

# Beyond Liberal Peacebuilding: A Critique of Liberal Peacebuilding and Exploring a Postmodern Post-liberal Hybrid Model of Peacebuilding

Juichiro Tanabe

Kumamoto University, Kumamoto, Japan

One of the pressing problems with contemporary peacebuilding research is that much of the analysis focuses on the practical and technical challenges while paying little attention to the philosophical assumptions of those operations. Any understanding of peacebuilding is underpinned by philosophical frameworks as they shape and orient us towards particular strategies for peacebuilding. This paper makes a philosophical critique of liberal peacebuilding (the mainstream peacebuilding) and explores a postmodern post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding. The analysis claims neither the categorical rejection of liberal peacebuilding nor the exclusive reliance on locally-oriented peacebuilding. Rather, the upshot is the need for deconstructing dualistic view of either liberal peacebuilding or locally-oriented peacebuilding so that both external liberal actors and local actors engage in jointly learning and mutually transformative process wherein both liberal international actors and local actors look beyond peace constructed around their narrow and restricted conception and framework to create the meanings of peace that can interconnect the global and the local.

*Keywords:* liberal peacebuilding, post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding, culture, postmodernism

## Introduction

This paper will make a philosophical critique of liberal peacebuilding and explore a postmodern post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding. One of the problems with contemporary peacebuilding research is that much of it has focused on the practical and technical challenges of peacebuilding whilst paying little attention to the philosophical assumptions of those technical operations (Paris, 2002). Truly, peace research is a practice-oriented intellectual enterprise that aims to transform a world filled with violence and contribute to achieving a more just and peaceful world (Rogers & Ramsbotham, 1999).

However, any understanding of peace, conflict, and violence is underpinned by philosophical assumptions. Our philosophical frameworks shape and orient us towards particular strategies for conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Therefore, engagement in reflection on philosophical assumptions we normally employ in an unreflective use can offer us an opportunity to make an in-depth analysis of how those committed to peacebuilding construct their approaches to the enterprise. Philosophical analysis will help us create new ways to look at peacebuilding and broaden our understanding of the enterprise (Thompson, 2000). This does not mean to deny liberal peacebuilding. Rather, critique of philosophical framework of liberal peacebuilding and

integrating other philosophical assumptions into liberal peacebuilding would enrich qualitatively our view of peacebuilding apart from liberal view of peacebuilding.

The first section introduces the basic ideas of peacebuilding, presenting the origin of peacebuilding and its core ideas. The second section critically examines liberal peacebuilding that has predominated the contemporary peacebuilding enterprise. Here, approaches of liberal peacebuilding and its philosophical underpinning will be critiqued. The third section will explore how postmodernism will contribute to post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding. In this section, how liberal peace views and non-liberal peace views can construct a positive relation to bring about a sustainable peace will be explored.

### **Introduction to Peacebuilding**

According to Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall (2011), peacebuilding undergirds the work of peacemaking and peacekeeping by addressing structural issues and the long-term relationships between those in conflict. Peacemaking refers to moving towards settlement of armed conflict whilst peacekeeping means the interposition of international armed forces to physically separate the armed forces of conflictants (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, & Miall, 2011). The rise and evolution of the term peacebuilding in global arena can be attributed to *An Agenda for Peace* in 1992 and *The Supplement to the Agenda for Peace* in 1995, both of which were proposed by Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the sixth Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN).

In *Agenda for Peace*, Boutros-Ghali proposed the concept of “post-conflict peacebuilding” that aims to secure and consolidate peace agreements between conflicting parties by helping conflictants to be demobilized and assist post-conflict countries to hold multiparty election and build democratic system (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). In *Supplement to An Agenda for Peace*, he extended the operations of post-conflict peacebuilding to more comprehensive scope, entailing humanitarian, economic, and political areas apart from demobilization of combatants and transition to participatory elections (Boutros-Ghali, 1995). Further, it was also assumed that at the first stage of the post-conflict peacebuilding mission, external actors such as the UN, other international institutions, states, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) take initiatives to proceed the mission and then the responsibility would be transferred to local and civilian agents after the task has shown certain progress to stabilize the post-conflict nations (Bercovitch & Jackson, 2012).

Reflecting the complexity of the conflict dynamics, multiple causes of conflict, and rising need for multi-faceted approach to resolving conflict in the post-Cold War era, peacebuilding is understood as a holistic approach that seeks to transform the political, economic, and social structures in the post-conflict nation in order to prevent a relapse into violent conflict and to build a sustainable and peaceful society. Since structural and institutional inequalities are one of the main causes of overt violence among different groups, transforming the political and economic systems of a society to overcome the structural asymmetries is the pillar of peacebuilding enterprise (Fisher, 2001).

### **Critique of Liberal Peacebuilding**

#### **Overview of Liberal Peacebuilding**

Contemporary mainstream peacebuilding is considered as liberal peacebuilding (Newman, Paris, & Richmond, 2009) and its theoretical foundation is the liberal peace. The liberal peace theory claims that democracy guarantees that domestic politics within states will be peaceful and stable (Richmond, 2014). Further, in combination with economic interdependence based on free trade, democratic states do not go to war

with each other by complying with international law to resolve their disputes (Richmond, 2014). Thus, liberal peace theory posits that democracy and free-trade economic interdependence secure both national, regional, and international order and stability.

Facing the challenge to reconstruct the failed or failing states that emerged after the end of the Cold War, international community managed mainly by liberal states has come to connect peace and security with market-oriented development, democracy, rule of law, human rights, and a vigorous civil society in a modern state framework (Richmond, 2005). Based on this background, the basic approaches of liberal peacebuilding are the promotion of democracy, market-oriented economic reforms, and a range of other institutions associated with modern states as they are believed to lead to a lasting peace (Newman et al., 2009). The premise of these methods is democracy and free-market economy enable people to resolve their differences peacefully, to accomplish their aspirations and make governments accountable and responsive to people's basic needs (Newman, 2009).

### **Philosophical Foundation of Liberal Peacebuilding**

As Richmond (2011) argues, liberal peacebuilding is founded upon Western Enlightenment philosophical framework. According to Crotty (1998), Enlightenment philosophy puts a great emphasis on the power of reason, especially, the instrumental reason to reach the absolute forms of knowledge. Instrumental reason is praised as the source of progress in knowledge and society, as well as the privileged locus of truth and the underpinning of systematic knowledge (Best & Kellner, 1991). On Enlightenment view, it is presupposed that reality exists independently of human subjectivity and the aim of research is to discover the objective truth that applies universally and explains every phenomenon systematically (Gray, 2004) and the instrumental reason has been employed as the only authentic tool (Crotty, 1998).

Relying on instrumental reason, Enlightenment thought seeks to uncover the intrinsic and universal structure of the physical and social worlds (Baronov, 2004). At the center of this endeavor lies the strong premise that there can be a universal and ahistorical matrix to which we can always appeal in judging the nature of truth and reality (Williams, 2004). It is assumed that a common denominator can be established for all beliefs and value systems and accordingly the world is a unified field and can be explained by a single system (Ermarth, 1998). So-called metanarratives or grand theories that allow us to understand the whole world in terms of all-embracing principles are presupposed (Burr, 2003). Since the world is considered as highly systematic and well-organized entity characterized as regularities, constancies, uniformities, and absolute principles, it is posited that the application of rationalistic thought leads us to unearth the universal rules or structures that underlay the surface features of the world, which enables us to produce certain overarching theories and methods to understand and address problems we face (Burr, 2003).

Based on universalistic thought, those who advocate liberal peacebuilding believe its universal applicability to build a lasting peace. The general transference of the liberal peace to any post-conflict peacebuilding has been promoted as a universal framework (Richmond, 2009). Under the banner of "peace-as-governance", that is to say, the mixture of institutional regulation and liberal freedoms, it is assumed that the achievement of stable peace relies on the reform of comprehensive frameworks for social, economic, political and cultural regulation and governance by external and internal actors working toward the same universal framework envisaged by the liberal peace (Richmond, 2005). Stated otherwise, in liberal peacebuilding, peace is assumed by academics as well as policymakers or practitioners to be arising by

transplanting western models of social, political, and economic institutions as universal method necessary for the permanent, liberal-economic and political governance into conflict-shattered states (Heathershaw, 2008).

### **Problems With Liberal Peacebuilding**

Though liberal peacebuilding has enjoyed the predominant position in peacebuilding enterprise, it has invited growing criticism. Some have called the legitimacy and validity of liberal peacebuilding into question as it ignores local engagement and lacks consultation with local actors (Newman et al., 2009). One of the conspicuous hallmarks of liberal peacebuilding is the idea that lasting peace can be built by external actors such as the UN, other international organizations, NGOs, and donor countries. This is due to that the liberal democratic peace thesis has been firmly embedded in contemporary international framework of peace in many states' constitutions, international law, the UN, International Nongovernmental Organizations (INGOs) and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) like World Bank (Richmond, 2014).

Accordingly, analysis of peace agreement, their negotiation, and the detailed mid- and long-term framework of peace have come to be inseparable from discussions of international peace interventions since most peace negotiations are not merely local but receive extensive international input (Selby, 2013). The strong emphasis on top-down approaches has raised concerns about the viability and sustainability of peacebuilding and caused local critiques or even resistance to the failure to fulfill local needs (Newman et al., 2009). The crisis of liberal peacebuilding is rooted in its standardized, universalistic pretensions and its concomitant failure to engage with local cultural practices of peacemaking and conflict resolution and with the manifold insecurities of everyday life in societies recovering from conflict (Selby, 2013).

Another critique of liberal peacebuilding along with the top-down approaches is the romanticisation of the local, that is to say, the idea that local actors, cultures and practices are inferior and an obstacle to the project of liberal and rational governance (Newman, 2009) and it has invited the charges of ethnocentrism by the Western powerful actor. Liberal peacebuilding itself is critiqued as globally hegemonic project (Selby, 2013), wherein post-conflict societies are brought into conformity with the international system's prevailing standards of domestic governance or standards that frame how states should organize themselves internally despite the diversity and uniqueness of each post-conflict circumstance (Paris, 2002). Rather than representing local preferences and needs, the process of liberal peacebuilding is seen as the promotion or imposition of an external, hegemonic agenda that seeks to integrate peripheral areas into global norms of politics and economics, which provides powerful international actors with self-righteousness of direct or subtle forms of interventions and colonialism (Richmond, 2011). Liberal peacebuilding is perceived to represent the maintenance of existing political and economic hierarchies at the local, national, and global levels (Richmond, 2011).

Liberal peacebuilding is a sort of linear model of peacebuilding approach. Founded upon the belief in liberal peace as the absolute framework that underpins universally stable peace, liberal peacebuilding has been implemented as an approach to bring about a lasting peace across different contexts of post-conflict societies. Though conflict is a complex and non-linear phenomenon, any form of post-conflict society would converge into a sustainable and stable peace monolithically when democratic governance, human right, market-economy, and centralized government system are imported.

## **Exploring a Postmodern Post-liberal Hybrid Peacebuilding**

### **Postmodernist First Pillar: Social Construction of Knowledge and Culture-oriented Peacebuilding**

Though it is difficult to generalize what postmodernism is, it can be acknowledged as the strong critique of modernism. Modernism puts a great emphasis on the power of reason, especially, the instrumental reason to discover the absolute forms of knowledge (Crotty, 1998). Reason is believed as the source of progress in knowledge and society, as well as the privileged locus of truth and the underpinning of systematic knowledge (Best & Kellner, 1991). Postmodernism rejects the idea that there can be an ultimate and eternal truth and that the world as we see is the consequence of hidden universal structures (Burr, 2003). The denial of the grand theories or metanarratives of ultimate truth that explains every phenomenon in a systematic manner warrants a rejection of any undertaking to probe for reality or truth in any ultimate sense (Spears, 1997). Ahistoric and acultural ultimate and eternal truth that can be applied universally is dismissed.

By rejecting grand theories, postmodernism stresses the co-existence of multiple realities and varieties of situation-dependent ways of life (Burr, 2003). Each situation is different and requires specific understanding. On a postmodern perspective, it should be acknowledged that there are diverse worlds that are inhabited by different people, and that those different worlds construct diverse ways of knowing, distinct sets of meaning and various realities (Crotty, 1998). The negation of ultimate truth and the recognition of diversity of truths or realities mean that all ways of understanding reality are historically and culturally relative and that people in a society or culture construct their own knowledge and shared values and norms. It is through the everyday social interactions that the categories or classifications people apply to comprehend the social world are constructed (Bryman, 2004).

In line with the social and cultural construction of knowledge, the central role of language or discourse in constructing the meaningful social world is also the essential feature of postmodernism (Alvesson, 2002). Discourse is referred to as language-use anchored in an institutional context, articulating structured understanding or a line of reasoning with active and productive effects of providing meanings to the social phenomena (Alvesson, 2002). Discourses can be understood as providing a repertoire of resources which people use to interpret the social world since the language they use in their daily lives constitutes the framework of the way they think, the categories and concepts that shape the meanings of reality (Spears, 1997). The activities of naming and symbolic representation give the first ordering impulse for the systematic construction of our human life-worlds (Chia, 2002). The social world as conventionally understood, that is to say, social systems, structures, agents, shared meanings, and a prevailing social order are based on discourse or language with strong constructing effects (Alvesson, 2002).

From these postmodernist viewpoints, locally and culturally oriented peacebuilding needs to be promoted. Culture is the customary way in which groups form and understand their behavior in relation to others and to their environment (Kyrrou, Pribilsky, & Rubinstein, 1999). Culture is organized around the understanding that human beings use locally received or developed common sense to perceive, interpret and act on and in both external and internal reality (Avruch & Black, 1991). Culture offers a grammar for acting and interpreting the world and refers to shared practices and to commonly held premises and presuppositions members of groups hold about the world that involves the social structuring of both the world outside the self and the internal world (Vayrynen, 2001).

Through socialization within their culture, individuals receive an understanding of what world is like, employ a particular set of values and grasp the cultural meaning of events and actions (Fry & Fry, 1997). Accordingly, meaning of conflict, cause of conflict, meaning of peace, approaches to conflict resolution would be understood in different ways according to each culture. In short, one of the important characters of post-liberal peacebuilding is the recognition that peacebuilding is a cultural phenomenon since the ways in which conflict is perceived and dealt with reflect a culturally shared set of attitudes and beliefs (Fry & Fry, 1997): Local cultural processes need to be enacted as valuable methods to peacebuilding that shows a strong concern for social welfare and justice on local micro level. Achievement of durable and stable peace hinges on bottom-up community initiatives and commitment to local institutions, customs and norms to give free expression of local voices, needs and forms of politics (Newman, 2009). It implies an engagement with the everyday to provide care and empathy (Richmond, 2011). Peacebuilding needs to move towards an everyday notion of peace sensitized to each local reality.

### **Postmodernist Second Pillar: Critique of Social Construction of Knowledge and Caution Against the Exclusive Reliance on Local Orientation for Peacebuilding**

While locally and culturally oriented peacebuilding is proposed based on postmodern critique of universal knowledge and claim for social construction of knowledge that depends upon each unique context, there is one more dimension concerning postmodernism that we need to consider for exploring post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding. It is a critical attitude towards socially constructed discourses themselves.

Gergen (1999) argues that, generally, discourse in the social world appears to its users as well structured, that is to say, as a set of conventions, habits or ways of life that are stable, recurring, and fixed. Crossley (2005) insists that the key point of discourse is the assumption that those who participate in it are generally unconscious of the system of conventions to which they have got accustomed and are also most unaware of the specific consequences that their use of the discourse may bring about. The discourse prevalent in the social or cultural world tends to be take-for-granted. However, postmodernism takes a critical attitude toward our taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world since power relations underlie the social construction of knowledge.

Gergen (1999) insists that since language is a critical aspect that represents power relations in a society, it is important to critically examine the discourse of knowledge prevalent in society. Our constructions of the social world are tied up with power relations since they have important implications for what it is acceptable for different people to do and for who they may treat others (Burr, 2003). Social construction of knowledge creates a particular version of reality that is generally recognized as such (Alvesson, 2004). Consequently, description or construction of a particular view of the social world can be understood as maintaining some fixed patterns of social action as normative and excluding others (Burr, 2003).

It is unavoidable that socially constructed knowledge derives from seeing reality from some perspective and consequently can be viewed as serving some interests rather than others (Burr, 2003). However, its danger is that by representing certain interests of a particular group over others, socially constructed knowledge itself can cause an unequal inter-group relationship in society. Discourses prevalent in the social or cultural world can be understood as being mediated by power relations in society: Through socially constructed discourses, certain groups are privileged over others and exercise some oppressive force on subordinate groups (Gray, 2004).

The critique of social construction of knowledge implies that whilst peacebuilding should be locally oriented, critical eyes also need to be cast upon local dynamics of certain construction of peace view since local culture is not immune from asymmetric relations among local peoples. The critique of cultural construction of knowledge or frames of references does not mean to deny the idea that at the center of peacebuilding enterprise should lie the consideration of daily needs and welfare of local people. Rather, it needs to be acknowledged that the local cultural dynamics is much more complex than critics of liberal peacebuilding who advocate the local approach to peacebuilding assume (Simons & Zanker, 2014).

The conceptualizations and views of peace within a local sphere are more complex, incoherent, and fragmented according to distinct local individuals and groups (Simons & Zanker, 2014). Actors and discourses are highly contested, making it difficult to decide on which discourse and policies are to be trusted to contribute to peace at the local level (Simons & Zanker, 2014). An exclusive emphasis on indigenous institutions and local ownership lead to wrong results since they are contested arena wherein certain voices and interests of specific actors are reflected at the expense of others' (Newman et al., 2009). In short, while it should play the central role, locally and culturally oriented peacebuilding is not the panacea as the local is not free from exclusionary or oppressive power games<sup>1</sup>.

### **Need for Deconstructing Binary Either Liberal Peacebuilding or Local Peacebuilding for Post-liberal Hybrid Peacebuilding**

At the core of postmodernist post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding should lie the need for the double critique, that is to say, the critique of liberal peacebuilding that pretends to be universal or global and that of local or cultural dynamics of peacebuilding in a local sphere since both approaches are not immune from asymmetric relations. Neither liberal peace nor locally or culturally built peace framework can achieve a lasting peace alone. Further, neither liberal peace nor locally oriented peace, both of which are complex and multi-faceted in nature, can be fixated and essentialized. And here deconstructionism plays the critical role in transcending dualistic thinking of either liberal peace or local peace.

Traditionally, the binary thinking has influenced Western philosophy and culture—for instance, subject/object, appearance/reality, man/woman, universal/relative, reason/emotion and so on—to construct discourses that have served to build an asymmetric hierarchy of values and marginalize and devalue diversity or multiplicity of thoughts (Best & Kellner, 1991). However, deconstructionism critiques the logic of the “either-or” dualism and fixed categorization (Lockeyer, 2004). The pinnacle of deconstructionism is that concept or frame of reference of any kind that we try to privilege or make hierarchy is not in the right and stable order but is dependent upon those that are considered as inferior or under-privileged (Butler, 2002). The allegedly opposing dichotomy has no absolute status since the alternatives it offers are neither exclusive nor exhausted (Gutting, 1998). There is no stability in binary or dichotomy in any mode of thought and the allegedly exclusive alternatives find themselves to be inextricably interconnected (Gutting, 1998). The ultimate point of deconstructionist thinking would be to liberate us from attachment to binary or dualistic thought as fixed or immutable, knowing there can be no firm foundation for stable binary logic.

Going beyond dualistic stance calls us to transcend many strongly engrained habits of thinking and participate in and play with opposing and contradictory thoughts that are seen as such only from “either-or” logical stance. Transcending an attachment to a particular frame of reference does not refer to the denial of

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<sup>1</sup> Regarding the detailed examples of local contested and asymmetric dynamics, see Simons and Zanker (2014).

taking standpoint itself; rather, when we are liberated from any particular view, it becomes possible to have multiple perspectives in examining and addressing the problems we face (Vaughan, 2002). The embodiment of transcendence and the relinquishing of all fixed perspectives enables us to overcome our particular limited horizon of attitude and open up the infinite network of meanings that are not tied to any specific standpoint.

Based on the deconstruction of binary thinking of either liberal peace or locally framed peace as the absolute answer for a lasting peace, the core of postmodern post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding is the recognition that both internal and external commitments are indispensable: International actors, local actors and constituencies cannot operate effectively without each other (Richmond, 2011). It is a reframing of peacebuilding as a dialogical and pedagogical process that reconstructs the everyday according to how its local subjects need and want to live in the broader liberal peace context, but also in recognition of multiple everyday and mutual engagements (Richmond, 2011). It is an organic interconnection between the international and local everyday.

Post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding should be understood as an opportunity for the promotion of empathetic relations between the international arena wherein liberal peace frameworks have assumed the central role and the local everyday dimension of peace to co-construct peace that gratifies the needs of local people as well as empower them to develop new ideas and visions to address local problems. In other words, it should be a dynamic process in which liberal international norms are reconsidered according to different cultural contexts so that liberal peace frameworks can be modified to help the grass-roots and the marginalized members in local political sphere to contribute to peace formation (Richmond, 2014). Each actor from both liberal international field and local sphere needs to look beyond peace constructed around his/her narrow and restricted conception and framework to create the meanings of peace that can interconnect the global and the local.

In relation to this, global transformation needs to be taken into serious consideration. As a result of dualistic logic of either liberal global approach to peace or local approach being deconstructed and contingent and fluid nature of liberal global structure and local and cultural sphere being revealed, it needs to be acknowledged that global structure is part of the cause of conflict and it should be a possible reality to transform it as it is not an immutable entity but a constructed structure with certain value. Truly, critiquing and transforming the liberally framed global political and economic structure is not easy. However, as long as the aim of peacebuilding enterprise in the context of interdependent and interpenetrating relation between the global and the local is to achieve a lasting peace, addressing global structural inequalities must be integrated into long-term peace process (Richmond, 2016).

At the center of postmodern post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding process should be joint learning placed. It is a joint conflict analysis to create a common view of the main challenges toward peacebuilding (Ropers & Anuvatudom, 2014). It is a joint action between external actors, especially those with liberal peace frameworks and local actors, wherein both can have an opportunity to show their views and explore jointly context-sensitive but also transformative approaches. Further, the joint learning must be dialogical. Dialogue—for which the need emerges from the increasing acknowledgement that our changing reality demands a new global ethic and perspective of one another—has become one of the main methods to deepen inter-cultural or inter-civilizational understanding (Der-lan, 2006). The main objective of dialogue is not just to share different information, but to uncover the processes that shape us and the struggle we are having, so that mutual respect and a sense of solidarity in the middle of diversity can be aroused (Der-lan, 2006).



Dialogue requires the openness to be challenged and transformed by encountering others' viewpoints and values, as well as the willingness and ability to engage in active listening and understanding of them (Ferrer, 2002). Dialogue demands us to let ourselves be changed in our point of view, attitude, and mode of thinking by freeing ourselves from any fixed frame of reference (Hadot, 1995). By learning to be less embedded or reified in a perspective or frame of reference, we can develop a different basis or relationship to our own mode of thinking process, which serves to empower us to be open to differences, diversity, and creativity (Claxton, 2006).

Though dialogical joint learning between liberal external actors and local actors with unique peace vision is not an easy process, the sequencing of dialogical joint conflict analysis and exploration of peacebuilding is an important aspect for promoting a process of trust-building interaction and shared knowledge construction (Ropers & Anuvatudom, 2014). Joint conflict analysis and learning helps participants change perspectives and move towards deeper levels of mutual understanding and respect (Ropers & Anuvatudom, 2014), which paves the way for culturally-sensitive but transformative and emancipatory peacebuilding<sup>2</sup>.

### **Reflective Self-awareness as a Method for Post-liberal Hybrid Peacebuilding**

While the deconstructive understanding of dualistic view of either liberal international peace or local peace, their interdependent and interpenetrating nature and need for dialogical joint learning process of peacebuilding have been discussed, how an asymmetric relation between liberal external actors and local actors, which has shaped liberally framed peacebuilding, can be addressed is a crucial issue. In order to overcome the asymmetric relationship, liberal external actors need to develop different skills and attitudes from those interventionary and instrumental ones (Richmond, 2012) and one of them would be reflective self-awareness.

Reflective self-awareness entails the practice of stepping back from our current frame of reference to critically examine our particular pattern of thought, values and logics that shape our experience (Park, 2008). Human beings need a solid philosophical framework to live a meaningful life, engage in intellectual enterprise, and address social and global problems. However, as shown in the critique of liberal peacebuilding, when completeness or universality is claimed for certain frame of reference, it causes us to be dogmatic, excluding other views or thoughts. Stated otherwise, even *prima facie* virtuous and noble acts including peacebuilding and conflict resolution can turn into a site of conflict or violence when a particular philosophical framework predominates the enterprise, marginalizing or downplaying others. Dissemination of certain philosophical framework as absolute or complete in the life-world becomes a constitutional power of institutional violence in human social and global arena (Park, 2008).

The development of self-knowledge through reflective self-critique of one's frame of reference generates pliability and flexibility with thoughts, which breaks through an attachment to any specific philosophical underpinning. Consequently, we can sharpen the capacity to simultaneously hold multiple perspectives and patterns of thought that depends on an awareness that embraces all perspectives without adhering to a position in any form as complete to approach the reality (Hart, Nelson, & Puhakka, 2000). By integrating reflective self-awareness into our intellectual and practical enterprise of peace and raising the conscious awareness present in them to engage in constant critique of our assumptions, the possibility of transcending particular belief system and approaching phenomenal world from various perspectives will be a viable reality.

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<sup>2</sup> Regarding the example of joint learning conflict analysis and resolution process, Ropers and Anuvatudom (2014) will be useful.

Self-critique of liberal international actors through reflective self-awareness does not mean that they should dismiss their liberal values and perspectives. Rather, by acknowledging that liberal peace and Enlightenment philosophy are only part of a variety of peace views and philosophical underpinnings, liberal actors learn to enact a critical and transcendental attitude that goes beyond liberal philosophical boundary and construct complementary relations with other locally and culturally framed philosophies in resolving conflict and building peace. When liberal actors realize and practice an all-embracing and integrative perspective free from an extreme attachment to self-centeredness of liberal frameworks, the authentic conditions for dialogical joint learning will be made, wherein new knowledge for peace that has not yet emerged can be co-created.

### **Meaning of Peace in Postmodern Post-liberal Hybrid Peacebuilding**

In liberal peacebuilding, wherein transferring liberal framework of democracy, human rights, market-economy system has been believed to bring about resolution of conflict, peace has been seen as closure since it is assumed that any form of post-conflict society will achieve the same institutional and structural stability as Western liberal states. However, as a result of pretention of liberal peace as universal and complete criterion being deconstructed, fluidity and unstable and indetermined nature of both liberal peace and locally oriented peace framework being revealed, and binary view of either liberal peace or local peace being deconstructed, peace with certain end-point or closure and monolithic nature is no longer what we strive to achieve.

Then, how should we understand the meaning of peace? It should be recognized as an open and non-closure process (Park, 2008). The intersubjectively constructed nature of peace framework and deconstructive nature of dualistic understanding of liberal peace and local peace, which admits the impossibility and unreality of any form of peace view to claim its absolute and complete status, refines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate and enjoy incompleteness of peace (Park, 2008). It also means the inexhaustibility of any kind of peacebuilding; peace is not subject to closure. It is an infinite game in which those participating in peacebuilding, rather than seeking to control the enterprise, contribute to sustaining and enhancing the quality of peacebuilding by transforming their own original approaches according to changing circumstances and combining different ideas into new ones (Hershock, 2012).

Arguably, every peacebuilding entails a variety of actors from both external and internal spheres with distinct values, visions, and goals. The awareness of intersubjectively constructed and interdependent and interpenetrating nature of different peace views empowers us to include a wider range of possibilities in building theoretical perspectives and practical methods to peace. The recognition of interdependent and interconnected relationship of different actors transforms our understanding of diversity. Touching diversity makes not mutual impediments, but the emergence of complex and coordination-enriching interdependence (Hershock, 2012), whereby we are empowered to qualitatively enrich our own ideas or thoughts and explore mutual contribution to well-being.

Peace process involves continuous, relationally-expanding and interdependent-enriching improvisation (Hershock, 2012), which allows us to experience differences or even oppositions as an opportunity to mutual insight and inspiration to explore something new. Improvising, the ethos of which is the lived enacted activity of being different in the world (Hershock, 2013), is the ongoing development of new views and meanings. Improvisation is not the abandonment of values, worldviews or norms that each actor or group brings to peacebuilding. It is their meaningful revision and reorientation so that we can draw inspiration from those having different or opposing ideas or norms.

At the heart of peace lies the promotion of human capacity for qualitative differentiation and transformation that broadens the meanings of reality, which opens up new knowledge within our world. It is an exploratory ongoing and everlasting process that explicates or unfolds new values and meanings to achieve and sustain interdependent and mutually liberating and transformative relational dynamics between those involved in peacebuilding. Peace is not the suppression or elimination of differences or disagreements, but rather the readiness to accord with differing situational dynamics, responding without exclusive reliance on any fixed views and principles, in order to amplify and accelerate relationally manifest mutual appreciation (Hershock, 2012). Encountering diversity ultimately means valuing creativity, that is to say, significant innovation and relational transformation in the direction of unprecedented and yet meaningfully enacted capacities for appreciative coordination (Hershock, 2013).

Truly, valuing diversity and participating in mutually transformative peacebuilding activities is not an easy task. However, since nothing is absolutely destined or fated to be, there is no warrant for us to claim any situation in which we find ourselves to be intractable (Park, 2008). Rather, human beings and social and cultural frame of reference are complex system that keeps incorporating the histories of their constitutive dynamics into the continuously ongoing process of their own environment and contextually responsive self-transformation and evolution (Hershock, 2013). As there is no closure of meaning-making, changing our values, visions and actions is a possible reality to embody transformative relational dynamics.

### Conclusion

This paper has engaged in a philosophical analysis of postmodern post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding. Normally, we study peace and conflict that exists before us with certain theoretical perspectives. Though it is essential to examine conflict or violence occurring before us and propose theories and methods to address it, making our underlying philosophical assumptions the subject for analysis needs to be part of peace research since they affect how we understand peace and conflict. To make a constructive critique and transformation of our phenomenal world, we must make a critical and constructive transformation of our ways of thinking and knowing (Said, Lerche, & Funk, 2006). Transformation is a process that involves a sustained engagement in self-reflection on our normally tacit philosophical framework and its change, which allows us to expand the mode of knowing in approaching the real (Said et al., 2006).

Doubtless, it is a natural phenomenon that those engaged in intellectual enterprise take a certain philosophical stance to construct a distinct view or discourse on the subject of which they make an analysis. However, the discourse established on a particular philosophical underpinning tends to be intra-paradigmatic and avoids engagement with alternative philosophical and theoretical formulations (Jarvis, 2000). This does not refer to a dismissal of taking a certain stance. However, it needs to be remembered that while having a particular philosophical stance is essential to our intellectual undertaking, it can end up restricting our scope of thought, narrowing down our vision. Therefore, promoting inter-philosophical dialogue has a positive impact on peace research including peacebuilding.

Exploring new philosophical views by deconstructing dualistic or dichotomous understanding of different philosophical assumptions might be seen as utopian. However, one of the enduring and everlasting challenge for intellectual enterprise is “to go beyond the affirmation and reconstitution of the familiar world to recognize other possibilities” (Calhoun, 2000, p. 506). New perspectives, new theories and empirical information, which are proposed by exploring new philosophical frameworks, enable us to see and understand how things can be

different from the ways they first present themselves to us and explore how things could be different from the ways they are (Calhoun, 2000). We must keep challenging the existing guiding assumptions and honing our formative capacity in relation to others and the world (Alvesson, 2002). The intellectual undertaking of knowledge creation is never a static substance but an everlasting process that keeps renewing itself (Chia, 2002) and the research explored in this paper should not be an exception.

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