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## **The Environment and Peace**

*Environmental Policies in Peace Processes and their Contribution to Building Peace*

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## Introduction

Does peacebuilding in the environmental sector influence perceptions of popular legitimacy of post-conflict authorities? Guided by this question this research plan addresses a gap in the literature on peacebuilding and environmental studies. Only limited research has been conducted on the link between the environment and peacebuilding. Generally, scholars and practitioners assume addressing environmental issues during peacebuilding processes contributes to the success of peace (Conca & Dabelko, 2002; Conca & Wallace, 2009; Ejigu, 2006; Kostić, Krampe, & Swain, 2012; Machlis & Hanson, 2008; Matthew, Barnett, & McDonald, 2009a; Matthew, Brown, & Jensen, 2009b; A. Swain & Krampe, 2011). Yet, findings in the peacebuilding literature show that externally driven peacebuilding often leads to a lack of popular legitimacy of governing authorities and the creation of new substructures of legitimacy, a development that has been termed hybrid or post-liberal peace (Kappler, 2012; Kostić, 2007; MacGinty, 2010; Richmond, 2011).

These adverse effects of peacebuilding have been identified and studied in many sectors, but are they similarly present in the environmental sector? Or do environmental peacebuilding activities contribute in fact to more popular legitimacy? This study contributes knowledge and understanding about peacebuilding in the environmental sector and its influence on local perceptions of legitimacy. The focus is specifically on projects of renewable energy production that utilize manageable natural resources (i.e. water and biomass). If and how these project influence popular legitimacy will be assessed through within and cross case comparisons of four case studies in the peacebuilding process of Nepal through data based on fieldwork.

## Roadmap

In this research plan I will, firstly, elaborate the problem of legitimacy in peacebuilding. Secondly, common environmental policies in peacebuilding will be outlined. Thirdly, I present my argument, i.e. hypothetically peacebuilding in the environmental sector is expected to have negative influence on popular legitimacy of post-conflict authorities, because these policies can be linked to the broader literature on popular legitimacy and peacebuilding. As will be shown, the energy sector is an intriguing area to study and test this hypothesis. Through fieldwork in Nepal the

interactions between international, national and local actors surrounding these projects will be studied.

## **Peacebuilding and Unintended Outcomes**

Motivated by democratic peace theory (Doyle, 1983a; 1983b) and an increasing linking of security and development (as e.g. in Boutros-Ghali, 1992) *liberal peacebuilding* became increasingly promoted by Western political elites and institutions as a comprehensive strategy for addressing the problems of war-torn states and societies (Chandler, 2006; 2010; Chesterman, 2005; Fjelde & Höglund, 2011; MacGinty, 2006; Newman & Richmond, 2006; Paris, 2004). These peacebuilding processes are strategic and have the goal of creating strong democratic state institutions, the protection of human rights, the promotion of a vibrant civil society and the presence of an independent and functioning judicial system. It predominantly includes the idea of development, yet narrowed to macro-economic growth based on a capitalist market economy (Chandler, 2006; 2010; Fjelde & Höglund, 2011; MacGinty, 2006; Newman & Richmond, 2006; Paris, 2004; Pugh, Cooper, & Turner, 2010). A vibrant and at times agitated debate between proponents and opponents followed the first cases of liberal peacebuilding in the 1990s, which revealed unintended consequences of this real-life experiment. For the purpose of this study, I consider *peace* as process and a ‘dynamic social construct’ (Lederach, 1997). As such peacebuilding (theoretically, not politically<sup>1</sup>) is the *process* where a post-conflict structure is produced through the *interactions* of different actors. Hence the interactions of actors in the peacebuilding process are crucial to this study.

### **The Problem of Legitimacy in Peacebuilding**

Successful peace/peacebuilding requires popular legitimacy of the post-conflict order (Chesterman, 2005; Doyle & Sambanis, 2000; Galtung, 1969; Hartzell, Hoddie, & Rothchild, 2001; Kostić, 2007; Lederach, 1997; Richmond, 2011; Zartman, 1995). Popular legitimacy has often been equated with democratization processes. Yet, despite democratisation efforts the interaction between peacebuilding actors have

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<sup>1</sup> Around definitions of peacebuilding runs a lot of confusion. Often statebuilding, peacebuilding, peace process, nationbuilding etc. are used synonymously. Moreover, studies frequently refer to political definitions of peacebuilding, first and foremost as outlined in “An Agenda for Peace” (Boutros-Ghali, 1992), while ignoring the political, not theoretical, nature of this definition. My critique is that these discussions subsequently neglect any understanding of peace and the transition towards peace in purely theoretical terms and thus being able to identify further processes and structures that might be relevant.

frequently lead to post-conflict governing structures that suffered under a lack of popular legitimacy, causing peace to be hybrid or post-liberal, i.e. a synthesis of resistance to external dominated peacebuilding agendas through locals (MacGinty, 2010; Richmond, 2011).<sup>2</sup> This hybridity of peacebuilding is often related to weak popular legitimacy of newly introduced authorities, especially when these are imposed through external peacebuilding actors (Kappler, 2012; Kostić, 2007). International governmental and non-governmental actors have been found to equally undermine local legitimacy in peacebuilding processes (Krampe, 2013).<sup>3</sup> This is problematic - not because of hybrid structures - but because weak popular legitimacy inhibits the progression of externally facilitated peace processes towards being self-enforcing, a key condition for such missions success (Downs & Stedman, 2002; Galtung, 1969; Kostić, 2007; Toft, 2009).

Identifying legitimacy as a significant problem of peacebuilding is surprising in so far as the international community perceives itself in the role of manager of the legitimacy vacuum that arises during post-conflict transitions – as advocate of the local population.<sup>4</sup> However, scholars emphasize that in today's peacebuilding practices *the local* is actually evacuated from the process (Richmond, 2011). Richmond argues that this has to be addressed through a broad social contract 'beyond political rights' and proposes a focus on local (human) emancipation (Richmond, 2011). I agree with the premise that a focus on the local population is important and that we need to discuss who has the power to define what is legitimacy. However, I contest that a comprehensive social contract is the real problem, due to its subliminal democratic underpinnings. Mancur Olson argues:

'Thus we should not be surprised that while there have been lots of writings about the desirability of "social contracts" to obtain the benefits of law and order, no one has ever found a large society that obtained a peaceful order or other public goods through an agreement among the individuals in the society.' (Olson, 1993).

Along this line Max Weber argues that a legitimate authority can be based on free agreement, but can also be imposed. This is because even - seemingly individually

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<sup>2</sup> For a discussion foreseeing the problems arising in international liberal and local liberal relations see (Doyle, 1983b). I omit a discussion of international peacebuilding and governmentability, see examples in (Chandler, 2010; Duffield, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> Western non-governmental actors attribute the problem to narrow agendas imposed by Western nation states or Western dominated international organizations. Studies explain these tensions to the actors different normative approaches (Olsson & Jarstad, 2011), however, both agents are equally imposing their agenda on local populations (Krampe, 2013).

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of the UN as "authoritarian" post-conflict ruler see (Chesterman, 2005)

free - democratic agreements on a new order require the subordination of the minority and are not a consensus. Weber argues what eventually counts is believe in the legitimacy of this authority, not how the order came about (Weber, 1922).<sup>5</sup> The findings by Albin and Druckman support this claim, as peace agreements that are *perceived* as more equal are more durable (Albin & Druckman, 2012). The legitimate validity of the order is, according to Weber, based on the compliance of people to it. This compliance is based on the believe that the new authority is legitimate, which is represented through a minimum degree of want, i.e. interest in compliance (Weber, 1922). That does however not mean that there are no legitimate structures when the central authority is not accepted. Kappler has shown that the lack of legitimacy in the public space ‘has led to a shifting of legitimacy to semi-public spheres, the cultural arena being one example of this, in which structures of legitimacy are reconstituted in alternative, more fragmented ways’ (Kappler, 2012, p. 15). Thus, there will always be spaces of legitimate structure that might however be in conflict with externally imposed structures – leading to hybrid or post-liberal peace. In synthesis, popular legitimacy is the key to successful societal transformation after conflict, because the process shapes and eventually depends on the compliance of the local population and their perceptions of legitimacy of the post-conflict order.

## **Peacebuilding in the Environmental Sector**

Research on the above stated findings has been conducted on key sectors of liberal peacebuilding.<sup>6</sup> But, how does peacebuilding in the environmental sector influence perceptions of popular legitimacy of post-conflict authorities? Addressing environmental issues during peacebuilding processes is thought to contribute to the success of peacebuilding (Conca & Dabelko, 2002; Conca & Wallace, 2009; Kostić et al., 2012; Matthew, Barnett, & McDonald, 2009a; Matthew, Brown, & Jensen, 2009b;

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<sup>5</sup> This argument becomes very interesting when looking at UN imposed post-conflict authorities. In post-conflict situations such as Afghanistan the peace agreement decided that the traditional grand assembly, Loya Jirga, would be a traditionally legitimate way to decide on a popular legitimate government and constitution. However, participants were not selected popular, but more importantly was the institutions as such not considered legitimate by the Afghan population (see e.g. Krampe, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> Most post-conflict research tends to focus on economic development (e.g. Collier, 1999), institution building (e.g. Paris, 2004), security sector reform (Themnér, 2011), democratization (e.g. Jarstad & Sisk, 2008), and reconciliation/transitional justice (e.g. Bar-Simon-Tov, 2004; Kostić, 2007).

A. Swain & Krampe, 2011).<sup>7</sup> This argument is based on the perception of environmental factors and change as threat multiplier.<sup>8</sup> In the following I will outline four peacebuilding activities in the environmental sector that are considered to decrease the environmental threat in post-conflict societies: 1) impact assessments, 2) natural resource governance, 3) protected areas and biodiversity, and 4) renewable energy production. Afterwards I will contextualize these activities with the problem of popular legitimacy in peacebuilding and present the underlying hypothesis/argument of this study.

### **Environmental Impact Assessment**

Environmental impact assessments are one of the tools employed by the international community to evaluate the impact war had on the environment. These studies have been important to verify that the bombing of cities and industrial sites leads to water and air pollution, as for example through the use of depleted uranium in Kosovo (UNEP, 2001). More general, military actions are associated to serious damage to the quality of available renewable natural resources. Among others through heavy military vehicles condensing soil, pollution through weapons testing and combat and landmines cultivatable areas become unusable (Machlis & Hanson, 2008; Price & Robinson, 1993; A. Swain & Krampe, 2011; UNEP, 2001). The assessments conducted by the UNEP's Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch are necessary and important in assessing the environmental impact of conflicts and to propose strategies for action. But also other agencies are developing tools to assess existing and potential environmental security risks that might influence peacekeeping operations. The Swedish Armed Forces and FOI (Swedish Defence Research Agency) have developed an assessment strategy to assess the a) risk for peacekeeping personal through environmental hazards, b) the peacekeeping missions environmental impact, and c) potential risks through the environment as threat multiplier (Jensen & Lonergan, 2012). While the latter example is rare, the focus of post-conflict impact

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<sup>7</sup> However, when it comes to verifying the relationship rather than anticipating the possibility of future threat most studies remain inconclusive. For example, studies investigating environmental cooperation provided interesting insight, yet could not isolate the specific environmental cooperation mechanism from the more general cooperation mechanism (see e.g. Conca & Dabelko, 2002). However, the biggest problem might lay in the fact that overall testable cases are still too rare to draw conclusive and generalizable inferences as the issue has been neglected widely (see Kostić et al., 2012).

<sup>8</sup> As such environmental issues contribute to - not cause - various forms of collective violence (Buhaug, Gleditsch, & Theisen, 2008; German Advisory Council on Global Change, 2007; Homer-Dixon, 1994; Kostić et al., 2012; Matthew, Barnett, & McDonald, 2009a; A. Swain, 1996; A. Swain, Swain, Themnér, & Krampe, 2011; Wallenstein & Swain, 1997).

assessments has widened considerably since the beginning to additionally capture the impact of the conflict to the natural resource base of the war-torn regions (Jensen & Lonergan, 2012; Lujala & Rustad, 2012; Matthew, Brown, & Jensen, 2009b).

### **Natural Resource Governance**

The popularity of post-conflict natural resource governance derives primarily from research findings that suggest for peaceful post-conflict development poverty has to be tackled through economic recovery and growth (Collier, 1999; Collier, Hegre, Elliott, Reynal-Querol, & Sambanis, 2003; Dobbins, Jones, Crane, & DeGrasse, 2007; Paris, 2004; Zartman, 1995). Secondly, there is increased interest and attention for sustainable development, a development concept that embraces and balances the economic, social and environmental needs of societies. It is considered a policy strategy enabling modernization of war-torn societies through farsighted development (Annan, 2004; A. Swain, 2012; United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, 2008).<sup>9</sup>

The UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) recognised the ‘interplay between conflict, environment and natural resources’ and emphasizes that peacebuilding must pay more attention to the environment (United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, 2008). Concrete suggestions for peacebuilding, were presented in a UNEP report (commissioned by PBC), which emphasizes capacity development of the UN and calls for the development of early warning and early action mechanisms. Moreover, the report argues for an equal and sustainable utilization of natural resources and suggests addressing the issue in the peacebuilding process by recommending to ‘capitalize on the potential for environmental cooperation to contribute to peacebuilding’ (Matthew, Brown, & Jensen, 2009b).

Successful cooperation over renewable natural resources like water sharing have enable conflictive parties to share benefits in the past and this has been considered positive influence on conflict resolution and peacebuilding as the cooperation experiences contributed to cooperation in other areas (Conca & Dabelko, 2002; A.

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<sup>9</sup> The 2005 established UN Peacebuilding Commission identifies sustainable development as one of the main goals, as it is thought to: ‘focus attention on the reconstruction and institution-building efforts necessary for recovery from conflict and to support the development of integrated strategies in order to lay the foundation for sustainable development’ (S-RES-1645 (2005)). The United Nations actively funds projects that aim to increase ‘national capacity for the integration of sustainable principles into development strategies in countries emerging from conflict’.

Swain, 2009; Wallensteen & Swain, 1997). Recent studies have established more insight into the role natural resources play in peacebuilding and again widened the agenda beyond renewable natural resources. These studies focus on countries with high value natural resources, which bear the potential for a swift economic recovery, however, those resources are also considered triggers for conflicts (Lujala & Rustad, 2012).

### **Protected Areas/Biodiversity**

The side effects of demilitarized zones gave way to a new idea: Peace parks. Many of these abandoned areas in fact were unique, unintended protected areas creating space for refuge to many species. Scholars suggest transforming the status of these areas to protected areas, because it allows managing biodiversity together and open possibilities to generate revenue through eco-tourism (Ali, 2007). However in reality the idea has not translated into any serious political action. There are proposals to create peace parks in the highly militarized border areas between North and South Korea, and between India and Pakistan (Ali, 2007; A. Swain, 2009). There are even proposals for a peace park on the Golan Heights between Israel and Syria by widening the concept through the inclusion of renewable energy production: ‘the renewable energy aspect of the park idea will add an important extra dimension to the peace effort, contributing not just to regional peacemaking but also to environmental sustainability’ (Greenfield-Gilat, 2009).

### **Renewable Energy Production**

Research on renewable energy production in post-conflict situations is largely missing, yet desired. In February 2012 the Chairman of the Assembly of Kosovo, Jakup Krasniqi, stated: ‘During the last 12 years, Kosovo followed truly the wrong policies in the energy sector’ and commented that the countries energy development could be much further if resources would have been used more efficient (Institute for Development Policy, 2012).<sup>10</sup> Renewable energy production would help deal with increased greenhouse gas emissions and further harmful impacts on environment, resources, and public health. However, the reality during peacebuilding looks different. Previous research found that the peacebuilding agenda for Kosovo was

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<sup>10</sup> The report found that Kosovo would be able to provide over 30% of its energy needs through renewable energy sources and that such a policy would even increase employment while costing less than the lignite based power plants (Kammen, Mozafari, & Prull, 2012). That means, a focus on security and economic development would not be contradicted by renewable energy policies in peacebuilding.

missing a comprehensive, long term strategy in the energy sector, which would address environmental factors through diversification of energy sources and utilizing of its renewable energy potentials (Kostić et al., 2012). Open-pitch lignite mining has been utilized to provide resources to thermal power plants in their production of energy for Kosovo's struggling post-conflict economy (Kostić et al., 2012).

In underdeveloped countries, where wood and charcoals are the dominant sources of energy for most of the population, the consequence is increased deforestation that intensifies populations vulnerability to natural disasters, increased air pollution, and decrease public health (Cuvilas, Jirjis, & Lucas, 2010; Kowero, Campbell, & Sumaila, 2004; Matthew, Barnett, & McDonald, 2009a). During conflicts these energy sources become even further exploited, aggregating the problem.

Studying energy production more broadly in the context of development research, energy sector reforms in the past aimed primarily to deregulate and privatize the typically state-owned sector in hope to overcome inefficiency (Bacon & Besant-Jones, 2001; Gabriele, 2004). Yet, similar to the liberalizing trend in peacebuilding (see Paris, 2004), pushing liberalisation of the energy sector too fast and short-sighted, and exclusively focusing on profit hampered development. It also impeded progress towards eco-friendly technologies that have potential to avoid environmental challenges that result from exploitation and consumption of non-renewable energy resources (Gabriele, 2004, p. 1321). These environmental challenges become more and more crucial, because economically developed and underdeveloped countries are more frequently searching for sustainable means of energy production, i.e. 'the development of stable, affordable, and environmentally sensitive energy systems' (World Energy Council, 2011, p. 7). But how can sustainable energy production be combined with peacebuilding and to what effect for the local population?

### **The Environment and its Influence on Popular Legitimacy**

Peacebuilding in the environmental sector is likely to affect popular legitimacy of post-conflict authorities. However, studies considering the environmental aspects of peacebuilding too often disregard the wider political magnitudes of such policies. Considered a technocratic exercise the depolitization of the environment might be

good (see Conca & Wallace, 2009, p. 500). However, peacebuilding in the environmental sector requires discussions beyond ‘cleaning up’ after war and economic growth. Based on the critical peacebuilding literature it is credible to expect that also peacebuilding in the environmental sector influences popular legitimacy negatively, in particular when external actors introduce these policies. Thus, it is important to provide empirical evidence if and how these policies influence popular legitimacy of post-conflict authorities.

The relevance of these wider political dimensions of peacebuilding can be observed in several instances. Initial insight provides a look at UNEP's *Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch*, which came about in the aftermath of the intervention in Kosovo through NATO in 1999:

‘The range of modern weaponry involved and the deliberate targeting of industrial and military facilities made it clear that the Balkans faced not only a humanitarian crisis of tragic proportions, but also potentially serious environmental damage’ Klaus Töpfer in (Jensen & Lonergan, 2012 p. xv).

Of course, there is no doubt that environmental problems created by the conflict stay on or increase once the battles are ceased. However, the environmental damage through warfare in Kosovo is closely related to the NATO intervention, which used among others weapons with depleted uranium. Maintaining a critical scientific perspective thus, demands scholars to be aware and consider differences between local and global actors and their perceptions and interests, which are highly relevant in these debates. The issue becomes ever more pertinent when considering natural resources. Jansen and Lonergan stress that ‘Decisions about the restoration, management, and protection of natural resources have fundamental implications for short-term, stability, longer-term sustainable development, and successful peacebuilding’ (Jensen & Lonergan, 2012, p. 1). But sustainable development in the dominant UN discourse is explicitly connected to security (visible in Annan, 2004; Boutros-Ghali, 1992) (Duffield, 2010; 2012; A. Swain, 2012). This has caused criticism, because scholars point towards the adverse influence sustainable development has on local populations. Particularly a false Western advocacy and hegemonic imperative over the development discourse is causing concern (Duffield, 2001, p. 38), because ‘the notions of ‘partnership’ and ‘local ownership’ simultaneously disguise and legitimise the interventions of international agencies in

domestic reform processes, serving to mystify power asymmetry' (Crawford, 2003, p. 139). Along that line Swain, while in favour of sustainable development, demands attention to the question of who has the power to define these processes, by asking: 'whose security and whose development' (A. Swain, 2012, p. 140). Swain and Krampe suggest that sustainable development in peacebuilding 'should pursue a sustainable economic policy for growth and development, which not only will be sensitive to local needs and environment but will also take the support of the local resource base to promote cooperation and peace in the long run' (A. Swain & Krampe, 2011, p. 205).

To conclude, I argue that peacebuilding in the environmental sector is an imposition of external environmental agendas on the local population, undermining the popular legitimacy of post-conflict authorities. This argument will be tested empirically through an in-depth study of the peace process in Nepal by conducting four case studies of renewable energy production, utilizing manageable natural resources (i.e. water and biomass). Through fieldwork in those cases the focus is on studying the interactions between international, national and local actors and the interactions influence on the perceptions of the post-conflict structures. Eventually, the aim is to contribute knowledge and understanding about peacebuilding in the environmental sector and its influence on local perceptions of legitimacy.

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