

**The Green and the Cool:
Hybridity, Relationality and Ethnographic-Biographical Responses to Intervention¹**

Abstract

Policy debates on conflict research, which are mostly directly used to develop practices of intervention, conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and statebuilding, emanate from common epistemic and ontological frameworks. All have been produced and perpetuated by key institutions in the global north through their encounter with historical direct and structural violence, both north and south. Power has followed Enlightenment knowledge, along with its various biases and exclusions. Its progressive normative, political, economic, and social assumptions about a 'good society' and an 'international community', have been fed through social science into the building of international institutions, IFIs, and the donor system. Using a method called ethnographic-biography, this article charts how the thrust of policy responses based on such assumptions have long tended to veer between interventionism, trusteeship, 'native administration' in disguise and the attempt to establish 'cordon sanitaires' around conflict zones. It argues that in reality, peace thinking is mutually constructed as both positive and hybrid, confirming earlier critical work, but the research methods deployed to engage with social actors are sorely underdeveloped. This is illustrated through an analysis of the work of 'local' conflict scholars on their own peacebuilding and statebuilding processes in Cyprus, Kosovo, and Timor Leste.

¹ Thanks to my three subject-scholars, and apologies for any misrepresentations I may have made.

Introduction: the working entanglement of peace and power

Policy debates on conflict research, which are mostly directly used to develop practices of intervention, conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and statebuilding, emanate from common epistemic and ontological frameworks focused on the state and the international.² There is a long genealogy of such frameworks, which run back into liberal colonialism, as Mazower has argued,³ projecting power through history into the contemporary liberal international order. They connect to the UN and Bretton Woods and the donor systems, and the Eurocentric logic that drew them through into the contemporary (or recent) ‘liberal peace’ era.⁴ Similarly, critical development scholars, including Chambers and Escobar, have in their various ways pointed to how development practices are intimately connected with hegemony and dominant ideologies, even if they explicitly claim not to be.⁵ They often highlight the need to engage with actually existing claims being made in real development contexts, meaning everyday life and micropolitics,⁶ pointing to the virtual nature of much mainstream theory and policy, which posits ideal subjects, ideal states, and specific and unbendable goals related to historical epistemological frameworks, connected to existing power-structures.

² Eg, see, UN Secretary Report on “Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict”, A/63/881, 11 June 2009.

³ Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*, Princeton University Press, 2009.

⁴ Michael Doyle, “Kant, liberal legacies, and foreign affairs”, *Philosophy and public affairs*, Vol 12, (summer and fall), 1983, pp.205-35, 323-53.

⁵ Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995: Robert Chambers, *Rural Development: Putting the Last First*, Longman, 1989.

⁶ Ty Solomon & Brent J Steele, “Micro-moves in International Relations Theory”, *EJIR*, forthcoming 2016: Henri Lefebvre, *The Critique of Everyday Life*, Volume 1, John Moore trans., London: Verso, 1991 [1947].

All have been produced and perpetuated by key institutions in the global north through their encounter with historical direct and structural violence, both north and south.⁷ Power– and the emergent ‘interventionary system’- has followed Enlightenment knowledge, along with its various biases and exclusions, leading to a technocratic rule of experts, in matters of development and peace.⁸ This has tended to produce an interventionary blueprint for the subject’s rights and needs, the nature of the state, and global governance. Standardization and homogenization is the order of this approach, with a *telos* of positive peace and development as the consequence of the natural evolution of this epistemology. It is relatively simple, efficient, and can be implemented without local knowledge, though political contacts are important. This allows for a type of standardized international civil service to circulate the conflict-affected world bringing liberal peace as a kind of bureaucratic, structural adjustment model, dependent upon its own internal legitimacy based on its liberal, Kantian and Republican epistemology.⁹ Its progressive normative, political, economic, and social assumptions about a ‘good society’, state, and an ‘international community’, have been fed through social science into the building of international institutions, IFIs, and the donor system. This has produced a framework for understanding conflict, which is based on the other’s deficiencies in a social-Darwinist world of sovereign hierarchies. Liberal peace offers an escape, and it is such that it can be “programmed” by the existing international civil service.¹⁰ This is the basis for ‘conflict expertise’ or ‘expert knowledge’ which might then be separated from knowledge about conflict-affected societies, because the former follows external power, whereas the latter

⁷ J Comaroff & Comaroff, J, *Theory from the South: Or, How Euro-America is Evolving Toward Africa*, Colorado, Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2011.

⁸ Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*, University of California Press, 2002.

⁹ Michael Barnett, "Building a Republican Peace: Stabilizing States After War", *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 4, 2005, pp.87-112.

¹⁰ Bertrand Badie, *The Imported State*, Stanford University Press, 2000.

might follow local power structures or indeed might prefer emancipatory and more hybrid forms of peace.

However, the awkward question of what to do in the face of ongoing violence, resistance, and particularly what to do when powerful elites reject impositions on their sovereignty, requires intervention of varying sorts. Soft peacebuilding and developmental intervention is at one end of the political scale, whereas military intervention in peacekeeping or humanitarian forms moves towards more overt infringements of sovereignty and the emergence of socio-political engineering through neo-trusteeship (in the shape of peacebuilding, statebuilding, or long term peace processes, as seen in Cyprus, Kosovo, and Timor-Leste). The auto-legitimacy ascribed to the liberal epistemology of peace is also used to legitimate this full range of interventionary practices connecting, say peacebuilding in BiH with military intervention and neoliberal statebuilding in Afghanistan as part of the same suite of interventionary practices.¹¹

The whole range of interventionary practices constructs the conflict-affected individual as unable to achieve modernity without external assistance and offers a minimum level of existence to its subjects. It does not engage more than partially with the ontological and epistemological fields of that subject.¹² Herein lies an increasingly agonistic tension, in which globalized individuals realise their positionality as subjects of intervention and react in discursive or more direct ways to broadly perceived inequalities. In many ways, this tension is productive, but in some, it is highly problematic. It represents autonomous political space for development in which more progressive forms of peace might emerge, but it also underlines the various inconsistencies of interventionary

¹¹ Oliver P Richmond, *Failed Statebuilding*, Yale University Press, 2014.

¹² My *Post-Liberal Peace* (Routledge 2011) examines this issue, as do other texts, including Roger MacGinty, *International Peacebuilding and Local Resistance*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011; Severine Autesserre, *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014 & *The Trouble With the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations series. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

epistemologies, connecting them with historical practices of domination and self-interest, unintended consequences, and thus their broad social de-legitimation. At the moment when intervention, which brings its own epistemology of peace and order with it, offers progress, it may be rejected as unsuitable or simply not going far enough by its subject recipients, who operate in different epistemological settings. Peacemaking, thus, is related closely to power. Realists would generally agree.¹³

Local claims and entanglements, and ethnographic biography

Local voices often point to an understanding of how casual factors of conflict are transmitted from one part of the world to another in a long-term time scale of mutual co-implication, which has broad implications for a sustainable peace. An equitable and certainly more solidarist international order is needed just as much as reform is required in situ, from this liberal internationalist perspective. Marxist/ critical, post-colonial, and subaltern critiques all suggest that the structural framework of the international and state architecture, in the context of global capital and the materiality of geopolitical forces, tends to further marginalize the subject causing further resistance.¹⁴ For Marx, this is based on the way global capital structures a class system, leading to unjust power-relations. This undermines legal and political rights, a point made recently in Piketty's study of modern capital.¹⁵ For post-colonial scholars, the dominant epistemology of progress legitimates neo-imperial hegemony and the eradication of diverse societies. However, as Marx saw the possibility

¹³ John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001.

¹⁴ Gayatri Spivak, "Can the subaltern speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, 1988, pp. 271–313.

¹⁵ Thomas Picketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2014.

of the global mobilization of labour, post-colonial scholars also ascribed the local limited agency in inducing hybridity as an indirect challenge to intervention, which in any case maintains a neo-colonial order. A hybrid epistemology is emerging, one dually associated with more diverse political encounters, but also the revival of trusteeship or ‘native administration’ forms of intervention. A range of subaltern scholars have raised the possibility of the decolonization of such epistemology, offering a pluriversal mode of ‘progressive’ politics.¹⁶ They have highlighted previously ignored dimensions to modernization and so-called structural adjustment.

Using ethnographic biography, a range of methods long discussed in anthropology,¹⁷ this essay charts how three conflict-affected scholars have navigated the thrust of policy responses based on such assumptions, and examines their own responses and insights. The paper proceeds by discursively analysing the growing evidence on key interventions on the part of the international community from the perspective of three scholars from Cyprus (Costas Constantinou), Kosovo (Gezim Visoka), and Timor-Leste (Josh Trindade), effectively through a literature review of their scholarship. This forms a biography in that it attempts to see their work as an expression, over a long period of time, with their engage with their own conflicts and international intervention. All three of these conflicts have long been subject to the programmatic policy statements about conflict which emanate from Hobbesian observations on civil war, Cold War and contemporary geopolitical thought such as that outlined say by Kissinger and Mearsheimer, and Kantian and Lockean liberal

¹⁶ Walter D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options*, Duke University Press Books, 2011.

¹⁷ Michael Herzfeld, *Portrait of a Greek Imagination: An Ethnographic Biography of Andreas Nenedakis*, University of Chicago, 1998; S Brandes, “Ethnographic autobiographies in American anthropology”, *Central Issues in Anthropology*, 1, 1, 1979; D Hayano, “Auto-ethnography: paradigms, problems, and prospects”, *Human Organization*, Vol.38, 1979, pp.99-104. DE Reed-Danahay, *Auto-ethnography: rewriting the self and the social*, New York: Berg. 1997; Harry F. Wolcott, “The Ethnographic Autobiography”, *Auto/Biography*, 2004; Vol. 12: pp.93-106.

peace theory.¹⁸ ‘Fixing’ these states through mediation, peacekeeping, development, peacebuilding and statebuilding rests on a blend of this body of knowledge with Kantian, republican epistemology, to build peace, along with concurrent neoliberal economic and legal rationalities of states in the current global governance system. Such rationalities have inevitably been disseminated by power- as legitimate authority in many cases- whether the UN system, human rights norms, and key donors and their foreign policies.

These three scholars, partly trained in the UK, US, or Australia, have been involved in local peace movements, the state, worked with international actors, and produced a significant volume of work critiquing or construing them. They have all also had high-level policy experience from within their own governments and administrations, directly related to the process of state stabilization and peace. In other words, they have learned IR from core metropolitan centres, worked in the state system and in their own state frameworks, critically engaged with the theories of peace and development, and often juxtaposed all of these with identity, rights, needs, and agency in their own specific contexts. Their work speaks through context, theory, and practice, towards some sort of epistemological symbiosis, specific to the breadth of experience they have had.¹⁹ If we are to understand the encounter between peace making forces from the outside, which carry their own epistemological baggage, how better than to engage with the discussions and critiques from scholars who have experienced the conflict, the interventions, and are well-versed in bridging the debates surrounding them?

In all of these cases, authority has been drawn from contradictory sources and different forms of legitimacy have competed with each other rather than forming settled norms of association through the liberal state. The Cyprus intervention began through old-fashioned peacekeeping in an

¹⁸ Daniel H. Deudney, *Bounding Power: Republican Security Theory from the Polis to the Global Village*, Princeton University Press, 2008.

¹⁹ All three have given their permission for my use of their work, and to make them a kind of ‘case study’, as follows.

era when a cease-fire and a high-level diplomatic agreement was all that was required. People were absent from diplomatic discussion, but ethno-nationalist elites were ever present. By the 1990s the EU was offering its mantle of integration and ‘europeanisation’ as an escape route from the conflict. The Kosovo and Timor conflicts spilled over into the post-Cold War environment and so were subject to a mixture of structural development, liberal peacebuilding and neoliberal statebuilding. The liberal peace framework was ever present, and has become a source of patronage around which power-sharing is centered. A careful engagement with the complexities of social history was rarely achieved or even possible from the external perspective, so they wrote about just this.

I have chosen these three cases and scholars because I have worked with them previously and discussed these issues often with them, as well as having co-written pieces that engage with such matters with two of them. The goal of this paper is to let these three scholars speak through my own critical analysis (and bias) about the nature of external conflict epistemology, and the complexity of their positionality.²⁰ They mount their critiques of the various interventions that were supposed to bring peace, and speak about peace from a local positionality coloured by their transnational experiences. I will try to capture some insights through their approaches to concepts and theory, rationality, methodology. All the usual caveats about the limitations of such ethno-biographical methodological approaches apply. I implicitly draw upon a range of literatures on hybridity, subaltern agency, ethnography and auto-ethnography, as well as standard critical theory. I accept that this essay is partly autobiographical and based up my own experiences of these three conflicts and people who work around them.²¹ I think it is significant that such hybrid expertise exists today, and I might extend my argument to say that *my subjects are the experts who could rule legitimately*

²⁰ Linda Tuhai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, London: Zed Books, 1999, p.88; Robert Chambers, *Rural Development*, London: Longman, 1983; Michael M. Cernea, *Putting People First: Sociological Variables in Development*, OUP, 1985, p.8.

²¹ Eg Morgan Brigg and Roland Bleiker, “Autoethnographic International Relations,” *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 36, No 3, 2010, pp. 779-98.

in a broader milieu than that of the narrow local or international scales and their currently rather isolated systems of parallel legitimate authority and governance.

Costas Constantinou on the peace process, diplomacy and everyday peace/ hybridity in Cyprus

Costas Constantinou is a scholar who has worked in universities in the UK and Cyprus, and has been involved in practical and academic terms in the country's long-standing peace process both at the diplomatic and social level. He has been directly affected by the conflict, and has lived through invasion and reconstruction and well as numerous peace efforts. He is a prominent figure in the island's inter-communal movement, and his work is aimed at deep political and social reconciliation, along with many others. His scholarly career began with a critical discussion of diplomacy, which seemed calculated to point to the ineffective, arcane rituals that had evolved over history in terms of IR theory,²² but which in their application closer to home (meaning in the Cyprus conflict) had failed to yield their promise of either a moderation of interests and a balance of power, of a compromise agreement worked out through various different modes of political discourse. Having treated the failure of Western diplomacy in this manner, his work then also turns to the other oddities of the encounter between Cyprus and various modes of intervention. He examined at the relics of Empire in an article with myself on the British bases, and argued that Empire still maintained an exceptional presence even despite the post-1960 era of sovereign independence (supposedly at least). This argument is extended into a discussion of the exceptions to Cyprus' sovereignty made on independence in 1960, the clear implication that this is an oddity of

²² Costas M. Constantinou. *On the Way to Diplomacy*. Minneapolis University Press, 1996.

modern post-colonial statehood.²³ What is significant about this argument are the implications for disparate societies and individuals in Cyprus, which end up being alienated from Cyprus as a concept and as a state, looking elsewhere for forms of legitimacy.

From here his work turns to the dividing green-line across the island, and its interesting status, and most notably the oversight in most literature on Cyprus of the processes of historical reconciliation of ethnic and religious difference. He also then turns to an examination of one of the forgotten minorities of the island- the Maronite community- who have worked out practices of co-existence around the fault-lines cause by Greek and Turkish Cypriot conflict.²⁴ Recurring motifs in his work are the long-standing existence of hybridity, the mono-culture of diplomacy and the need to expand it, the privatization of the Cyprus settlement and concurrent domination of the negotiations through the Cypriot and international states of exception, international versions of (il)liberal peace, and the emergence of human/self-diplomacy in everyday encounters.²⁵

His view of the negative peace that has emerged in Cyprus since 1974 is that it is a partial peace in which the common qualities that one might expect of liberal peace are only available because of the legacy of the war spanning 1963-1974, because of colonialism, and because of international blind-spots. This is an illiberal peace based upon forced division and loss. Most local people, whether nationalists or not, assume a better form of peace can be arrived at, even including international actors who have seen failure after failure of formal peace talks, but the majority see this better peace through a nationalist and sovereign rather than pluralist lens. Current

²³ Costas M Constantinou, "On the Cypriot States of Exception", *International Political Sociology*, Vol. 2, 2008, pp.145-164.

²⁴ Costas M. Constantinou, *The Third Motherland*, Documentary 2011.

²⁵ Costas M. Constantinou. "Everyday Diplomacy: Mission, Spectacle and the Remaking of Diplomatic Culture" , in Jason Dittmer and Fiona McConnell, *Diplomatic Cultures and International Politics* London: Routledge 2016.

circumstances may be illiberal, but he also concludes that many see the liberal peace as empty but useful rhetoric- and have something else in mind.²⁶

Constantinou's work displays a general appreciation but also a dissatisfaction with the perspectives of the western academy on Cyprus in IR. Entwined in the progress made in understanding are parallel blockages to understanding more, an appreciation of diversity, and overall epistemological and perhaps ontological obstacles to peace. Such contradictions are present on the island and in the international epistemology produced on the 'Cyprus Problem' and the notion of a 'settlement' or 'solution'.²⁷ In much of his more recent work, he establishes a critique of international roles as being configured by interests, norms, and approaches which have weak appeal or traction in Cyprus because they emerge from a different site of legitimate authority, however well-meaning they may be.²⁸ Instead, he often points to the actual reality of everyday encounters in Cyprus, which is beginning to shape an alternative political settlement, one which is rarely captured by external pronouncements on Cyprus. The settlement is thus being 'privatised' but not in a neoliberal sense.²⁹ Within the state of exception that are the Cypriot states, these are negotiating a form of peace more salient in reality than futile diplomatic/ territorial identity rituals over a peace agreement within a Westphalian ontology. Constantinou appears to argue that the current situation is not a solution, but is more an imaginative way of living together after the conflict and the failure of many international diplomatic efforts under the resultant structural conditions that have emerged.³⁰

²⁶ Costas Constantinou & Constantinos Adamides, "Comfortable and Illiberal Peace in Cyprus", in Oliver P Richmond & Audra Mitchell, *Hybrid Peace*, London: Palgrave, 2012.

²⁷ Costas M Constantinou, "Multidirectional Diplomacy and the Privatisation of Settlement", *Peace Review*, Vol. 24, ?? pp.454-461.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.460.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 460.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.461.

Over the course of more than a decade, in his work one can see a deconstruction of mainstream IR theory and related notions of peace and an indication of the power relations that are denoted by their intricacies and disguises. One can also begin to see the reconstruction of a narrative of reconciliation which is much more aesthetically oriented than the external (and often internal) instrumentalist and rationalist discourses about the state and geopolitics. His positionality is somewhat conflicted then about how the Cyprus problem has been constructed and reconstructed and the depth of a relationality between the communities on the island and in the region. One receives the impression that he has detected a subterranean relationality that is far more deep-rooted and pervasive than most analysts would expect. Some of his work describes Cyprus as if he were not fully part of the societies there (a hint of methodological neutrality). There are only hints about what the nature of peace might be in Cyprus in his work, if reconstructed from the issues his work interrogates: post-colonialism and the bothersome remnants of colonialism, the exclusions of sovereignty, the historical possibilities in hybridity, everyday diplomacy, the transgressions that take place against power, the 'other' minorities, and the importance of discursive reconciliation even when formal political issues remain unsettled.³¹

External parties' epistemological perspectives are appreciated for their efforts and their attempts to bring basic standards to political debate, but also seen as superficial, single minded, and often connected to the very power structures that caused the conflicts in the first place (colonialism and the exclusive nation state). Peace can thus only be located at the everyday nexus, where interactions, diplomatic, cultural, and others, allow for reconciliation in the absence of political agreement. Indeed, in some of his work he turns to a discussion of a concept he has created "homo-diplomacy" in which the self gains knowledge about how to live in the world as it actually is, rather than as it might be suggested to be according to more old fashion diplomatic, strategic or liberal

³¹ Costas M. Constantinou, "Between Statecraft and Humanism: Diplomacy and Its Forms of Knowledge", *International Studies Review*, Vol. 15, Iss. 2, 2013.

thought.³² Experience and experiments are used in everyday life to navigate around the legacies of old style thinking about the state, war, politics, and diplomacy, and to re-imagine human relations. Again, the particular paper that outlines this approach- though not on Cyprus- offers a clear sign of the inadequacies of mainstream conflict knowledge in its ‘Cartesian’ formulation, and the need for more depth, and more reflexivity- a ‘gnostic way’.³³ One clear message is that mediating difference should not be taken as an ethnic issue to be carried out by formal diplomacy and built into a legal state-level agreement, but that mediation needs to reach far deeper and more broadly in and across what it means to be human in agonistic societies. We might take this to point to the problem of understanding the conflict-affected human in modernity.

Constantinou illustrates this development in his thinking about the mistakenly named ‘Cyprus Problem’ by turning to examples of complex hybridity.³⁴ He sees a historical alliance of colonial and nationalist frameworks giving birth to the ethno-territorial division of the island, and what he calls a contemporary ‘static bicomunal system’, also representing modern governmentality, such as that brought by external perspectives on peace and conflict. He points to empirical evidence about long-standing hybridity and syncretism on the island, which contradict the moral categorization of ethnicity as the only basis for static, territorial and state governmental frameworks. The implication of this more relational analysis is clearly a self-evident but normally overlooked truth. The conflict is an international/ local production: a mixture of orientalism, nationalism, colonialism, stratification, and governmentality. The international production of peace has failed, however, precisely because it repeats the very systemic assumptions which caused the

³² Costas M Constantinou, “On Homo-Diplomacy”, *Space and Culture*, Vol. 9, No.4, 2006, pp.351-364.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 362.

³⁴ Costas M Constantinou, “Aporias of Identity: Bicomunalism, Hybridity, and the Cyprus Problem”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 42, No. 3, pp.247-270.

conflict in the first place- colonialism, nationalism, a focus on power-sharing and the state, and various other binaries and problematic authorisations upon which the modern state and peace rest.

According to Constantinou's research, there are progressive practices already historically present in the very 'local' the international and a range of local actors seek to transform, some of which as associated with the spiritual, cultural and the emotional spheres, according to his overall oeuvre.³⁵ Constantinou's work has trodden a careful line between engaging with received international knowledge about peace and conflict, engaging with nationalist and reconciliatory voices in Cyprus, and engaging with Turkish/ Turkish Cypriot work on Cyprus too (often at a time when this was more or less proscribed). Clearly his work foregrounds the social, and its ability to negotiate and mediate a polity on its own terms- something that Cyprus has not done formally as a unitary actor, but has done informally through a range of interlocking political communities. To some extent it points to context in Cyprus as operating in a different temporal zone and consciousness to Euro-centric 'metropolitan time', not just as different mechanism of rational and nationalist governance and society, and offering a different and more relational political ontology.

His work betrays a concern that the essence of the decolonized, power-sharing, state and sovereignty may contribute not to the solution of the 'Cyprus problem' but are the essence of the problem itself. Perhaps the EU's 'normative power' might save Cyprus, but there again he connects this, somewhat ambivalently, to previous colonial projects, thus underlining a common ambivalence about the place of intervention- broadly defined- in the modern world, as well as the limits of the state as a peace framework, and the limits of modern diplomacy as its method.

Gezim Visoka on dominant culture, and hybrid/ progressive peace in Kosovo

³⁵ Costas M Constantinou & Mete Hatay, "Cyprus, ethnic conflict and conflict heritage", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol.33, No.9, 2010, pp.1600-1619.

Gezim Visoka's work on Kosovo offers a broad and detailed critique of many aspects of the international's peacebuilding and statebuilding programme in that country. He is both a scholar, and has formerly worked for international organisations and NGOs, as well in the policy sector. He was caught up in the conflict in Kosovo and experienced the intervention, as well as the reconstruction efforts. Later he became directly involved in them from a number of different directions. The underlying thrust of his work's oeuvre is that peace intervention has not dealt with underlying conflict causes, brought justice, or indicated much external comprehension of the problems or potential of local political agency. Indeed, it has failed to connect to the underlying sources of social legitimacy in Kosovo. His work defends the autonomy of Kosovo as a pluralist state project in modernity, whilst also seeking international support to extend peace and buttress its status.³⁶ He sees the interventionary process as driven by external dominant culture, interests, and programming mentalities. He argues that it is disinterested in the realities of local political life. As a consequence there has been a range of subtle and overt resistances (co-optations, etc) to peacebuilding and statebuilding, on the premise that such processes are exclusionary and lack local legitimacy because they cannot recognize their own or local dominant political cultures accurately.³⁷ With respect to the UN mission in Kosovo, he describes it as eventually becoming an institutionalized, legacy form of unaccountable power, even though there is the ongoing theatre of an international ombudsperson and a human rights advisory panel in place.³⁸ He argues that UNMIK and other international organisations consequently lost the trust of local populations, and ultimately this also encouraged

³⁶ Gezim Visoka, "The Complex Nature and Implications of International Engagement after Kosovo's Independence", *Civil Wars*, vol. 13, No. 2, pp.189-214.

³⁷ Gezim Visoka, "International Governance and Local Resistance in Kosovo", *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, Vol.22, pp.99-125.

³⁸ Gezim Visoka, "The 'Kafkasque Accountability of International Governance in Kosovo'", *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, Vol.6, No.2, p.189.

undemocratic processes and abuses on the ground in Kosovo, factors which have also begun to affect the EU's role.

However, he also sees the necessity of international involvement both to dismantle existing regional and local power structures and to establish a more progressive alternative. He is fairly clear that the EU and its regional integration project offers the prospect of a better peace. However, internationals see this as a source of conditionality, which is their way of mediating the encounters that are taking place around Kosovo. Internationals are unable and unwilling to unravel localized epistemologies that would make sense of their encounters in Kosovo, nor to 'share' the EU, but instead adopt a programmatic and conditionality oriented approach. This allows them to conduct themselves according to a semi-orientalised understanding local political and identity, as well as to legitimate the framework of the state they have engaged in building. This promotes unaccountable power, both internationally and locally. Simultaneously this allows for conditionality to be imposed on society by external actors, formerly the UN, and now the EU. The net result for Visoka is the realization of the limits of external capacity,³⁹ following the earlier realization of the limits or underground and parallel agency during the period of Serb oppression. The international's attempt to build a new form of liberal authority to replace Serb domination, and to replace the Kosovan parallel institutions has failed, partly because of bias, partly because of ignorance, and partly because of the limits of international power: so now all three types of agency are entangled.⁴⁰

Visoka argues in some of his work that the sources of knowledge internationals use for thinking about peace need to be reoriented. Embedded knowledge, personal experience, everyday observations and sense-making, interviews both formal and informal with relevant actors but also random people, as well as readings of daily press, policy reports, and academic work, can all be used to construe a picture, but this is a picture that is necessarily biased by the third party

³⁹ Gezim Visoka, "Peace is what we make of it?", *unpublished paper*, 2014.

⁴⁰ Gezim Visoka, *Personal Interview*, Pristina, 23 May 2016.

researcher's positionality, whether local or international. Understanding positionality therefore is crucial, and some of Visoka's work implicitly points to the problem of international-local inequality across a range of areas. He appears to argue that modes of thinking and theorizing in around the field of conflict affected societies are entangled in a heap of different knowledge systems, many of which are both internally and externally contradictory.

For Visoka, a Kosovan peace would require a reconstruction of politics, the state, and the full framework of peace through such contradictions, within which other forms of knowing would be fully included. This does not appear to be a rejection of the liberal peace, and his work acknowledges the local and regional problems that the state of Kosovo and any ambition for a progressive peace, faces. Much of Kosovan political agency has been aimed at state formation, joining the EU, and attaining membership of international organisations over the last decade or so. However, local epistemologies of peace and conflict represent a positionality from which to understand intervention and its complexes. For him, the subaltern and vulnerable in society should be a focus, but power-structures tend to receive the most attention, much of it unwilling to judge the nature of any specific power structure let alone intervene in them. Thus, Visoka argues that local epistemologies are trying to overcome the externalized, instrumental and technocratic approach to peace, which ironically rejects their own salience. This problem is compounded by the lack of longer-term accountability for intervention.⁴¹ He argues that local knowledge about peace can be situational and contextual and can be both problem-solving and emancipatory. The surprise is that he still sees the possibility of an emancipatory form of peace in Kosovo, even after his critique of intervention and local responses to it. For him, state recognition, autonomy and local agency appear to frame its putative character.

⁴¹ Gezim Visoka, "Peacebuilding and International Responsibility", *International Peacekeeping*, Published online, October 2014.

Some of his work helps uncover the work of local organizations (eg Balkan Sunflowers and others) and networks which remain involved in peace work despite the widespread rejection of international conditionality, and the hybrid modification of the liberal peace and state framework they offer.⁴² Many of these organizations exercise resistance and autonomy in the face of hegemony, in his view, but are also implicated in a relatively common project of peace with each other and with hegemony.⁴³ Indeed, this has been a historical pattern, which some of his work reconstructs in detail.⁴⁴ Their impact is relatively invisible, long term, and slow moving, but they are acknowledged informally in society, and might be translated eventually into more formal and viable political institutions. Visoka treads a careful line between supporting critical thinking on peace, and attempting to disseminate it in Kosovo, and supporting the recognition project of the self-declared state in the modern states-system as it is, both academically and professionally. Again, I would say that a sense of the peaceful state as a social democracy permeates his work, but it is also a territorialized, ethnicised but mediated form of state. In the final analysis his work points to the limits of the state in dealing with such conflicts, but also that we only really have the state as a vehicle for peace. His work uncovers the relationality of any interventionary praxis, inherent in any emergent form of hybridity.

Josh Trindade, Custom, Hybridity and the Ideal State in Timor Leste

Josh Trindade is another policymaker-scholar, who was directly affected by the conflict, was part of the reconstruction process afterwards, also contributing significantly to scholarship on Timor-Leste,

⁴² Gezim Visoka, “Three Levels of Hybridisation Practices in Post-Conflict Kosovo”, *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, Vol.7, No.2, pp.23-36.

⁴³ Gezim Visoka, “Peace Multitudes”, unpublished book chapter, 2014.

⁴⁴ Gezim Visoka, *Political Obligations in Kosovo*, Pristina Institute for Political Studies, 2013.

working with donors, and later for Timor's President himself. He wrote one of his key papers on Timor-Leste's development whilst in a refugee camp. As with my other examples, he is well versed in international peacebuilding, statebuilding, and development policy. He has been directly involved in advising the Timorese president on how to build a legitimate 'ideal' Timor-Leste. He draws on international liberal sources of knowledge and local custom. The ideal state is closely connected to the old social- national dream of democracy and statehood (as far as I can see) combine with the deeper history of the Timorese people. Like Visoka, the state is an essential political project that is connected to territory and identity, peace and order, with utopian leanings.

Like Constantinou and Visoka, quite a lot of his work treads a line between soliciting the support and attention of international actors, guiding yet critiquing them, and also the rediscovery of past, pluralist social practices and sources of legitimacy, lost due to colonialism, conflict, and nationalism.⁴⁵ As with my other two authors (who are authors of their own local peace and state), he accepts that the state must be the centre of a new peace system, requiring a range of inputs, and perspectives, probably being hybrid, and perhaps not necessarily being as sovereign in territorial terms as one might expect, but certainly sovereign in spiritual terms.

As with Constantinou's work, there is the element of the spiritual about his depiction of local political community and its history of formation. This spiritual dimension is deeply alien although potentially compatible with the modern state and modern economy, according to him.⁴⁶ It is the basis of legitimate authority for him, and for much of the Timorese population. The 'Uma Lulik' (sacred house system), customary forms of law and political authority, is part of this, but it is

⁴⁵ Josh Trindade, "Lulik: The Core of Timorese Values", in *Peskiza foun kona ba / Novas investigações sobre / New Research on / Penelitian Baru mengenai Timor-Leste* ", Edited by Michael Leach, Nuno Canas Mendes, Antero B. da Silva, Bob Boughton and Alarico da Costa Ximenes, Hawthorn: Swinburne Press, 2012.

⁴⁶ Josh Trindade, "Reconciling the Conflict Paradigms: An East Timorese Vision of the Ideal State", in D Mearns, *Democratic Governance in Timor-Leste*, Darwin: Charles Darwin University, 2008.

inaccessible to outsiders because of epistemological barriers. It governs all social relations in the name of order, peace and tranquility, through balancing. It does so in the context of natural conditions in Timor. Indeed most insiders see it as animist and therefore as illegitimate knowledge (uncivilized). It has not been written down because local languages (Tetum) have not until recently been written languages (Trindade has been involved in developing transcription, modern vocabulary, and the written archive every constitutional state requires). He has developed a complex map of the *lulik*, which might be compared to other crucial political statements on rights, constitutions, and law in western history.⁴⁷ It constitutes a rescued archive from the past for Timorese people, but also a mediated translation for outsiders. It has progressive components, which are related to democracy, and gender, surprisingly enough to some. Inadvertently, internationals recognized *Lulik* in the national constitution they helped develop through that constitution's recognition of culture and cultural heritage (Article 59.5).

This does not mean that there is nothing that is legitimate about interventionary processes, however, but he feels that they have been relatively ineffective, especially when isolated from the Timorese lifeworld.⁴⁸ He is clear that all identities are constructed, and hence presumably can be tampered with, and perhaps should be for the sake of peace and progress within the state. The state thus is a vehicle for modernization and unity. But likewise, his work suggests that there are local bases of legitimate authority in Timor, which need to be translated in order to educate outsiders, but are perhaps more mutable and more progressive than outsiders often expect. The state thus also has

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Jose 'Josh' Trindade, "Rethinking Timorese Identity as a Peacebuilding Strategy: The Lorosa'e – Loromonu Conflict from a Traditional Perspective", *The European Union's Rapid Reaction Mechanism Programme Technical Assistance to the National Dialogue Process in Timor-Leste*, Dili, Timor-Leste, 6th June 2007.

to represent the people as they were in the past, as they are now, and as they would be in an ideal situation.⁴⁹

At times his work points to fairly advanced political and social practices in Timorese history to show that liberal thought is not new. He wishes to discover a nation for the new state of Timor, and looking at liberal, rational, secular, legalistic thought from his outsider positionality, not to mention neoliberalism, he does not find the essential components of Timorese nationhood. He sees this in relatively hidden- to external eyes- common belief systems about Timor and societal and political life.⁵⁰

Indeed, some of his recent work points to a phenomena, also present in Constantinou's work, but in more exaggerated form (to Western eyes): alterity. He is unashamed (and certainly justified) to write of politics in Timor at the social level being motivated by a utopian desire for 'tranquil time' (echoing Augustine's connection between tranquility and order) and 'the green and the cool'.⁵¹ The 'green and the cool' is a common concept used across all Timorese language groups, referring to peace and the good life. This means that people have achieved 'tranquil time', which is also a reference to mythical memories of a pre-colonial, peaceful idyll in Timor. If peace is not present, then another common concept is 'the chanting of the suffering', which is literally a call for help from outsiders. It may be a ritual, or it may be real and reactive. During the Indonesian occupation, it represented a call for outside political and military help, whereas in current times the call is most often made for clean water, better roads, and other public services.⁵² During Indonesian

⁴⁹ Josh Trindade, "*Matak-Malirin, Tempu Rai-diak and Halerik: Expressions of what Timorese Long for in Life*", in *Buka hatene, Compreender, Mengerti, Understanding: TIMOR LESTE*. Edited by Hannah Loney, Antero B. da Silva, Nuno Canas Mendes, Alarico da Costa Ximenes and Clinton Fernandes, Hawthorn: Swinburne Press, 2014. Vol. II: Swinburne University, Australia, 2014.

⁵⁰ Josh Trindade, "Reconciling the Conflict Paradigms", *Op. Cit.*

⁵¹ Josh Trindade, *Matak-Malirin, Tempu Rai-diak and Halerik, Op. Cit.*

⁵² *Ibid*, p.5.

times, Trindade was part of a complex and global network of secret activists, advocates, and resisters seeking to lay the basis through which the state may form and thus respond.

Clearly, Trindade yearns for unity across a long-divided series of political communities in Timor: he works toward it, advises the President and internationals, and also produces academic papers, which he sees as an evolving and eventually formal basis for the reconstitution of Timorese political life. Resolving identity matters is crucial to avoiding and responding to violence and the reconstruction of Timor not just as a state but as a society, through a unity of diversity⁵³ - perhaps as with my other two authors. He sees its potential in the symbolic social and political capital- legitimate authority- at the village level, which might be extended to the state-level. Perhaps he is inventing a progressive past and romanticizing the nation all by himself, but he is clearly in an influential and privileged position to be able to do so. He also argues extensively that international statebuilding has failed to live up to even its own limited standards and objectives in practice.⁵⁴ Its failure to engage with the 'hidden' life-world of Timor is partly to blame for its inability to solve political issues, social problems, or really spark off development in the state and the economy through social and political unity.

Perhaps Trindade's work comes closest to offering a window into an alternative political philosophy (and cosmology) and its attempt to co-exist with the modern state and global economy. Its ontology is very distant from a discussion of constitutions, law, bureaucracy, stratification, class, power, agency, or structure as confluent representatives of the seminal historical moments in the life of a state and society. Most other scholars, and including my other two biographical examples, are perhaps shy about revealing the alternative cosmologies that legend has it guided politics in their own contexts. This is not the language of western science, but somehow it is the socio-political

⁵³ Jose 'Josh' Trindade, "Rethinking Timorese Identity as a Peacebuilding Strategy: The Lorosa'e – Loromonu Conflict from a Traditional Perspective", *Op.Cit.*, p.10.

⁵⁴ Josh Trindade, "Reconciling the Conflict Paradigms", *Op. Cit.*p.2.

language of many of the people of Timor. It points to a problematic gap between international policy and local, transversal, sometimes transnational lifeworlds, which I am sure some of my subjects might say is plugged either by well-meaning ignorance masquerading as governmental policy, or careless power at elite and international levels. For Trindade, the ideal state and concurrent peace of tranquility, greenness, and coolness, seems to encompass a Timorese lifeworld, custom, and contradictorily, the modern liberal and social democratic state. Once again the concept of the state as a vehicle for peace with the assistance of law bound practices of intervention are being tested in his work by the local historical dimensions of legitimacy.

Conclusion: The Green and the Cool

The three countries referred to through my ethnographic biographies in this article are witnessing the emergence of voices and theoreticians with wide and local experience: one might say they are the theoretical equivalents of John Stuart Mill, Tom Paine, John Locke, and other bastions of foundational thought for the state and the international in its Western, post-Enlightenment form. But, Mill *et al* had the British Empire, American power, and many other resources at their disposal, which helped them capture the debate about the state and the international.

The three scholars I have examined critique how external interventions have long tended to veer between realist isolationism and the attempt to establish 'cordon sanitaires' around conflict zones, deploying liberal interventionism, trusteeship, and 'native administration' in disguise.⁵⁵ They highlight more critical attempts to engage with emancipation, justice, and identity. They place what

⁵⁵ Such stronger views are my interpretation of discussions with my research subjects over a long period of time.

Trindade describes as the ‘green and the cool’ and ‘tranquil time’- local understandings of peace and social justice- in relations with statebuilding and the interventionary practices of the international peace architecture, with mixed results. They point to what Constantinou and Visoka highlight: everyday productions of hybridity and relationality increasingly experienced at the state level. This, I would suggest, is an inevitable outcome of the mix of power, sovereignty, problem-solving, and progressive aspirations, which emanate from these contradictory frameworks of understanding and sites of power upon which policy-making for peace is often based. In response, these three scholars speak of hybridity, agency, resistance, relationality and alterity in the context of their own countries and in northern modernity, but also still engage with the state and the international architecture.⁵⁶ They are very aware of the iniquitous nature of their own positionality (and privileges). They accept the post-colonial notion of hybridity is often against the interests of their political community, but that its engagement with liberal and local frameworks provides space for development. They are involved in different political projects. Two of them want settled states and norms on both autonomous and cosmopolitan terms. The other wants unsettled frameworks to be mediated through politics, knowledge, culture, and affective dimensions hitherto unrecognized by the modern state. We can see the workings of power on knowledge, the agonistic nature of this relationship because of the multiple sources of both, and the longer-term ‘reassembling of the social’⁵⁷ after war. The ambiguities of context are matched by those of intervention.⁵⁸ They all seem to point to the need for broader ontological approaches to peace and order across local to global

⁵⁶ Jean Comaroff & John L Comaroff, *Theory from the South*, London: Paradigm, 2012, p.113 & p.130; Douglas P Fry, *The Human Potential for Peace: An Anthropological Challenge to Assumptions about War and Violence*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005; Vivienne Jabri, *The Post-Colonial Subject*, London: Routledge, 2013, p.134; A Appadurai, “The Production of Locality”, *Counterworks*, Routledge London, 1995, p.178.

⁵⁷ Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, OUP, 2005, p.5.

⁵⁸ Marta Fernandez Moreno, Carlos Chagas Vianna Braga, and Maira Siman Gomes, “Trapped Between Many Worlds: A Post-Colonial Perspective on the UN Mission in Haiti”, *International Peacekeeping*, Vol.19., No. 3, 2012, p.377.

scales, informed by mediated epistemologies and methodologies. They write, act, and exercise forms of authority according to their own legitimately accrued constituencies. Their engagement indicates hybridity, relationality, mobility, flexibility, and fluidity, as the way in which peace might be made, meaning the state and international architecture is increasingly anachronistic in the way that it focuses on rebuilding territorialised states.

Though my approach must be caveat ridden, having written this experimental, ethnobiographical paper, I am all the more intrigued about the potential of the ethnographic-biographical methodological approach that it engages with, and what it may show about peace in a globalizing world of difference, inequality, and injustice. Clearly there is much to learn from subjects if ‘experts’ are to rule legitimately.

One clear implication relates to the production of expert knowledge in external institutions involved in a range of interventions, which without the subjects I have foregrounded is probably methodologically unsound and unethical. This points to another implication relating to the way citations of sources are organized in both academic and policy writing on conflict zones. The standard citation structure, which represents the structure of knowledge and power in northern-centric terms, starts with theories produced in the global north, and then data uncovered by the same researchers or local researchers in the global south or conflict-affected societies using those northern theories and methods. The conclusions to such writings often then returns to foregrounding northern theories about war and peace perhaps with some adjustment for any findings. My biographies above show that both data and theories are being produced in other and perhaps more significant sites and the standard citation structures represents hegemony, not necessarily veracity (which biography cannot fully claim either). Imagine an article or report in which the structure of knowledge, theory and methods represented through citations in each section- introduction, theory, methods, discussion, and conflict, represents the scholarship I have outlined in my biographies.

Policy and scholarly documents on these three cases would in the main be very different. It may well represent a step forward in understanding conflict dynamics, the ability to develop an emancipatory form of peace, coming to terms with bias and positionality, and the production of a contextualized but also scalar, hybrid, relation, mobile, and networked understanding of how conflict is perpetuated and what might be done.

Relatedly, it is notable how many professors of IR or practitioners in the international civil service emerged from conflict situations, via refugee camps, disruption, and loss associated with war, but found a voice within the spaces provided by various liberal universities, NGOs, peacebuilding, statebuilding, and development programmes- sometimes even learning the languages of intervention (and not just “English”)- but also developing an alternative, hybrid voice. It speaks of a higher level of peace and justice because it offers the subaltern perspective of the power structures which maintain conflict or a non-peace. The three scholars discussed in this article occupy a liminal space from an international perspective. They speak multiple languages but conduct much of their work in a language which is not their own, and in a world which they have not yet made. They are a still rarity: grounded in empirical, but inevitably subjective, knowledge that internationals cannot reach, but which they can translate where they are given the opportunity for both international and local audiences. They have had to suffer internationals talking about their conflicts and setting the guidelines for their peace. They normally accept such tutelage with good grace. And yet, they want such input, and disseminate it locally to both society and those in elite and predatory power structures. They also attempt to educate their international partners in the ways of their contexts (including myself). They grew up with their conflicts and the interventions, and at least two of them had their life-chances significantly improved by intervention and peacebuilding. They have made a concrete difference in their own states. All three also point to or have uncovered local practices and ways of thinking about security, politics, conflict, and peace, in order engage

with broader questions of legitimacy and identity, which they think internationals miss. Along with rational-legal and secular governance and law issues, they point to the emotions of nationalism, the desire for autonomy, in which to conduct religious or spiritual, or identity based rituals of political organization. They want contribute to order and peace at home, but they have to display bravery, tact, diplomacy and often work dubious elites they know well, with social practices they recognize as problematic, with internationals who may be committed to an incommensurate set of interests and norms.

All three of my subjects are not content with problem-solving and formalist methodologies- one or two are of the view this constitutes an erasure- and are concerned about but also embrace aspects of euro-centricity in politics. They focus on ethnographic methodology in connection with various mainstream or critical western approaches, often taking a philosophical and pragmatic approach simultaneously, to engage with more everyday dimensions of IR, but they acknowledge the structural power of the state, great powers, and the global economy. They recognize they need this power, but that they also have their own critical agency. They acknowledge legal-rationalism, but point to important political dimensions that constitute legitimate authority, and more specifically peaceful order, which falls outside of the Weberian, technocratic epistemology allied to notions of the liberal state and global governance. Two of them see the nation-state as essential to political survival, whilst one is unsure. All of them are ambivalent about intervention, nationalism, territorialism, outside trusteeship style authority, and global capital. Yet, all them are deeply torn about their own societies' capacity to produce a peaceful order, being very concerned about the problem of transforming entrenched local and international power-structures that support nationalism, inequality, patriarchy, securitization, extremism, and unaccountable decision-making. Yet, opportunities and privileges they may have had and adversities they have faced

notwithstanding, none of them betray apathy about the quality of peace and the nature of its politics. Tranquility they do not have, yet.