at the post-conflict development of Cambodia. In the end I will be able to draw conclusions whether or not the local-turn critique is justified and what the local-turn has to offer peacebuilding in general.

The local-turn critique

First of all I show how the academic world generally judged the intervention in Cambodia, which received overwhelming critique. The long-term effect and outcome of UNTAC's work remains a matter of debate in the academic literature. According to one point of view, the intervention led by UNTAC successfully created bases for a politically, and economically stable society by successfully putting an end to state-led violence. On the other hand critical approaches argue that Cambodia was abandoned too early after the intervention ended, and politics are once again driven by 'veiled authoritarianism and renewed patrimonial politics.' Thus the political rule in Cambodia is illegitimate.⁸¹

Richmond and Franks claim that the peace achieved in Cambodia was only 'virtual'. The Janus-face of the operation originates from the political stability, economic growth achieved and constitutional democracy sustained on the one hand. On the other hand, however, the sustainability and stability of this 'positive peace' remains questionable as the 'local' were not heavily included in the process denying the possibility of achieving sort of an 'everyday peace'.⁸²

Öjendal also happens to agree with the 'schizophrenic' nature of the intervention between March, 1992 and September, 1993. It was one of the most ambitious UN interventions of its time with a great scope as well as depth in theory. Yet he highlights it turned out to be both narrow and shallow in the sense that the local dimension of this plan was never sufficiently institutionalized due to the rapid intervention which took place immediately after the constitution elections. Even though a new, liberal system was introduced, it was totally different from what the people of Cambodia had gotten used to, both institutionally and culturally. In order for the new system to comply with liberal peace, the donor community used massive political pressure and financial resources, suppressing the local voices. This

⁷⁹ Öjendal (2013) pp. 366-367.

⁸⁰ Öjendal (2013) pp. 375.

⁸¹ Öjendal (2013) pp. 370.

⁸² Öjendal (2013) pp. 371.

self-evidently opened space for resistance from the citizens of Cambodia in the early stages of the intervention.⁸³ Back in its time, UNTAC was considered the most massive in UN history, yet in the aftermath it is visible that it did not manage to include all relevant parties, disarm the four factions or totally take over civil administration.⁸⁴

In the elections of 1998 the dominant era of CPP (Cambodian People's Party) began, and they hold it up ever since. Even though the constitution states liberal democracy with free elections is the norm, there was tangible resistance from the political elite to accept for example election results unconditionally. The system at the time was already different from authoritarianism, yet also far from the ideal liberal system that the UN advocates had in mind.⁸⁵ And even though from the outside Cambodia seemed like an electoral democracy by 2006, according to critical scholars it was more like an 'electoral dictatorship' standing rather far from a consolidated democracy. The most fundamental elements were apparent, just like elections took place regularly, and the electoral process in general became more and more transparent for the citizens over time. However there were concerns over the procedural rules, such as freeness, fairness and just representation. The CPP dominated the agenda and the election outcomes were predictable. Understandably the opposition parties did not necessarily respect the rule of fairness and were often reluctant to accept the outcomes and let the winning party to form a government. Furthermore the new government officials failed to really meet people's needs as they had poor communication with the citizens of Cambodia, and to make matters worse they often undermined their political legitimacy by engaging in corrupt practices.⁸⁶ The peace agreement and the intervention in 1992 overwhelmingly focused on centralized dynamics, mostly concerned with the national elites. Peace established should be grounded in a much wider segment of the population, in the day-to-day life.⁸⁷ The previous chapter lists the main critiques towards the peacebuilding operation in Cambodia, it is time to move on to the official documents and check whether they support these claims or not and if we see any signs of the local approach in the early stages of the intervention.

The approach of the UN

During the Paris Conference held in 1989 the participants decided that elections have to occur in a politically neutral environment 'with full respect for the national sovereignty' of Cambodia. Furthermore it was also decided upon that during the transitional period Cambodia and its national unity as well as sovereignty will be represented by the Supreme National Council.⁸⁸ It consisted of all Cambodian parties in Jakarta; the UN asked to elect the chairman of the council as soon as possible.⁸⁹

⁸³ Öjendal (2013) pp. 371-372.

⁸⁴ Öjendal (2015) pp. 934.

⁸⁵ Öjendal (2013) pp. 372-373.

⁸⁶ Peou (2007) pp. 60.

⁸⁷ Öjendal (2015) pp. 938.

⁸⁸ Annual Report (1990-1991) pp. 155-157.

⁸⁹ Resolution 668. pp. 28-29.

The chairman of the Supreme National Council later became Prince Norodom Sihanouk.⁹⁰ The other key document for the UN intervention in Cambodia is the peace process adopted in Tokyo on the 22nd of June, 1992.⁹¹

The most important goal set by the Annual Report of the 1991-1992 period was to organize free and fair elections for the Cambodian people so that they are able to ‘exercise their right to self-determination’. The aforementioned election was the key to both regional and international peace and security as it was the first crucial step towards a ‘just and durable settlement.’ The election was planned to take place in May, 1993 the latest. Only after the ‘comprehensive political settlement’ was signed in Paris the 23rd of October in 1992, were the first UN forces deployed. The UN started preparatory studies in order to get detailed information for the incoming intervening forces. The first mission was a survey mission that prepared schedule and plans for the whole mandate; afterwards UNAMIC (United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia) was responsible for maintaining the ceasefire and preparing the field for UNTAC (United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia) to demobilize the military, and collect the deposited weapons.⁹² Another top priority of UNAMIC was mine clearance in the region because first of all it poses threat to citizens in everyday life and also significantly slows down the return of refugees. They established training programs in mine clearance to speed this process up and include the Cambodian in the process.⁹³ This was the first slight sign of a more inclusive intervention. The Secretary General emphasized the importance to deploy the UN authorities as quickly as possible while keeping in mind the main guidelines to be as efficient and cost-effective as possible.⁹⁴ A rapid process like this involves greater risk that the intervention causes alienation and thus more resistance from the Cambodians.

UNTAC gained control over more and more parties’ territories (SOC, FUNCIPPEC, KPNLF), but PDK did not meet their obligations that the Paris Agreements laid down for every party in Cambodia. According to the agreements, UNTAC should gain unlimited access to these territories, as well as over administrative structures and the parties should sufficiently conduct voter registration before the elections. By gaining authority, the UNTAC could create the politically neutral environment for the elections, which was the absolute top priority for the UN. Furthermore the Security Council encouraged training of the civil police, which could contribute to maintaining law and order in the country.⁹⁵ That was the second initiative of the resolutions that directly engaged with, and involved the local.

The UN highlighted that good progress was made in voter registration as well. UNTAC started to work more closely with the Supreme National Council, gained strong control and supervision over

⁹⁰ Resolution 766. pp. 41-42.

⁹¹ Resolution 783 pp. 1.

⁹² Annual Report (1991-1992) pp. 115; 117-118; 122; 125.

⁹³ Resolution 728. pp. 38.

⁹⁴ Resolution 745 pp. 39-40.

⁹⁵ Resolution 783 pp. 1-3.

administrative structures. But at the same time they made effort through the creation of working groups to involve political parties in their work. The UN demanded that PDK do not hinder the work of other parties and voter registration. Upholding of the ceasefire was obviously the other highly prioritized issue mentioned frequently in the resolutions but it is not strictly relevant to my thesis topic. The UN also invited other states and international organizations to seek economic support and assistance to evaluate the current state of the Cambodian economy.⁹⁶

But as the rapid intervention indicated, soon acts of violence emerged in the region, mostly on political and ethnic grounds; these attacks also threatened UNTAC personnel. The following goals were set in response: to ensure freedom of speech, assembly and movement. Last but not least they wanted to ensure citizens that the balloting for the election will be secret. The UN furthermore tried to defend the national resources of Cambodia by restricting export from the country.⁹⁷ All the above, but especially the fair access to media aim at appealing to Cambodian citizens to increase trust in the UN authorities.

According to the reports of the UN, 5 million people registered themselves for voting before the elections.⁹⁸ Most of those 5 million people actually lived with their rights to vote, a constituent assembly was set to create a constitution and establish the new government of Cambodia. The UN emphasized that the results of the elections have to be respected.⁹⁹ When the new government was then formed according to the plans, UNTAC's authority was set to end and withdrawn by November, 1993.¹⁰⁰

After the elections of 23-28 May 1993 the UN concluded that the most important goals of the Paris Agreements had been achieved. This includes, citing the resolution: 'restoring to the Cambodian people and their democratically elected leaders their primary responsibility for peace, stability, national reconciliation and reconstruction.' The new king of Cambodia became once again His Majesty Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk. The UN also promised high quality international assistance in order to 'consolidate the achievements of the Cambodian people.'¹⁰¹ Despite of all the developments, however, tension remained. In the Presidential Statement of 1997, the Security Council expressed its concern for the increasing violence that was undermining the efficiency of the Cambodian peace process and thus the UN wanted to put an end to fighting as soon as possible.¹⁰²

After reading through all the official documents from the Security Council, it looks evident that the UN indeed started off with a top-down intervention in mind, considering the huge focus on elections, and the emphasized close cooperation with the Supreme National Council. However, on numerous

⁹⁶ Resolution 792. pp 1-5.

⁹⁷ Resolution 810. pp. 1-3.

⁹⁸ Resolution 826. pp. 1-2.

⁹⁹ Resolution 835. pp. 1-2.

¹⁰⁰ Resolution 860. pp. 1-2.

¹⁰¹ Resolution 880. pp. 1-3.

¹⁰² Presidential Statement (1997) pp. 1-2.

occasions they specifically mentioned cooperation with local actors as well. Elements such as the mine clearance program and civil police training prove that even in the early stages of the intervention the UN did not entirely ignore the local realm. In what follows I examine changes in post-conflict Cambodia based on the academic literature, and see if I can see any signs of the local-turn in the post-conflict setting. Obviously 'local' is a broad concept so I have to be more focused, but luckily both in the case of Cambodia and East-Timor I found two or three main areas which were in the focus of most articles. They do not entirely overlap as both countries had unique stories; consequently the priorities were also somewhat different, but the implications of the local-turn can be demonstrated regardless.

Civil society

The first area in Cambodia I am going to mention is the civil society, with a special focus on NGOs. In general, Cambodia's public institutions heavily underperformed according to the Report of World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness. During the 2005-2006 period, Cambodia ranked 114th among 117 countries. This demonstrates how under-institutionalized the country was in general at the time.¹⁰³ It did not make things easier for civil society organizations either. Their possibilities were also limited, as they were almost entirely dependent on aid provided by foreign funders. If such an organization is that heavily aid-dependent, their objectives and work understandably somewhat mirrors the preferences of the donors, and the actual needs of the civil society are secondary. This explains why the development of civil society has been so cumbersome.¹⁰⁴

The donor-driven peacebuilding limited the extent to which the local could have effect on the direction of the intervention. Civil society organizations such as NGOs follow the priorities set by the donors. Civic engagement never actually had a strong tradition in Cambodia. There were only informal organizations like the 'pagoda committees' and the social interactions were generally influenced by 'kinship and patronage networks', just like politics in general. The lack of civic engagement leads to huge gap in power relations between the state and citizens. In order to make this gap more narrow the UN agencies aimed at developing and expanding civil society from the very beginning (1992-93), during UNTAC's mandate. Furthermore, despite of the Constitution of 1993 that recognizes NGOs, according to Dosch they have to work in a 'legally ill- defined' sphere.¹⁰⁵

In an ideal case, an individual NGO approaches the donor with its project ideas and seeks funding. In the case of Cambodia however, due to the high dependency on funds it was the donor organization that actually contacted the NGOs with projects mirroring their strategies.¹⁰⁶ Unfortunately the Cambodian government cannot provide funds for the NGOs at least partially, which would reduce aid-

¹⁰³ Peou (2007) pp. 99.

¹⁰⁴ Peou (2007) pp. 123.

¹⁰⁵ Dosch (2012) pp. 1070-1072.

¹⁰⁶ Dosch (2012) pp. 1073-1074.

dependency.¹⁰⁷ Aid dependency was not necessarily a problem, if the needs of the Cambodian democracy and the priorities of the donors would match. But unfortunately institution building on the civil-society level was not top priority for international donors on the long run. They instead pursued short-term projects where they could more easily present more spectacular results. As aid recipients could not focus on long-term needs, the institutionalization of Cambodia became painfully cumbersome, precisely as the World Economic Forum's survey shows. And without proper institutions, it is hard to give stable foundations to democracy.¹⁰⁸

To make matters worse, major NGOs in Cambodia tend to be 'undemocratic, exclusionary, elitist and business-oriented'. Unions and student organizations are unorganized and are on occasions created for solely political reasons.¹⁰⁹ This means the Cambodian civil society is not a separate third sector independent from the government. It is more like as Dosch calls it state-tolerated, state-co-opted, loosely organized that only acts whenever the government will not get involved for some reason.¹¹⁰ Civic engagement in Cambodia does not have a long tradition, or more precisely any tradition whatsoever. The role of civil society is played by informal organizations (pagoda committees) and their interaction is 'deeply embedded in kinship and patronage networks.'¹¹¹

So even if it was not for the aid dependency problem, there is no reason to believe it would have been the best decision from the UN to empower such organizations even more. This is exactly a downside and limit of the local-turn critique mentioned in the theoretical chapter.

The aforementioned phenomenon of aid dependency and the ill nature of civil society organizations are problematic because civil society has important functions in a peacebuilding process. Dosch distinguishes seven of them: "protection, monitoring, advocacy, socialization, inter-group social cohesion, facilitation, and service delivery." Hereby I only mention the most important ones in detail, which also demonstrate why it is necessary to also take note of the local approach's inherent potential to enhance peacebuilding operations.

- Protection: protecting citizens from violence and manipulation from different parties
- Monitoring: human rights violations, implementation of peace agreements
- Inter-group social cohesion: organizing communication and closer cooperation between adversarial groups. And in general facilitating dialogue between all sorts of actors, both on the local and national levels.¹¹²

On the other hand, there are also limits of the local-turn that the UN has to handle if they want a positive hybrid peace to emerge. As it is visible, despite the UN's intentions to empower civil society, aid dependency and the flawed nature of existing civil society organizations of the country prevented

¹⁰⁷ Dosch (2012) pp. 1088.

¹⁰⁸ Peou (2007) pp. 179.

¹⁰⁹ Öjendal (2015) pp. 942.

¹¹⁰ Dosch pp. 1072.

¹¹¹ Dosch pp. 1071.

¹¹² Dosch (2012) pp. 1080-1081.

the Cambodian civil society to have a beneficial effect on peacebuilding. The inherent potential of the donor community could not be exploited as donors ‘could not unite to pursue collective aid diplomacy’ because each donor had their strategic or security interests in mind.¹¹³ This case demonstrates why the critiques towards the UN’s inability to create a beneficial civil society for peace and democracy are exaggerated and at the same time shows the inherent potential of the local-turn.

Decentralization

The second area is the question of decentralization, involving local actors in governance. This did not appear in the peace agreement itself, nor in the Constitution. The top priority of the intervention was holding elections, and the first local elections were held in 2002. Following the 2002 elections, this slowly but surely became a nationwide reform. This consisted of: ‘local elections, commune councils, budgets for local spending and an explicit strategy to build local participation and popular inclusion guaranteed in law.’ These developments were highly welcome at the local level, and qualitative studies proved how much the local environment has transformed from a ‘previously harsh local environment of widespread fear to one of openness and dialogue.’¹¹⁴ In 2004, for commune councils got involved in a training program on transparency, decentralization participatory government and accountability.¹¹⁵

As an aftermath two more local elections were held in 2007 and 2012, also perceived as free and fair by international experts. The academic world considers these elections as the most influential and also successful democratic reforms in post-conflict Cambodia. There were definitely attempts to build locally addressed peace in the country. In 2009 94% of the respondents perceived the general situation in villages ‘more harmonious’ than prior to first local elections.¹¹⁶ Broad inclusion of local actors contributed to building everyday peace, which is the key to a more sustainable political system as addressed in the chapter about the local-turn.

Observations in 2013 show how fear and distrust waned as the civil society and citizens in general can reach out to the authorities easier, who listen more carefully to Cambodian people’s ‘concerns and demands.’ In the name of broader inclusion women also tend to participate more and more in politics on the local level. Öjendal’s informants from Cambodia claim that decentralization proved useful in teaching more about democratic values to people, which closes the gap between the central/local and the state/citizens.¹¹⁷

Decentralization efforts as proposed by the local-turn proved to be useful and the results above suggest that the UN did a sufficient job, even though it took 10 years to organize the first commune elections. Obviously there were shortcomings, but once again the theoretical framework proved right claiming

¹¹³ Peou (2007) pp. 205.

¹¹⁴ Öjendal (2015) pp. 938.

¹¹⁵ Peou (2007) pp. 168.

¹¹⁶ Öjendal (2013) pp. 377-378.

¹¹⁷ Öjendal (2015) pp. 939.

that there are limits to decentralization as well. For two main reasons the UN had to be careful what local actors to empower. First, since historically and also recently many civil servants engaged in corrupt acts on the local level, the citizens understandably avoided getting in touch with local bureaucracy and institutions.¹¹⁸ More authority for corrupt local actors can easily end up being counterproductive. Furthermore the dominant party's (CPP's) power is heavily grounded in the rural areas.¹¹⁹ Consequently despite of more decentralization efforts, the CPP would have even more authority throughout the country, so the UN has to be careful when deciding upon decentralization acts, as CPP's hegemony is a major threat to long-term peace in Cambodia.

Judiciary

An additional brief example of the local approach in the Cambodian intervention is the case of judiciary. The establishment of ECCC (Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia) was aimed at bringing to trial formal Khmer Rouge leaders for crimes committed against humanity. It brought justice to Cambodians, strengthened the rule of law and contributed to national reconciliation.¹²⁰ The trials helped Cambodians to overcome their Khmer Rouge past. It became possible to deal with such deeply embedded traumas. As Dosch argues, 'a profound understanding of the past is necessary to prevent conflicts in the future.'¹²¹

This was an important part of the UN intervention, but the Cambodian court system in general made it extremely problematic for the UN to be as effective as the academic world expected them to be. Cambodia's court system was often used to 'exercise political power as well as favor those patronage networks.' No matter which party is in charge, be it the dominant party or the opposition, they used and would use this flawed system the similar way.¹²² Consequently despite the UN's intentions to improve the judiciary in the country, the elected government had no incentive to push for a non-corrupt and competent judiciary, as it would have weakened their patrimonial system.¹²³

In sum, in the post conflict setting even more emphasis was put on cooperating with the local, as the example of civil society, decentralization or even the short example of judiciary shows. Thus, compared to critiques from local-turn theorists, some of them appear exaggerated. But more importantly the local approach also showed its beneficial impact, especially in the area of decentralization. Yet, the analysis revealed limits such as aid-dependency, CPP's dominant position or simply the corrupt nature of civil servants. These factors the UN has to keep in mind in order to successfully balance between the liberal and the local approach.

¹¹⁸ Öjendal (2015) pp. 935.

¹¹⁹ Öjendal (2015) pp. 940.

¹²⁰ ECCC at a Glance pp. 1.

¹²¹ Dosch pp. 1076.

¹²² Öjendal (2013) pp. 375-376.

¹²³ Öjendal (2013) pp. 379.

Implications of the intervention

The UN managed to strengthen and found stable basis for an electoral institutional framework. For instance UNTAC drafted the 1993 Electoral Law that was a positive foundation for the following electoral laws.¹²⁴ The UN managed to introduce parliamentarianism, created a new constitution and made politics more stable in the country. Twenty years after the intervention four national elections and three local elections have been held, and as Öjendal argues, the majority of Cambodian citizens' life is much better than it was back in 1992.¹²⁵ But unfortunately for several reasons the intervention was not able to weaken CPP's power, and equalize power relations in domestic politics.¹²⁶ International assistance for party building was limited, because it was not the intention of the donors to intervene in Cambodia's domestic affairs and thus got the least attention from donors.¹²⁷ Without a proper multiparty system the international community was not able to create a political system with proper checks and balances. The donors did not act collectively, and were not able to constrain the political authority of CPP.¹²⁸ As a result many efforts of the UN were hindered by the CPP's domination, exactly as the cases of decentralization or judiciary show.

As for the early stages of the intervention, Ashley wrote a review of three works on the peacebuilding process in Cambodia. And his findings also confirm what one can conclude from the official documents. The UN did a good job organizing elections, and the authors agreed with major policy choices despite of shortcomings. Like it has to be admitted that UNTAC left the country before sufficient supporting institutions were established, which was a significant limitation of the reconstruction process.¹²⁹ Those authors claim regardless that 'the 1991 Paris Agreements was the best option available to resolve the Cambodian war and consider that the country ended up in a far better shape as a result.'¹³⁰ We must also not forget that the Cambodians do not have a long history and experience of democracy. If we take 2006, it roughly equals up to only 13 years of experience of democracy, and the war did not even finish totally until 1998.¹³¹ In the light of this, such improvements since 2006 are reassuring, especially if we take into account the case of several Eastern-European countries after the Cold War. Democracy indeed requires more time; the expectations towards the UN mission in Cambodia were unrealistically high in this context, but the local-turn still had beneficial effect on the operation. The next step is to conduct the same analysis with East-Timor before drawing conclusions, accordingly I move on to introducing the second case study.

¹²⁴ Peou (2007) pp. 175.

¹²⁵ Öjendal (2013) pp. 370-371.

¹²⁶ Peou (2007) pp. 195.

¹²⁷ Peou (2007) pp. 177.

¹²⁸ Peou (2007). pp. 193.

¹²⁹ Öjendal (2013) pp. 372-373.

¹³⁰ Ashley (1996) pp. 451.

¹³¹ Peou (2007) pp. 138.

Case Study: East-Timor

In 1975 Indonesia invaded East-Timor that marked the beginning of destructive and disastrous 25 years of conflict. In 1999 however citizens of East-Timor were offered a choice between gaining autonomous status within the Indonesian Republic, or total independence. This ballot was organized by the UN, and after the vast majority of citizens voted for independence, further violence emerged in the region, the Indonesian military and paramilitary forces went on a rampage that the UN had to put an end to.¹³² Similarly to the case of Cambodia, I first present the critiques of the East-Timor intervention coming from pro-local-turn scholars and then compare it with the official UN documents and the post-conflict developments in the country to be able to reach conclusions.

The local-turn critique

Formally East-Timor became an independent state in 2002, and the UN mission was perceived as a resounding success in the early years. The mission's results were so impressive for the UN that their forces were withdrawn in 2005. But this turned out to be a way too fast and premature decision to make. The next year security situation was so fragile the international forces had to return. The UN decided too early upon withdrawal in a country transiting from colonial repression to a stable democracy. But it was not the only critique the UN faced, in what follows I introduce the arguments of critical scholars in favor of the local-turn critique.

Despite of the rural majority, the government had little to nothing connection/communication with the rural areas and was highly centralized in Dili.¹³³ To defuse the situation efficiently, it was also important to be aware of the fact that most resistance against Indonesia was coming from the countryside, in the form of guerilla warfare.¹³⁴ A top-down and highly centralized process cannot effectively cope with people in rural areas. What the UN done from 1999 to 2006 they could basically repeat from 2006. In the period from 1999 to 2012 five missions took place in East-Timor with different and frequently extended mandates.¹³⁵

Despite the destroyed infrastructure, establishing basic infrastructure for the civil society was not a priority for the UN. This made post-independence public administration and the 'Timorization' (transferring competencies to local authorities) of the process less effective. One important conclusion of the East-Timor case shows that the UN should not underestimate the strength of local traditions. International, and universal values were applied without thorough consultation with the local, consequently their expectations towards democracy and human rights in general varied greatly to what

¹³² Hughes (2009) pp. 221-222.

¹³³ Brown (2009) pp. 62-63.

¹³⁴ Candio (2001) pp. 66.

¹³⁵ Lopes (2014) pp. 188.

the UN imagined. This understandably delays the consolidation, or at least stabilization of democracy in the country.¹³⁶

Since gaining independence, East-Timor did not achieve any significant socio economic improvement and had low Human Development Index. The UN's approach at first sight seemed like a colonial authority, because it was reluctant to share power and kept it in the hands of centralized institutions. Understandably it was not welcome in the peripheries and created mistrust away from the capital.¹³⁷ Institutions are only organizational structures, but in a country where the human development is so low the institutions 'may not have anyone to function for, or anywhere to gain support from.'¹³⁸

The UN also disregarded factors that could have supported their goals. For instance East-Timor is a mostly Catholic country. The Church; if used well can greatly contribute to stabilizing the country, and even establishing democratic values and norms in the society. The independent Church together with an active civil society could, as Candio claims: 'constitute the strong counter-balancing forces necessary to secure the survival of the democratic and pluralist culture.'¹³⁹

East-Timor was among the poorest countries in South-East-Asia, the rise of a locally rooted civil society was inconveniently cumbersome. One example of how different system the citizens have to live in is that they now have to live and work in the formal economy, instead of sharing bartering which is a long tradition in East-Timor. But unfortunately it is usually the internationals that carry out the tasks of the UN. The local people did not get more knowledge of the new system this way. For the UN achieving results is more important than working with for example local NGO's on longer terms, without fast results.¹⁴⁰ As a consequence, in post-independence East-Timor many citizens do not find themselves at home in the new political environment they are supposed to be a part of, especially in the rural areas as government institutions do not have a sufficient reach outside the capital.

The rapid introduction of the liberal system ended up in poorly understood liberal norms and erosion of local practices.¹⁴¹ The problem of alienation was further contributed by the widespread poverty as even basic livelihood was a matter of everyday life for East-Timorese citizens. Establishing even more central institutions cannot solve these kinds of problems.¹⁴² It is a widely accepted assumption in Western societies that citizens value their political, etc. rights over other aspects of life. But in a country where welfare requirements do not meet at least a sufficient minimum level, the priorities may vary. The East-Timorese citizens do not value their rights as much as Western interveners think. If the goal is to establish a self-sustaining liberal state, the priorities of the citizens should be in focus. Even

¹³⁶ Alldén (2007) pp. 7.

¹³⁷ Richmond (2008) pp. 189-190.

¹³⁸ Lopes (2014) pp. 193.

¹³⁹ Candio (2001) pp. 70-71.

¹⁴⁰ Richmond (2008) pp. 194.

¹⁴¹ Brown (2009) pp. 64.

¹⁴² Brown (2009) pp. 65.

more so because cultural and the aforementioned welfare requirements serve as building blocks of liberal states to which several rights are secondary.¹⁴³

Local agents were not effectively capacitated nor involved in the process. Despite of critiques the UN moved on with withdrawing UN forces way too early, claiming that the situation was stable.¹⁴⁴ The article of Freire examines frictions emerging between the UN's applied model and local dynamics, and relies on fieldwork conducted in June-July 2012 in East-Timor. The results suggest that the UN applied universal schemes without local readjustment.¹⁴⁵ The UN's strategy could not effectively deal with the underlying factors driving the whole conflict, such as political cleavages, ethnic and community divisions, social and economic inequalities. The liberal approach treated Western liberal values as superior to local and customary values, which are often non-liberal.¹⁴⁶ One has to identify the frictions in a society to be able to either minimize their effects or totally defuse the source of conflict and thus contribute to a more sustainable peace.¹⁴⁷

As it is evident from the previous paragraphs, the intervention in East-Timor indeed received overwhelming critiques. In what follows I attempt to shed a light on how justified these critiques are, and how the local-turn contributed to the intervention in the country. First, I turn to the official UN documents once again.

The approach of the UN

The UN planned to conduct a popular consultation in East-Timor, so that citizens can express their will whether they want to accept a proposed constitutional framework where East-Timor would receive special autonomy within Indonesia. The consultation was scheduled for 8 August, 1999. The Government of Indonesia was responsible for maintaining security and peace so that a free and fair consultation can be conducted in a safe environment free of any sort of intimidation and violence.¹⁴⁸ The UN decided to establish the United Nations Mission in East-Timor (UNAMET). The main quest of UNAMET was to carry out the aforementioned popular consultation. If East-Timorese voted against autonomy, that would have meant separation from Indonesia. The intervention started off with 280 civilian police officers as advisers for the Indonesian Police. The main priorities had 3 components:

- Political component to 'monitor the fairness of the political environment, and ensure the freedom of all political and other non-governmental organization to carry out their activities.'
- Electoral component to control activities connected to voting and voter registration.

¹⁴³ Richmond (2008) pp. 197-198.

¹⁴⁴ Freire (2014) pp. 173.

¹⁴⁵ Freire (2013) pp. 205-106.

¹⁴⁶ Freire (2013) pp. 209.

¹⁴⁷ Freire (2013) pp. 216.

¹⁴⁸ Resolution 1236 (1999) pp. 2.

- Information component to explain the situation and the process to the East-Timorese in a neutral manner, without any sort of manipulation.¹⁴⁹

As there were numerous competing factions in East-Timor that time, the security situation was tense and fragile in dire need of a reconciliation process. The number of civilian police was complemented with additional personnel and reached 460. They recruited and trained the future police force of East-Timor.¹⁵⁰ The UN had to postpone the consultation, until 30 August, 1999,¹⁵¹ which was then successfully conducted as planned; however the security situation did not become less worrisome. In the popular consultation the citizens of East-Timor expressed their wish to move forward to independence under the authority of the UN. The administration of East-Timor, including the right to exercise ‘all legislative and executive authority, as well as the administration of justice’ became the task of UNTAET (United Nations Transitional Administration in East-Timor). Following the consultation, East-Timorese civilians had to suffer from violence and large-scale relocation. There was dire need for humanitarian assistance; the UN highlighted the importance to give full and safe access to humanitarian organizations. In his statement of 12 September, 1999, The President of Indonesia supported and accepted the UN peacekeeping force in East-Timor.¹⁵²

Even though Kofi Annan (Secretary General of the UN at the time) also asked all the parties in East-Timor to respect the outcome of the popular consultation, East-Timor experienced violence, as pro-Indonesia forces committed mass-violence; killing thousands of people as well as displacing hundreds of thousands. To make matters worse, they left 70% percent of the infrastructure destroyed. In the 6th of September 2000, a ‘militia-led mob’ murdered three United Nations personnel.¹⁵³ Due to violence even more focus was put on training of East-Timor Police Service.

After the he Constituent Assembly was successfully and relatively peacefully elected in April 2002, a new mission, UNMISSET (United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor) was established, to supervise the process of ‘Timorization’.¹⁵⁴ Despite the security situation, the UN already planned the downsizing of UNMISSET in the near future.¹⁵⁵ That was an interesting decision from many aspects. Its mandate was soon extended until May 2004, then later until May 2005.¹⁵⁶ Due to concerns of the Security Council, the mandate had to be extended several times, but the UN wanted to focus on downsizing and withdrawal regardless.¹⁵⁷

Since the new institutions in East-Timor were still perceived fragile in further need of consolidation, the UN took actions to strengthen the key sectors like justice, public administration, and the National

¹⁴⁹ Resolution 1246 (1999) pp. 1-2.

¹⁵⁰ Resolution 1262 (1999) pp. 2.

¹⁵¹ Resolution 1257 (1999) pp. 1.

¹⁵² Resolution 1264 (1999) pp 1-2.

¹⁵³ Resolution 1319 (2000) pp. 1.

¹⁵⁴ Resolution 1410 (2002) pp. 1-3.

¹⁵⁵ Resolution 1473 (2003) pp. 1.

¹⁵⁶ Resolution 1480 (2003) pp. 2.

¹⁵⁷ Resolution 1573 (2004) pp. 2.

Police.¹⁵⁸ They also established a special political mission, United Nations Office in East-Timor (UNOTIL). The task of UNOTIL was to monitor the development of the aforementioned critical institutions and the development of the police.¹⁵⁹ But what's more relevant to my thesis topic is the mandate of UNAMET and UNTAET. The resolutions showed real intentions from the UN's side to put emphasis on the local in the process. UNAMET had an important component in their mandate, to 'ensure freedom of political parties and NGOs to carry out their activities'¹⁶⁰ meanwhile UNTAET was responsible for the 'Timorization' of the mission. This means transferring competencies from the international (UN) authorities to state local authorities. This was a fundamental part in the exit strategy with focus on building local capacity and transferring competencies.¹⁶¹ In the light of 'Timorization' the UN highlighted the importance of cooperating with the East-Timorese people. The mission had to monitor the development of local institutions,¹⁶² and UNTAET focused on strengthening direct participation and broader involvement of the East-Timorese citizens in the administration of their local territories. Even though the UN expected that East-Timor will gain independence by the end of 2001, UNTAET's mandate was also extended until the end of January 2002.¹⁶³

Then for the first time ever in East-Timor's history, elections were scheduled to take place in 2007. Considering this the UN put emphasis on informing the Timorese citizens about the upcoming elections as well as about the work of UNMIT. (United Nations Integrated Mission in East-Timor) In order to inform the citizens, the step of assisting in local media capacity building was crucial.¹⁶⁴ During the preparations for the elections, the security situation became concerning, so the mandate of UNMIT was first extended until February 2008,¹⁶⁵ then until February 2009, following the assassination attempt on the President and the Prime Minister in February 2008.¹⁶⁶

After reading through all the resolutions and reports, I conclude that the even though the UN had liberal components in its repertoire, like putting most focus on organizing elections and holding strong legislative and executive authority over the country, they also put emphasis on cooperating with the local and strengthening civil society for instance. Comparable to Cambodia, such goals are even more explicit and more comprehensive, which is also a sign of the UN learning from previous experiences and applying more of the local approach than before. One of the three main priorities of the early intervention was the information component, to inform citizens, so that they know more about the ongoing process. The UN furthermore put emphasis on training civil police, securing the freedom of NGOs and local media, transferring competencies to local actors, broadening inclusion of local people

¹⁵⁸ Resolution 1543 (2004) pp. 1.

¹⁵⁹ Resolution 1599 (2005) pp. 2.

¹⁶⁰ Alldén (2007) pp. 5.

¹⁶¹ Freire (2014) pp. 172.

¹⁶² Resolution 1272 (1999) pp. 1-3.

¹⁶³ Resolution 1338 (2001) pp. 1-2.

¹⁶⁴ Resolution 1704 (2006) pp. 3.

¹⁶⁵ Resolution 1745 (2007) pp. 2.

¹⁶⁶ Resolution 1802 (2008) pp. 2.

in public administration. These documents reflect that the claim the UN did not take note of local entities is mistaken. This of course does not mean that critiques on inefficiency do not stand their grounds. In what follows I analyze the post-conflict developments in East-Timor to investigate if this tendency persists, and if the local-turn proves to have a beneficial effect on the intervention, like it did in the case of Cambodia.

Decentralization

The local-turn in East-Timor manifested in two important areas, overwhelmingly in decentralization but also in justice. The already mentioned centralized institutions of the UN did not reach nearly 80% of the population in the periphery. By 2004 it became clear that ‘liberal state institutions had only shallowly taken root.’ The values of such state thus became irrelevant or stamped as illegitimate by citizens. The top-down peacebuilding methods the UN used was explained by the inability of local actors to govern themselves. One of the main pillars of UNTAET was Governance and Public Administration with the responsibility to re-establish governance on the central and district levels.¹⁶⁷

According to Candio, ‘the issue of local participation is of particular importance in the rebuilding process, on the way to a sustainable peace.’¹⁶⁸ Local people need to have addressed roles and tasks to take part in such process to get familiar with the system. Instead the international authorities recruited international personnel with no particular experience of the country or even locally understood languages.¹⁶⁹ Decentralization did not take place before independence. (East-Timor has 13 districts and 67 sub-districts, and their leaders are centrally appointed administrators. 442 *sukus* are below the sub-district levels as well as the 2225 *aldeias*.) Municipalities were only established in 2009, and the first elections were delayed even further due to capacity building difficulties. In 2004 administrative and political decentralization was only premature on the *suku* and *aldeia* level which are labeled as most important in terms of local political participation.¹⁷⁰

The lack of popular involvement and local participation in the rebuilding process not only aggravates the initial tension amongst citizens but also undermines the legitimacy and accountability of the whole UN mission. Popular involvement is however a great challenge for the UN, as the East-Timorese society lacks skilled and trained labor force. How to utilize those people was one of the greatest questions to answer for UNTAET.¹⁷¹ The local population not only lacked the resources but the basic skills to be involved in the rebuilding. The UN usually emphasized that the public administration should be as small as possible, but that pretty much undermines effective involvement of the local. A larger apparatus can with a greater chance provide opportunities for their people.¹⁷² To make it even

¹⁶⁷ Richmond (2008) pp. 188.

¹⁶⁸ Candio (2001) pp. 64-65.

¹⁶⁹ Richmond (2008) pp. 189-190.

¹⁷⁰ Wallis (2016) pp. 256.

¹⁷¹ Candio (2001) pp. 72.

¹⁷² Candio (2001) pp. 75.

more challenging, aldeia and suku leaders are not part of the public administration; consequently they lack access to resources and support of the central government. This leaves them with low levels of influence on higher level politics. To make matters worse, these leader positions are ‘essentially voluntary’ so the incentive is rather low for leaders to further pursuing such issues.¹⁷³

The intervention on local-level governance focused on trying to reduce the power corrupt traditional leaders and ‘Indonesian-era chiefs’ hold, thus putting an end to the hierarchical structure.¹⁷⁴ It manifested in elections on the aldeia (hamlet) and suco (village) levels in 2005. The elected representatives were mostly representatives of youth, elderly and women, who worked in advisory councils alongside the leaders of the region.¹⁷⁵ Elections on the village (suco) level took place once again in October 2009.¹⁷⁶ That was an important step towards a locally rooted, legitimate and long-term peace in the country. Even the UN expressed its delight that the Timorese government promoted constructive dialogue between local and national authorities. They cooperated for instance on the development plans of the government for 2011.¹⁷⁷ They furthermore urged the Government of East-Timor to focus on rural areas, women and the youth when it comes to employment and empowerment policies.¹⁷⁸ All these actions from the UN were intended to help decentralization and the ‘Timorization’ of the process, yet turned out to be ineffective. In the following I present a few circumstances that made the job of the UN more complicated than it seemed.

Fretilin’s political dominance was not only apparent in major cities but at the village level as well. The local suco elections organized by the UN turned out to be politicized where independent individuals were pushed aside and overthrown by Fretilin party representatives.¹⁷⁹

Consequently these leaders do not do their jobs as intended, and the UN efforts of decentralization becomes ineffective. Leaders make decisions that favor their personal interests, and suco councils do not even meet regularly. Like Fretilin, local political dynamics show authoritarian characteristics, as the leaders get elected for the dominant party’s traditional power and ‘ritual authority’. On many occasions this means that their ‘levels of literacy and numeracy’ is low which makes managing the administrative activities and decentralized development efforts more than cumbersome. And even though representatives of the youth and women are in the councils, they get discriminated and Fretilin elites hold all the power. The role of elected councils becomes latent.¹⁸⁰ Many of the elected local parties and leaders do not respect nor fear the ‘verbal condemnation’ of the UN’s Security Council. It

¹⁷³ Wallis (2016) pp. 260.

¹⁷⁴ Hughes (2009) pp. 237.

¹⁷⁵ Hughes (2009) pp. 231.

¹⁷⁶ Resolution 1912 (2010) pp. 1.

¹⁷⁷ Resolution 1969 (2011) pp. 1.

¹⁷⁸ Resolution 2037 (2012) pp. 5.

¹⁷⁹ Richmond (2008) pp. 192.

¹⁸⁰ Wallis pp. 261.

is understandable that it makes the job of UN personnel much more difficult, as in the name of decentralization and local empowerment they have to work with these actors on daily basis.¹⁸¹

The case of decentralization in East-Timor is slightly different to the one in Cambodia. Even though the UN put emphasis on decentralization efforts, they produced less effective results for several reasons. Local elections on the aldeia and suco level were successfully conducted, where most representatives became representatives of youth and women, and the central government was ready for constructive dialogue with them. These results are reassuring, but the UN had to face many hindering factors. Fretilin's dominant party position in the rural areas and some elections turned out to be politicized and many local leaders became representatives of Fretilin. So despite the wider inclusion, the elected councils are actually controlled by the dominant party, and their leaders follow personal interests. Lack of skills and resources of the local made local involvement problematic in general. These are limits to the local approach the UN needs to find solution to, in order to utilize the inherent potential of the local-turn.

Justice

The UN expressed the importance of conducting a justice sector reform where one of the most important steps was training of national lawyers and judges.¹⁸² After 2003, the UN provided legal training by a Legal Training Centre based in the country, where more than 70 judges graduated since 2007.¹⁸³ But the UN faced difficulties when they tried to apply decentralization to judiciary. According to a survey 81% of respondents prefer local justice mechanisms (customary chiefs or elders) for maintaining law and order over the 14% of the PTNL. (National Police of Timore-Leste) To resolve this issue, the government tried a new approach where PTNL was assigned to work with communities in resolving conflicts, so they established for instance district courts, but they remain inaccessible to rural Timorese.¹⁸⁴ In a 2008 survey 58% of respondents did not support women 'being able to speak for themselves in local justice mechanisms'. But by 2013 this number had lowered to 39% that illustrates the changing and improving community attitudes, and proves that consolidation takes time.¹⁸⁵ This is an underemphasized topic in the resolutions, yet proves on one hand how powerful local mechanisms can be through the legitimacy they receive from the citizens and that it is worth to be more patient with peacebuilding processes and aim for long-term results.

One problem of the judiciary reform and decentralization efforts is that local mechanisms coexist with the newly introduced legal system. The local level often enforces customary law, and avoids acting according to state law. In this legal pluralism two or more legal systems coexist, where people might get sanctioned on the local level, for something that does not contravene state law. Local actors in the

¹⁸¹ Freire (2014) pp. 169.

¹⁸² Resolution 1867 (2009) pp. 3.

¹⁸³ Goldfinch pp. 103.

¹⁸⁴ Wallis (2016) pp. 258-259.

¹⁸⁵ Wallis (2016) pp. 263.

local judiciary are not neutral on many occasions, they do not make decisions consistently, and disregard women mainly in the area of sexual assault and domestic violence.¹⁸⁶

Implications of the intervention

Wallis sees the potential of the local turn in ‘its ability to help governments work through existing local socio-political practices, rather than attempting to supplant them.’ But he also admits that there are limits to an overly local approach,¹⁸⁷ I mentioned a few of these in both cases, even though the list is far from complete, and would require further investigation.

In terms of local capacity building the UN was in an inconvenient “damned if I do damned if I don’t” situation. The goal of the whole intervention was to bring the territory to independence as quickly as possible, but try to be also the most effective. But speed and effectiveness do not necessarily come hand in hand. More focus on local capacity building would have delayed independence beyond 2002, what the UN wanted to avoid. They had initiatives regardless to work together with the local as proposed, but several factors made this more complicated for them, and the ineffectiveness despite of their efforts turned into some exaggerated critiques.¹⁸⁸

The UN did generally well in traditional peacekeeping and electoral assistance.¹⁸⁹ They established a democratic political framework and successfully conducted several elections, even on the local level. The two areas of decentralization and judiciary demonstrate the UN’s intention to apply a more local approach, but also demonstrate why they generally turned out to be unsuccessful. Yet, one should not forget that contrary to Cambodia, the UN’s additional challenge was to do all this in almost laboratory conditions, as East-Timor was a new country that never existed and was independent before. This might serve as further explanation to the ineffectiveness of the intervention and would be an interesting subject for further research to learn more about the implications of the local-turn in new countries.

¹⁸⁶ Wallis (2016)pp. 263.

¹⁸⁷ Wallis (2016) pp. 253.

¹⁸⁸ MacQueen (2014) pp. 13.

¹⁸⁹ Alldén pp. 7.

Conclusive remarks

When a peace intervention is deployed it first focuses on guaranteeing physical security, but is afterwards also meant to create the institutional framework to back the new system up and contribute to development.¹⁹⁰ One of the main priorities in both cases for the UN was to conduct free and fair elections in the countries. This step had been taken successfully.¹⁹¹ There are also mistakes the UN has to learn from of course. For instance when following independence the UN withdrew forces too early from East-Timor and was downgraded to a political office. This later proved to be a premature decision, given how fragile the country was in the institutional, political, economic and even social realm.¹⁹² Despite the difficulties and mixed results, the UN was neither ‘counterproductive’ nor ‘nonsensical’ and in general did more good than harm. They were able to improve the efficacy of their missions as years passed by. In his article, Lopes argues, that the UN peace missions were inclusive conceptually but turned out to be much more exclusive when it came to adaptation.¹⁹³ But the archival data do not support Lopes’s claims. The UN had explicit efforts to be as inclusive as possible, as well as in the post-conflict setting.

In the case of Cambodia we can mention the mine clearance program, civil police training, developing and extending civil society. The nationwide reform in decentralization was a resounding success and resulted in consecutive local elections. Last but not least we can mention the establishment of ECCC, bringing justice to the Cambodian people.

In East-Timor the UN informed citizens from the very first days of the intervention about the new democratic system, trained civil police forces, secured the freedom of NGOs and local media. Furthermore, in the name of ‘Timorization’ they focused on transferring competencies from the central government to local authorities, and aimed at broader inclusion of local people in public administration.

It does not mean all the critiques are unjustified but in both cases I found evidence that focusing on the local also has its limits which made the duty of the UN much more challenging to complete. They had efforts to be inclusive, but these pitfalls explain a part of the ineffectiveness they are often too harshly criticized for.

As the Cambodian case demonstrates, civil society plays a crucial role in building ‘everyday’ peace, unfortunately aid-dependency and the self-interest of donors blocked this possibility despite the UN’s efforts. Further hindering factors were under organized unions, student organizations, as well as major NGOs which tended to be exclusionary and elitist. Patronage networks were still apparent, civil society did not function as an independent sector, and the court system often exercised political power.

¹⁹⁰ Lopes (2014) pp. 186-187.

¹⁹¹ Alldén (2007) pp. 9-10.

¹⁹² Freire (2013) pp. 207-208.

¹⁹³ Lopes (2014) pp. 184.

Meanwhile in East-Timor, increasing local participation was set back by corrupt traditional local dynamics. ‘Timorization’ was hindered by the fact that the local population lacked skills and resources, and there was limited power and incentives for local leaders to pursue their office. Fretilin’s political dominance resulted in the latent power of locally elected councils, where the democratically elected representatives consisting also of youth and women are still discriminated. In the judiciary legal pluralism caused confusions, members of the apparatus were not always neutral. In general, a big problem is that local actors didn’t respect the UNs verbal commands and simply refuse to cooperate.

Many of these findings overlap with the arguments on the limits of the local-turn presented in the theoretical chapter, especially the ones concerned with the flawed nature of local actors. They for instance proved to be corrupt, partisan and exclusive in both countries. Furthermore the incompetence of local actors who lack skills and resources also manifested in the case of East-Timor and hindered the cooperation between the interveners and the local.

In spite of demonstrating the limits of the local approach, this thesis is not to suggest that the local-turn is unnecessary. To the contrary, the paper demonstrates on many occasions, especially in the case of Cambodia that the local-turn indeed can contribute to better peacebuilding, in collaboration with the liberal approach, in the form of a positive hybrid process. And in order to find the recipe to that positive hybrid mixture, peacebuilders have to be aware of such limits of the local approach. Accordingly, as the last step I summarize my findings on the beneficial effect of the local-turn.

In Cambodia more women started to participate in politics. According to citizens, life at the village level became more ‘harmonious’ as fear and distrust waned in the villages. The establishment of ECCC contributed to strengthening the rule of law as well as promoted national reconciliation.

In East-Timor locally elected representatives became members of local councils, where they represented the interests of youth and women. The UN furthermore managed to start dialogue and motivate cooperation between local councils and the central government. Last, but not least, women became more accepted to speak for themselves in local justice mechanisms.

The cases of Cambodia and East-Timor show that interveners should put more emphasis to find out what the local-turn has to offer and exploit these opportunities to generally improve UN peacebuilding in the future. Yet the claims that the UN did not negotiate with or included local actors in their interventions are overly pessimistic, that is both confirmed by the academic literature on the post-conflict developments and the official UN documents as well. The UN has to consider what local actors and to what extent they need to cooperate with, this a fine line extremely hard to walk on. Such findings can take them closer to creating a positive hybrid peace in the future, by keeping in mind the local approach’s beneficial effects as well as its limits.

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