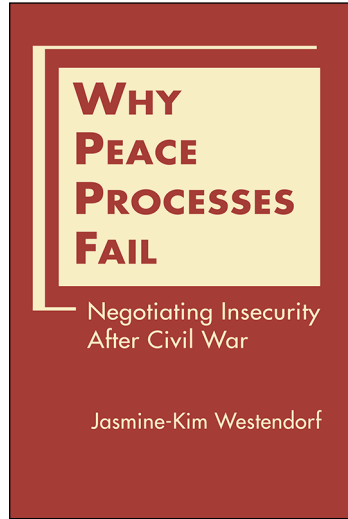


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Why Peace Processes Fail:
Negotiating Insecurity
After Civil War

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1

When Peace Fails

To a man with a hammer, everything looks like a nail.
—*Mark Twain*

Why, despite the best of intentions and often the investment of significant resources, do peace processes so often fail to lead to a consolidated peace after civil war? Even if there is not a full-scale resumption of war, violence, insecurity, and instability pervade many postwar societies. In this book I investigate this puzzle, focusing particularly on the way that the international community engages in resolving such wars and what it is about the dominant approach to peace processes that means they often lead to situations where the pressures for peace and those for war are locked in a stalemate, with neither fully able to capture the society at hand.

The post–Cold War era has been characterized by increasing international involvement in the internal conflicts of states, which has been made possible by the growing normative regimes around human rights and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). As a result of these normative frameworks and the imperative to respond to massive humanitarian catastrophe due to intrastate conflict, the sovereignty norm is no longer a paramount obstacle to such intervention.¹ This post–Cold War internationalism has meant that the international community, primarily through the United Nations (UN) but also through other institutions, has become heavily involved in resolving and building peace after civil wars. From Latin America and the Caribbean to the Balkans, from the Asia Pacific to Africa, peace processes have attempted to move societies out of often protracted civil warfare and toward a peaceful system of governance and social relations. Yet intrastate wars involve complex webs of motives, actors, and funding sources, and they are notoriously difficult to resolve. The World Bank’s *World Develop-*

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ment Report 2011 found that repeated cycles of violence and recurrent civil wars are the dominant form of armed conflict, with all civil wars that started after 2003 occurring in countries that have a history of civil war.²

Perhaps more striking than the fact that new civil wars usually start in countries that have already experienced such wars is that, even where peace processes successfully prevent a resumption of armed conflict, they are often unsuccessful in establishing durable peace, or even the basic hallmarks of security and stability. Instead, they have entrenched situations of “neither war, nor peace” in many postconflict states.³ As illustrated in the narratives of peace processes that I develop in the chapters that follow, many postwar societies remain characterized by widespread insecurity, violence, political instability, and ongoing cleavages between formerly warring groups, despite significant efforts to build peace. Why is this the case? What is happening in peace processes that means that while they can prevent a resurgence of war, they are unable to establish security and stability in the postwar society? Is there something in the international community’s approach to peace processes that perpetuates this phenomenon? This book is concerned with these questions.

Why This Investigation Matters

There are a number of reasons why this investigation matters. First, peace is an essential condition for a flourishing society where people can live their lives in dignity. Civil war, however, has devastating effects on individuals, communities, and entire societies. It causes not only civilian deaths but massive ongoing suffering as a result of the long-term impacts of human rights violations and atrocities, displacement, epidemics, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), the breakup of families and communities, environmental degradation, the collapse of service provision (including medical and education systems) and food production structures, and the destruction of the social fabric that binds a peaceful society together. The economic costs of war are also high. Paul Collier’s analysis of civil wars shows that at the end of a typical war an economy is about 15 percent poorer, and though the average civil war lasts about seven years, it takes over a decade for a postwar country to recover economically. Significant costs also accrue for neighboring countries due to regional economic decline and the refugees, disease, and environmental degradation that cross borders.⁴ The *World Development Report 2011* found violence to be the most significant contributing factor to underdevelopment.⁵ These high and long-term costs of civil war highlight the importance of resolving violent conflicts as quickly and sustainably as possible.

Second, while the international community is deeply engaged in peace processes, and has been since the end of the Cold War, peace processes

often do not establish peace or even basic levels of security and stability. Whether the international community is, as a result of its approach to peace making in civil wars, inadvertently contributing to the establishment of postwar systems and structures in which violence, insecurity, and instability are pervasive, warrants serious investigation. This is particularly pertinent as there are no signs that international involvement in the negotiated resolution of civil wars and subsequent peace consolidation processes will decrease in the foreseeable future. Given the challenges and complexities inherent in negotiating peace settlements, some analysts have suggested that the future will see a return to victory as the dominant strategy in terminating intrastate wars, including through decisive external interventions biased toward one conflict party.⁶ For instance, Charles King argues that the emergence of the norm of negotiated settlements was largely due to the changed international context post-Cold War, with the end of superpower competition and the reinvigoration of multilateralism through the UN, and that such multilateralism will not maintain its influence as a norm given the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the trend toward US unilateralism in international relations. He thus predicts a return to a policy of supporting the victory of one side in civil conflicts.⁷ Although victories have been found to be the most stable way to end civil wars,⁸ they are an increasingly rare outcome due to the difficulty for any one side in a civil war to militarily defeat its opponents and to the rise of international peacekeeping, which makes it possible for belligerents to agree to stop fighting.⁹ Other research has suggested that negotiated settlements do not occur where victory is possible, but rather “stop those conflicts that are stalemated and unlikely to be resolved by any other means.”¹⁰

It is unlikely that the international community will stop attempting to peacefully resolve conflicts between warring intrastate groups given the rise of norms around human rights and the R2P, as well as the long-term cross-border implications of violent conflicts that can destabilize whole regions and affect international peace, security, and prosperity. In fact, with the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) in 2006, the international community committed itself to improving peace-building efforts in civil wars. Avoiding the entrenchment of more “neither war, nor peace” situations in postagreement contexts demands ongoing reflection on the merits and shortcomings of current approaches to peace building. This book contributes to developing a deeper understanding of why so many peace processes over the past two decades have failed to establish durable peace, and develops scholarly and policy-relevant conclusions about how peace processes can become more effective.

A third reason that this investigation is important is that I attempt to explore the challenges to peace-building success by using a novel approach that fills some of the gaps in the existing understanding of why peace

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processes fail. By taking a broad, qualitative approach to the three core functional areas of peace processes and exploring how peace building occurred in these three areas across a wide range of cases, I develop a complex and nuanced account of why peace processes fail. This account not only illuminates the major challenges to peace process success but also grounds those conclusions in an analysis of how the international community's approach to peace making and peace building contributes to the endemic violence and insecurity of many post-civil war societies. My findings are relevant to both scholars in this field and the policymakers and practitioners who animate the arena of peace building.

The Argument in Brief

My central finding is that, while a set of practical challenges undermined the effectiveness of the peace processes I examined, a more fundamental challenge was that security building, governance building, and transitional justice initiatives were primarily technocratic exercises that attempted to “fix” the infrastructure and systems of states emerging from civil war. The tendency toward technocratic peace processes is underpinned by the assumption that intrastate violence is an irrational phenomenon that occurs in the context of the breakdown of state institutions and that reestablishing, or in some cases simply establishing, those institutions through a number of mechanisms across the security, governance, and transitional justice sphere will help build peace.

The result of this technocratic approach was that the peace processes I studied were effectively depoliticized, in that they did not respond to the political and social contexts that defined how individuals and communities engaged with peace consolidation, or worked against it. In other words, they overlooked the relationship between the society and the state and did not engage with the politics of conflict and peace in the postwar society, particularly in terms of how power and authority are organized and contested, and how competing interests intersect with either peace building or the continuation of conflict. As a consequence, the peace processes were often manipulated and captured by elite interests, and inadvertently contributed to perpetuating the very conditions of insecurity and conflict that they were attempting to alleviate.

My core argument is straightforward. Civil wars are, at heart, political processes. Peace processes fail when they do not respond to this central characteristic. However, international structures, organizational incentives, bureaucratic imperatives, and the global peace-building culture all contribute to the perpetuation of the technocratic model of peace building, which

leaves little room for local responsiveness despite the increasingly sophisticated knowledge about how to respond to the complexities of civil war.

In order to become more effective, peace processes need to be reframed away from the dominant technocratic approach to one that is more bespoke, in which the form of each process is custom-designed to suit the specific functions of the process, the context in which it operates, and the needs of the local population, and where the interaction of these factors and the constituent elements are regularly assessed and approaches are shifted as necessary to respond to changing conditions, outcomes, and challenges. A genuine engagement with the politics of each society and a sensitivity to the local political, social, and economic dynamics that shape individuals' and groups' interactions with the peace process need to be the background to the implementation of governance, security, and transitional justice efforts in the context of peace building. Recognizing that civil war-affected societies are not simply broken states that require fixing by the international community is crucial to this engagement. Rather, they are societies in the midst of complex and contested processes of social change and political negotiation. The international community can play an important support role in these processes, but only if it breaks away from the technocratic and template-based approaches that have characterized the post-Cold War period and finds ways to bring politics back into peace building.

Civil Wars and Peace Processes Since the Cold War

The increased prevalence of armed conflict within states in the aftermath of the Cold War saw the international community move quickly into the arena of facilitating negotiated peace processes between warring groups within fractured states. According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), 112 of the total 119 armed conflicts between 1989 and 2004 were intrastate conflicts. During that time, a total of 139 peace agreements were signed in 46 conflicts, of which only two were interstate conflicts (Eritrea-Ethiopia and Ecuador-Peru). In other words, peace agreements were signed in 39 percent of civil wars.¹¹ Many civil wars do not culminate in a negotiated peace settlement, which may be because one side militarily defeats the other, because the violent conflict peters out for a time for whatever reason, because the warring parties are not willing to negotiate, or because peace negotiators are unable to reach an agreement. However, negotiated peace processes have fast become the preferred way that the international community supports conflict resolution in civil wars, and the form they take has crystallized around a few fundamental pillars, namely, security, governance, and transitional justice. These pillars remain central even though peace

processes have grown to encompass a much wider range of issues, which range from security sector reform (SSR) and refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs) to human rights, HIV/AIDS policy, gender policy, children's policy, disability policy, economic development, transitional justice, local conflict resolution, and broad institutional capacity building.

The core goal of peace negotiations is to stop violent conflict and, despite the trend toward broad and inclusive settlements, security and the political settlement needed to establish it remain the most central issue. The most comprehensive study of the provisions in post-Cold War peace agreements found that between 1989 and 2005 only 26 percent of the peace agreements in civil wars did not include any military provisions, but in all but one of those cases the agreements were partial, rather than full agreements, and security issues had been dealt with in earlier agreements.¹² The San Andrés Accord in Mexico was the only full peace agreement that did not include military provisions, but it did commit the parties to discuss military issues in subsequent talks. The major issues addressed in military provisions were cease-fires, disarmament, integration of rebels into the army, amnesties, deployment of a peacekeeping operation, and (to a lesser extent) withdrawal of foreign forces.

Political provisions were included in all full peace agreements in intrastate conflicts over territory, and in 93 percent of full peace agreements in conflicts over government.¹³ Provisions covered the issues of local government, autonomy, cultural freedoms, regional development, referendums on future status, federalism, and local power sharing, although no agreement granted independence to a secessionist region or group. In intrastate conflicts fought over government, the only settlements that did not include political provisions were either peace process agreements or those that reaffirmed earlier agreements. Political provisions in settlements in conflicts over government covered elections, interim governance arrangements, integration of rebels into government or civil service structures, the right for rebel groups to become formal political parties, and power sharing.¹⁴

That security and governance are the most common themes included in peace agreements is confirmed by a 2007 study by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), which found that, of the twenty-seven cases of civil war termination through a negotiated peace agreement between 1990 and 2006, the most common provisions centered around SSR; disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR); and elections.¹⁵ When the analysis was broken down into peace agreements signed between 1990 and 1998 and those signed between 1999 and 2006, the incidence of SSR and DDR provisions increased from 70 percent in both cases for peace agreements between 1990 and 1998 and to 100 percent and 94 percent, respectively, in peace agreements after 1998. While electoral provisions were already included in more than 90 percent of

agreements before 1998, nearly all of the peace agreements since then have included them. Provisions for transitional governance arrangements and institutional power-sharing arrangements have doubled to more than 40 percent and nearly 80 percent, respectively, in recent peace agreements, while provisions related to decentralization and the devolution of powers have increased from 40 percent to 65 percent.¹⁶ There has also been a marked increase in the inclusion of provisions relating to public administration and governance issues, including civil service reforms.¹⁷

In recent years, transitional justice has joined security and governance as a central pillar of peace processes, with transitional justice mechanisms becoming more common in peace agreements signed since 1999. The UNDP-CMI study found that provisions for transitional justice were included in 40 percent of peace agreements between 1990 and 1998, and in 60 percent of peace agreements signed between 1999 and 2006, which suggests that transitional justice is increasingly understood as being central to peace making.¹⁸

Since the end of the Cold War, peace processes have gone from being fairly narrowly focused instruments about ending armed conflict to much broader-ranging negotiations of key aspects of a postwar society. There has been a convergence around issues of security building, governance building, and transitional justice, each of which has been increasingly broadly conceived to set the foundations for how the postwar society is organized. In this book, I investigate the way that these three central arenas of peace building have been pursued in a range of post-peace agreement societies.

One of the most striking trends in post-Cold War peace processes is the high recidivism rates for civil wars, which are the backdrop to this book. Although statistical analyses of failure rates vary in terms of coding, time frames, and parameters, they all demonstrate this high failure rate. Barbara F. Walter's work on the relapse rates for civil wars shows that they have always been difficult to resolve. In a 1999 study, she found that between 1940 and 1990, of all the civil wars settled through peace agreements, 53 percent experienced resumed violence at some point in the future.¹⁹ Although the geopolitical context in which these peace processes happened was fundamentally different from the post-Cold War context, the failure rates for agreements between 1989 and 2004 are surprisingly similar: recent UCDP statistics show a failure rate of about 45 percent within five years,²⁰ and the *Human Security Report 2012* notes that 32 percent of peace agreements signed between 1950 and 2004 were followed by recurring violence in comparison with 38 percent of cease-fires.²¹ This analysis distinguishes between cease-fires, which just halt violence, and peace agreements, which attempt to resolve the issues over which the war is being fought. Similarly, Collier shows that countries have a 40 percent chance of renewed violent conflict immediately after the end of armed hostilities, and this risk falls by around 1 percent per year of peace.²² Other research has shown that states

relapse into civil wars within five years of a negotiated peace settlement in about 50 percent of cases.²³ To give some perspective, conflicts ending through negotiated settlement have been shown to be about three times as likely to relapse into violence as those ending through victory; however, victory is an increasingly rare outcome in contemporary civil wars.²⁴ Further analysis of the UCDP statistics show that when the analysis is limited to final agreements in a peace process or single acts, as in the case of Macedonia, violence restarted in only 30 percent of cases, which would seem to suggest that peace agreements are increasingly effective in terminating armed conflicts as the *Human Security Report 2012* argues.²⁵

While this is heartening, it might be part of a broader trend in which the international community is getting better at making agreements last through the initial two to five years after they are signed. But we are still seeing either a relapse into civil war or widespread insecurity later due to structural weaknesses in the peace, which remain after the international community pulls out or reduces its involvement in the situation. This might be linked to the increasing awareness of the importance of peacekeepers in preventing relapse into war in the immediate aftermath of a peace agreement. Virginia Page Fortna's research shows that "peace lasts significantly longer, all else equal, when international personnel deploy to maintain peace than when they do not."²⁶ Research has not yet shown whether, in such situations, relapse rates in the longer term remain high after the peacekeepers leave, largely because the recent settlement of these conflicts means that time frames for analysis are limited. However, the violence, insecurity, and political conflict and instability that remain characteristic of many postwar societies indicate a deeper problem with the peace being established after civil wars. While the international community may be getting better at holding peace together in the short term, the fact that peace often remains unstable in the longer term raises questions about the approach to peace making and whether it establishes simply a holding pattern until the peacekeepers leave or international attention and peace-building support is refocused elsewhere. Further, the high criminality rates that plague many postwar states and threaten to destabilize them even decades after the end of violent conflict suggest that there are some issues that are not being addressed in the years immediately following peace agreements.²⁷ For instance, criminal violence in El Salvador increased threefold in the immediate aftermath of the 1993 peace settlement, and the number of killings in Guatemala was far higher in the decade after the 1996 peace settlement than at any time during the war.²⁸ The root of this problem may be that political and criminal violence are often dealt with as separate issues in peace processes.

What all of this suggests is that, far from signifying the establishment of a lasting peace, peace agreements are best seen as just one early step in the much

broader and more complex process of ending violent hostilities and consolidating peace. To make sense of why they fail, we need to consider the broader peace-building process that revolves around them. According to a report by several former Northern Alliance leaders in Afghanistan, “peace cannot come through a deal, but rather it will have to be a process and a movement.”²⁹

Why Peace Fails: What We Know

So, what do we know about why peace sticks in some places, but fails in others, despite significant international involvement and investment in peace processes? Much attention has been given to answering this question, however, the highly contextual nature of peace and conflict means that something that contributes to success in one situation may have little impact in another and may even be detrimental to peace building. Particularly since the end of the Cold War, a large body of literature has developed that examines the success or failure of peace processes, and it has crystallized around four central explanations. These make sense of civil war resurgence variously in terms of grievances, rational actor explanations, the conflict context, or the nature of the peace negotiations and settlement. While all of these explanations contribute to our understanding, there is something missing about why peace processes tend to result in very similar weaknesses or failures across a range of different contexts, and how the international community’s approach to peace making and peace building contributes to these weaknesses.

Many scholars have explained civil war onset and recurrence in terms of grievances based on either identity politics driven by religion or ethnicity³⁰ or, more recently, in terms of economic underdevelopment and the unequal distribution of resources.³¹ The former explanation has been strongly contested, largely because it is unable to explain why ethnic differences and tensions have caused violent conflict in some societies but not in others, why communal violence flares up after years of peaceful coexistence, or how the manipulation of identity politics can serve political and economic ends.³² The latter holds more sway, with numerous studies linking poor economic development to the likelihood of war recurrence, albeit without consensus on how or why. Some have suggested that postwar peace building is more successful in contexts of higher economic development,³³ while others show that poverty may motivate actors toward violent conflict because of the low opportunity costs of war and the potential for private gains from violence.³⁴ Walter found that poor economic development contributes to war recurrence because rebel recruitment is easier in situations of individual hardship or severe dissatisfaction with the current situation,

and when there are no nonviolent alternatives for effecting change because ordinary people have less to lose from war.³⁵ In spite of these various findings, the causal links between economic underdevelopment or unequal wealth distribution remain opaque and, as with ethnic diversity, poverty or inequality alone cannot explain the reeruption of violent conflict in a post-war society. In contrast to the focus on poverty as a risk factor for war recurrence, other studies have found that potential wealth, particularly through natural resource sequestration, is a far more influential factor in increasing the likelihood of war, which suggests that greed, rather than grievance, may be the key driver of war and that war recurrence may be driven by rational economic and political agendas.³⁶

These explanations of war onset and recurrence overlap with explanations that revolve around the opportunity costs of war for a population—or the balance of the incentives for war against incentives for peace. Studies have highlighted three main factors that can tip the balance toward renewed war: the recruitment potential for rebel forces, which is based on the benefits individuals receive from joining those forces;³⁷ the availability of finances and resources necessary to fund a war, especially in terms of primary export commodities;³⁸ and the coercive balance between the government and the rebel groups considering renewed warfare, which may be determined by geographical and political characteristics such as rough terrain, large populations, and weak political institutions.³⁹ It is striking that one study found that “no peace agreement has been successfully implemented where there are valuable, easily marketable commodities such as gems or timber.”⁴⁰

Civil war resurgence has also been explained on the basis of the conflict context—focusing either on the characteristics of a conflict or the warring parties involved. Perhaps the most prominent work in this area is I. William Zartman’s theory of the “ripeness for peace.” Zartman argues that violent conflicts are ripe for negotiated resolution when they reach a hurting stalemate—in other words, when conflicting groups realize that further violence is too costly and can no longer help them achieve their goals.⁴¹ In such situations, groups are willing participants in negotiations because they believe that they can benefit from peace, and are more likely to implement and honor peace agreements than in contexts where participants see further opportunities in the continuation of war. The ripeness idea goes a significant way toward explaining why some agreements are reached after years of inertia in a peace process, and more work is warranted regarding the particular ways some peace processes help to maintain ripeness and prevent relapse into war, while others do not. Other context-focused explanations have identified specific factors that influence the likelihood or durability of peace, such as the internal characteristics of belligerent groups,⁴² the number of conflict dyads present,⁴³ or the attributes of the previous war, including how it was fought and brought to an end.⁴⁴

Another prominent explanation for peace process failure centers on the process and structure of peace agreements as the key determinants of the durability of peace; however, there is significant contention over the factors that contribute to success or failure. Studies have found variously that a peace agreement is more likely to be signed and to hold if it includes all belligerents involved in the war than if it does not,⁴⁵ and that even excluded groups' engagement in violent conflict does not affect signatories' commitment to peace, probably because the risk of such action was anticipated and factored into the signatories' decisionmaking calculations before signing the agreement.⁴⁶ Other studies have focused more broadly on the process of mediation and negotiations, arguing for instance that biased mediators are more likely than neutral mediators to produce agreements with elaborated institutional arrangements that are conducive to durable peace.⁴⁷ Some studies have looked more specifically at the presence of particular provisions in an agreement, showing, for example, that agreements including detailed political, military, and territorial arrangements were more likely to succeed, whereas those that failed contained only vague provisions for future political arrangements.⁴⁸ Others have found that peace agreements are more likely to hold if they include provisions for power sharing and DDR.⁴⁹ Again, certain elements of these pronouncements are contested, with Walter's research suggesting that disarmament can have a negative effect on adversaries' sense of security and thereby increase the risk that they will resume violent confrontation.⁵⁰

Credible commitments have also been shown to be a deciding factor in the durability of peace, and research has demonstrated the importance of external intervention, particularly through the presence of peacekeepers, in holding a fragile peace together through the initial volatile period after a peace settlement. Walter's seminal research on credible commitments found that the highly dangerous nature of the early implementation period of a settlement deterred combatants from committing to peace agreements and that third-party security guarantees were essential to addressing this security dilemma and ensuring the stability of the peace in the period of demilitarization following a peace settlement.⁵¹ The presence of peacekeepers has been shown to have a positive effect on post-civil war peace durability by numerous analysts.⁵² These findings are particularly important in light of the trend that fewer civil wars now end in victory, but become increasingly protracted and result in low-level conflict festering indefinitely.⁵³

These various explanations for civil war recurrence shed light on different factors and actions that have contributed to peace process success and failure in the past. However, there is still something missing from our understanding of these issues, particularly in terms of the functional relationship between certain actions or factors and stable peace. Explanations based primarily on statistical analysis provide what are essentially flat con-

clusions that may not adequately reflect the texture of postconflict environments. They cannot capture the micro-level dynamics of civil wars and peace processes and, while their conclusions usefully illuminate risk factors or susceptibilities, there is a need for research that looks beyond them to investigate why existing approaches to peace making and consolidation do not adequately address those factors to mitigate the risk that they pose, or why responses are not robust enough to withstand such pressures. By looking more broadly at the national, regional, and international processes that provide the background in which conflict or peace are made, this book builds on the existing literature to more effectively understand the range of factors, linkages, and processes that contribute to the failure of peace processes to establish lasting peace.

There is a clear need to balance technical lessons with the distinct qualities of each particular case, and the broader lessons that can be drawn about why peace processes across a range of contexts fail to establish lasting peace.⁵⁴ Further, many of the explanations put forward about peace process failure are based on civil war recidivism as the main indicator of failure. Given the growing evidence that full resurgence of civil war is not as common as it was in the past, in this book I consider the many peace processes where war has not resumed but peace has also not been durably established, and where violence and insecurity continue to characterize “postwar” societies. To my knowledge, none of the existing explanations about peace process failure can explain why the same types of weaknesses keep recurring across a range of different peace processes, and what it is about the international community’s approach to peace making and peace building that contributes to them. In this book, I attempt to fill some of these gaps.

The Approach and Scope of the Book

I take a novel approach to answering the questions of why “neither war, nor peace” situations are entrenched in many postwar societies despite internationally supported peace processes, and how the international community’s approach to peace processes has perpetuated this phenomenon in the aftermath of the Cold War. I do so by qualitatively analyzing a wide variety of peace processes in terms of their functional elements, so as to determine what similarities exist across them and whether there is something about the international community’s approach to responding to civil wars that contributes to the failure of peace processes. My focus is on negotiated peace processes that have occurred since 1991, when the end of the Cold War ushered in an era of increased international involvement in the resolution of intrastate conflicts and created a fundamentally different geopolitical context in which those peace processes operated.

My analysis focuses on the three central pillars of peace processes—security building, governance building, and transitional justice—in order to explore how the implementation of these provisions plays out, and what their relationship to peace consolidation is, in the aftermath of a peace agreement. By concentrating on the way that these spheres of action are approached and implemented by the international community, I determine trends in terms of success and failure that exist across a variety of civil war contexts, and develop an overarching analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the international community's approach to peace building post-Cold War. I balance a detailed analysis of these three themes in a diverse set of peace processes with a broader analysis of the reasons why these processes have not successfully consolidated peace. In doing so, I offer a new way of making sense of the complex issues around peace process failure by determining the factors within the international community's approach to peace building that undermine peace consolidation.

In order to capture the variety of approaches to peace making that the international community has engaged in since 1991, I have grounded the book in a detailed analysis of the postagreement peace processes of six countries that experienced very different types of civil wars, and which are spread across the post-Cold War period. I do not take a classical approach to case studies, in that I am not developing comprehensive accounts of what happened in each case during the peace process. Instead, I take a functional approach, which draws out the core aspects of security building, governance building, and transitional justice processes that contributed to the failure of those processes to establish peace.

The cases that I investigate are, in chronological order, Cambodia (1991), Mozambique (1992), Bougainville (2001), Liberia (2003), North and South Sudan (2005), and Aceh (2005). Within this set, there are three secessionist conflicts, or conflicts over territory (Bougainville, Sudan, Aceh), and three conflicts that were more broadly a fight about government (Cambodia, Mozambique, Liberia). This set covers conflicts in geographically confined areas with small populations (Bougainville and Aceh) as well as conflicts in much larger countries with diverse and disparate populations (Cambodia, Mozambique, Liberia, Sudan). The set includes wars that were directly linked to decolonization struggles (Mozambique), wars that were the result of regional or international conflicts (Cambodia), and wars that are linked directly to conflict over resources (Bougainville, Sudan, Aceh). The length and casualty rates of the wars varies greatly, as do the negotiated processes by which peace was reached. Similarly, these cases represent varying levels of international involvement in the postagreement implementation and peace consolidation processes. While large international peacekeeping forces were deployed in some of these countries (Cambodia, Mozambique, Liberia, Sudan), smaller regional forces were deployed in others (Bougainville,

Aceh). These peace processes reflect a variety of ways that peace making and peace building have been pursued in the post–Cold War period.

Despite the variety of contexts in which these peace processes happened, a key reason for choosing these six cases for this study is that they are representative of a growing trend in postwar states: while none of these countries has seen a full resurgence of civil war in the years since the final peace agreement was signed, none of them has yet reached the point where their peace can be considered sustainable. Rather, violence, insecurity, ongoing divisions between formerly warring groups, and a sense of political instability remain characteristic of nearly all of these contexts, as they hover between peace and war, particularly at election times.

I also selected these as cases that represent very different conflict contexts and are spread out over the post–Cold War period, which allowed me to explore whether the international community’s approach to peace processes has shifted significantly over that period. Further, while they all enjoyed significant international involvement, they are not the cases that have received the most international support, such as the conflicts in the Balkans or Timor-Leste. The vast majority of peace processes do not result in international involvement that went as far as in Kosovo and Timor-Leste, where the international community assumed authority over state structures. Instead, the norm in peace processes is for significant international involvement in peace negotiations that frame the path to peace and in implementing the major aspects of that path—for instance, around security building, governance building, and, increasingly, transitional justice—and these cases illustrate this more common type of involvement.

In departing from the more common analysis of peace process failure as a resurgence of violence, I investigate the more complex dynamics of cases where the pressures for peace and those for war are locked in a stalemate of sorts, neither able to fully capture the society at hand. Bougainville is, in some respects, the outlier of this set of cases, as the approach to both the negotiated peace process and its implementation process diverged significantly from what appears to be the dominant international approach to resolving violent civil conflicts. It provides an important counterpoint to the analysis derived from the other cases in terms of how peace processes have been approached, and to what effect. However, it does demonstrate characteristics similar to the other cases in terms of the perceived stability of the current peace.

I include a second tier of case-based analysis when particular cases not in the primary list demonstrate interesting or relevant approaches and lessons about the strengths and weaknesses of international approaches to making and consolidating peace in civil wars. In these cases, I do not develop a full narrative of the peace process, but rather investigate a small element of it to further the analysis driven by the six central case studies and explore similarities across contexts.

My analysis is highly narrative based, in recognition of the important role that local context plays in informing an understanding of why a peace process followed a particular path, and how and why it interacted with the imperatives for either peace or continued insecurity. In each thematic chapter addressing security building, governance building, and transitional justice, I take one case study as a starting point and begin by developing a narrative of what occurred in that particular sphere of peace building in that country. The chapters are then organized around the analytical themes that arise from the initial case study, and in drawing out those themes, I bring in the experiences of the other cases, creating a broader analysis from which conclusions about the weaknesses of the international approach to peace building can be drawn. Thus, over the course of the book, I build up the narratives of each case that encompass the three focus areas of security building, governance building, and transitional justice. In some chapters the analysis proceeds after the initial case study in a case-specific narrative, while in others the individual narratives are more intertwined and drawn out by themes or issues over the course of the chapter. This variation reflects the different analytical imperatives of each thematic chapter: the exploration of security building lends itself to a theme-based narrative that picks up specific processes occurring within the set of cases and draws out similarities on that basis (e.g., DDR and SSR), while the chapters on governance building and transitional justice are organized more closely around the particular experiences of each country, drawing out the overarching analysis through them.

After developing the thematic analyses, my investigation turns to the question of why the weaknesses identified in earlier chapters persist and are perpetuated by international involvement in peace processes. I triangulate my case-based analysis and conclusions with the perspectives of sixty-two high-level practitioners, policymakers, and academics engaged in the field of conflict resolution and peace building internationally, whom I interviewed over a three-month period from January to March 2011. These individuals worked for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), regional organizations, governments, the UN, and universities, and their personal experiences of working in the peace-building arena covered the full range of regions, conflict zones, and sectors.

Although all cases of conflict and peace making are unique, and their success or failure is deeply linked to the particularities of each context, it is possible to compare cases to look for patterns and themes emerging from a variety of experiences and to draw wider lessons as to the effectiveness of existing approaches to peace. My intention in this book is not to develop an overarching theory or model of what must happen in order to successfully consolidate peace. Rather, I aim to investigate what broad conclusions can be drawn about the way the international community approaches, engages in, and carries out peace processes in the emergent post-Cold War context as

well as the functionality of various actions with respect to the broader goal of establishing peace and the reasons why peace remains so fragile in so many postwar contexts. In fact, mapping an overarching theory onto the empirical analysis would undermine the core conclusion that emerged from the investigation of case studies, which was that the international community looks for overarching and abstract approaches to frame war-to-peace transitions. Such approaches have often prevented local responsiveness in peace processes and resulted in the replication of certain technocratic models of peace building into contexts in which they were ill-suited and had negative impacts on the establishment of stable peace. It would also undermine the need that emerged from this study to engage in peace processes in terms of the immediate context of both the society at hand and the international community, rather than through abstract frames and assumptions about how peace is built. These may not adequately capture the particularities of individual cases. Putting the question of an overarching theoretical framework aside, this project is an analytical exercise that makes a number of theoretical contributions to the academic and practitioner discourses on the success and failure of peace processes. Through the detailed empirical analysis of case studies, I draw generalizable conclusions about the role of the international community in the recurring phenomenon of peace process failure, which is of value beyond our understanding of the cases examined. This analysis contributes to the development of a critique of institutionalized power that has long been of concern to scholars. In this context, I contribute specifically to our understanding of how power is organized and distributed in the context of peace processes, both among local actors and between local and international actors and institutions, and the impact that this power dynamic has on the outcomes and sustainability of peace. I also develop and apply a conceptual framework for understanding success in peace processes that goes beyond either minimalist or maximalist approaches to “measuring” success and failure in peace making and peace building. This “minimalist+politics” framework provides a more dynamic lens that can make visible the extent to which the basic foundations for lasting peace have been (or are being) established in the spheres of security, governance, and transitional justice after civil wars while also identifying the factors that are contributing to or detracting from the consolidation of peace.

Through the different lines of investigation pursued in this book, I combine description and analysis to draw conclusions about why it is that so many peace processes since the end of the Cold War have failed to establish lasting and stable peace in the long term. As Hugh Seton-Watson writes, “The attempt which I have made undoubtedly lacks neatness. This I believe is inevitable, because the subject itself is not neat.”⁵⁵ The unwieldiness of conflicts and peace processes is apparent in the sometimes complex nature of the narratives developed as part of this analysis. But it is only by

pursuing a broad, macro-level, qualitative analysis of a wide range of peace processes that a specific kind of conclusion can be drawn about the role that the international community's approach to civil wars plays in establishing the "neither war, nor peace" situations that persist in many post-peace agreement states.

There are many things that this book does not do, and does not attempt to do. It is by no means a definitive account of all peace processes since the end of the Cold War. There are many cases that I do not discuss, some of which play a major role in the narrative of international engagement in civil wars. The cases that I examine in detail were chosen on the basis of their utility to this study and representativeness of broad trends and international approaches, as outlined above. I also do not presume to offer an exhaustive analysis of all the factors that contribute to peace process failure. There are a number of themes that I do not address, the most prominent of which is the economic dimension of peace building. This issue has received significant attention in the literature,⁵⁶ and the reinvigoration of postwar economies has become a central aspect of supporting the reconstruction and recovery of war-torn societies. Although related to the three areas of peace building identified earlier, the economic aspect is distinct in that it is often not pursued on the basis of a framework established as part of a peace settlement. While security, governance, and transitional justice provisions are prominent and common across peace agreements, provisions relating to economic reform and recovery are less consistently incorporated, appearing in less than half of the peace agreements considered by the UNDP-CMI study mentioned above.⁵⁷ Additionally, such provisions are less specific than provisions related to the other three areas, particularly in terms of security and governance arrangements.⁵⁸ Although economic recovery has been established in the literature as an important part of peace-building success, in this study I am primarily concerned with peace-building processes that are rooted in negotiated peace settlements, and so it is necessary to isolate variables insofar as is possible when dealing with highly interlinked processes. However, the study is sensitive to the role that economic imperatives play in influencing the commitment of various actors to either the consolidation of peace or the perpetuation of insecurity, and these issues are drawn out where relevant in the case studies.

For similar reasons, I do not engage with the broad literature about the overlap of development and peace-building, nor the literature that deals with the merits of grassroots, civil society-driven peace building.⁵⁹ My investigation is primarily concerned with the international community, which is defined below, and its approach to negotiated peace processes in civil wars. I focus on this particular aspect of the peace-building world because of the unique and influential role that the international community has during both peace negotiations and the implementation of peace settlements as well as

the unparalleled role it has played in shaping the overarching approach to peace processes and the framework within which they are pursued. The international community's involvement is primarily at the institutional level of peace building and, as peace agreements revolve around the themes of governance, security, and transitional justice, those areas have been my focus for research rather than the broad array of bottom-up approaches to peace. The one time that I do engage with bottom-up approaches is in Chapter 5, where I contrast formal transitional justice processes with the informal and largely community-driven transitional justice process in Bougainville, as a way of exploring how official resources have been used to support locally driven peace-building approaches.

Terminology

A number of the terms that are central to any discussion of peace processes have broad and contested meanings, and it is worth outlining what I understand them to mean in the context of my investigation. As Mats Berdal notes, "A degree of terminological inexactitude is unavoidable in dealing with this subject,"⁶⁰ and while these definitions may not be precise, they are sufficiently dynamic to reflect the shifting nature of the processes and groups being described.

For much of the modern period, war has been defined primarily in terms of its political motivations—Carl von Clausewitz encapsulated this in his seminal statement that war is the continuation of politics by other means⁶¹—or by the number of battleground deaths.⁶² These definitions are less useful in the context of civil wars that often blend political with economic and criminal motivations, and where casualties are less easily quantified as a result of monitoring and reporting difficulties, exaggerations by armed groups of the casualties for which they are responsible, and the fact that the deaths caused by civil wars extend beyond the battleground.⁶³ Further, in many postagreement societies violence between groups continues but not on the military stage, and thus it may not be considered an active war or conflict even though violence and conflict may continue to define how the society operates.

For the purposes of this book, I use the term *war* to denote sustained violent militarized conflict, regardless of the number of deaths that result. Such militarization necessarily involves a level of organization, and so this definition precludes random acts of violence that are not part of a broader conflict process. I use *conflict* more broadly to denote all hostility, competition, or struggle that manifests violently in a society. I employ *conflict* particularly with respect to situations of insecurity where violence does not reach the heights of military confrontation, but where the absence of security is a defin-

ing feature of everyday life. Both war and conflict result in casualties, but they are generally at much higher rates during wars.

I use the term *international community* loosely to refer to those key states, organizations, and actors who are most involved in peace processes in civil wars. This includes individual states or groups of states, multinational organizations such as the UN, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the African Union (AU), as well as the myriad international and regional nonstate actors engaged in international peace building. Despite the obvious differences in scope, mission, and capacity of these actors, and their various levels of engagement in different contexts, they are similar in that they are broadly engaged in the promotion of peace in conflict-affected states and form the community of actors that drives the approaches to and thinking around peace making internationally. I also acknowledge the different constellations of actors in each context: in effect, those actors that make up the international community to which I refer are different in each context, even though they are from the same broad pool of actors. By looking at the various actors who played key roles in each particular context, this book builds up a comprehensive picture of the international community involved in negotiated peace processes, rather than just focusing on specific states or organizations or on the “community” involved in particular individual cases. When I speak of the international community’s involvement in particular processes, I mean to focus on those actions that broadly involve the range of actors described above, rather than specific actions taken by individual actors. This approach inevitably sacrifices a level of detail and sensitivity to the diversity both between and within these groups of actors but a level of generalization is necessary to pursue an overarching analysis of the dominant international approach to peace processes in civil wars. Echoing Séverine Autesserre, I believe that what this approach provides in terms of scholarly and policy insights is an acceptable trade-off for the loss of factual minutiae.⁶⁴

Finally, I use the term *peace process* to describe the complex, long, and dynamic endeavor by which a society moves out of violent conflict and toward peaceful modes of social organization and the contestation of power. Negotiated peace processes are much more than just a peace settlement; they involve the implementation of agreements and the broader mechanisms of peace consolidation that stem from negotiated agreements. Peace agreements are, at base level, in-principle agreements and words on paper that need to be implemented; they are aspirational road maps for the path the peace process will continue along. Although negotiating a settlement is paramount to a peace process and the term is often conflated to such negotiations, it is important to see agreements as just one part of a longer process, given their high rates of collapse. An agreement is no more than a

scrap of paper unless it is backed by ongoing efforts to support and consolidate peace.

However, a negotiated peace process is fundamentally about a negotiated settlement to violent conflict and the processes by which that settlement is implemented and peace is consolidated. As such, in this investigation I consider a peace process to include those activities and mechanisms that stem from the negotiated settlement, that are related to the overarching objective of peace building, and that operate at both societal and institutional levels for the duration of the period when local and international actors consider themselves to be involved in a peace-building process. This loose definition of peace processes excludes grassroots peace building that may complement, but is not a part of, the overarching negotiated peace process as well as the myriad civil society actors who work within the broad context of peace building but are not involved directly in the implementation of a peace agreement. This is not to diminish the importance and influence of such actors and approaches on the overall goal of peace building, but to focus, for methodological and practical reasons, on an inter-linked set of mechanisms and structures that operate at the core of peace processes and that stem from a negotiated settlement.

Organization of the Book

In Chapter 2, I set out the analytical foundations for this investigation by developing a conceptual framework for understanding success as well as a complementary analytical framework for analyzing and “measuring” success in practice. In Chapter 3, I examine the experiences of security building in the case studies to explore why, despite significant international involvement in building security after civil wars, insecurity and violence remain pervasive in many postagreement societies. In Chapter 4, I describe the way that governance reforms have been pursued in the aftermath of civil wars and what impact these reforms have had on peace consolidation in the cases studied. In Chapter 5, I discuss the role of transitional justice in peace processes. In Chapter 6, I examine the anatomy of failure in the peace processes studied by reviewing the major findings in Chapters 3 through 5 and identifying both practical and systemic challenges to peace process effectiveness. In Chapter 7, I summarize my findings and identify their implications for practitioners and scholars in the field of peace building.

Notes

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