Pacifism: The Anatomy of a Subjugated Knowledge

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Abstract
This paper reports on some preliminary results of a discourse analysis of “pacifism” and “nonviolence” primarily within the primary discursive sites of the discipline of politics and international relations (IR). Based on an examination of some of the leading IR journals, textbooks, conference programmes, and interviews with scholars, as well as some broader aspects of popular culture, the paper describes the primary silences, narratives, and discursive constructions of pacifist theory and practice in these texts. It finds that pacifism fits the definition of a “subjugated knowledge” within IR, and argues that the subjugation of pacifism is moreover, functional to the operation of current forms of hegemonic power and is maintained through a series of disciplinary practices, including scholarly self-censorship, silencing and exclusion mechanisms, and disciplining myths, assumptions, metaphors, and cultural repertoires. The paper concludes by discussing why this finding is so important, and makes some suggestions for de-subjugating pacifism within the discipline by, for example, contesting the naïve understanding of violence on which most normative IR theory rests and asserting the analytical, ethical, and practical superiority of nonviolence.

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Introduction

In late 2015, a major public controversy erupted in the United Kingdom over Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn’s opposition to the renewal of the Trident nuclear deterrent, and his opposition to the bombing of Syria. Despite his denial that he was a pacifist, and his assertion that he supported the use of military force under certain conditions, he was publicly labelled a “pacifist” by a great many critics from within the government, prominent media commentators, and even his own party. Moreover, the framing of the charge openly and implicitly suggested that being a “pacifist” was a term of shame and opprobrium. In the first instance, the term “pacifist” was in several cases used explicitly as a form of insult. For example, he was accused of holding to a kind of “diehard pacifism” (Jones 2015), and some of his own MPs claimed he was a “cheerleader” for an “angry, intolerant pacifism” (Chorley 2015). Another media commentator mockingly called him a “unilateralist ‘pacifist’”, and quoting George Orwell, referred to his foreign policy views as “squashily pacifist” (Montefiore 2016). In other cases, Corbyn’s “pacifist” views were discussed as a key part of his “wacky foreign policy ideas” (Marchant 2016).

In addition to the explicit use of the term “pacifist’ as an epithet, Corbyn’s “pacifist” views were also considered by many to be naïve and unrealistic. One national newspaper referred to “his utopian principles” (Greenslade 2016), while Jack Jones (2015; emphasis added) suggested: “Discussion is all very well until someone decides that it isn’t; and then pacifism leaves you as a bystander. Welcome to the real world – where some people can’t be negotiated with.” General Sir Nicholas Houghton, the chief of the defence staff, stated publicly that he would be worried if Corbyn’s views were translated into power (Mason and Wintour 2015), while an article defending Corbyn stated that although his position was “politically naïve”, at least he was consistent (Gray 2015). Others suggested that his unrealistic views made him unelectable and threatened the future of the party: “Labour risks returning to the 1980s and no longer being taken seriously because of Jeremy Corbyn’s opposition to Trident and his ‘pacifist views’... voters want a government that ‘takes defence seriously’” (McCann 2015; emphasis added).

Related to this, another narrative common in public discussion about Corbyn’s “pacifism” was that in addition to its naivety, it was dangerous to the security of the nation and a form of defeatism. A former Labour shadow minister, Chuka Umunna, said publicly:
“Jeremy Corbyn’s pacifist views should disqualify him from office because he cannot keep Britain safe” (Hughes 2015). An article by a Labour activist, in a direct reference to the World War II narrative of appeasement, talks about Corbyn’s “pacifism” as coming from a position of “peace at any price” (Marchant 2015), while an article in the Telegraph argued that his views “encourages our enemies to think us weak, encouraging them to act and makes war more, not less likely” (Tugendhat 2016). Lord West, a former Labour Minister, said he would “not tolerate a shift to waving the white flag... Because I don't believe that being a pacifist – although it's an admirable thing for an individual – I don't believe it's a way for someone to look after our nation because we are in a very, very dangerous and nasty world” (Woodhouse 2015; emphases added).

I have described this episode at some length because it illustrates a few of the core themes and narratives I am investigating in the wider study which this paper reports on, as well as the broader political-cultural context in which discussions of pacifism and nonviolence take place. For example, I am interested in the way in which the terms “pacifism” and “pacifists” have come to be seen as personally admirable, but unsuited or even dangerous to so-called real world politics, and how they can be used as socially-acceptable pejorative terms. I am also interested in the kinds of narratives and cultural repertoires employed when speaking publicly about pacifism, such as references to dominant myths about appeasement, Hitler, and World War II, and assertions about relevance to the “real world”. A key point is that this episode could not have occurred unless there was a broader cultural-political discourse in which pacifism, as a theory and practice of politics, was already discursively constructed and narrated in a particular (negative) way. When even Corbyn’s defenders call his pacifism “politically naïve”, it is a surety that pacifism is widely considered to be an inferior set of ideas to other political philosophies and theories. Moreover, this broad cultural suppression of pacifism as a valid form of political knowledge and political practice is enabled and constructed through the participation of a variety of social institutions, including politics, media, academia, and popular culture.

The primary aim of this paper is to report on some initial results of a discourse analysis of “pacifism” and “nonviolence” within the primary discursive site of academia, specifically, the politics and IR discipline, as well as within the sites of popular film and war
remembrance. Based on an analysis of some leading IR journals, textbooks, and conference programmes, as well as interviews with scholars and an examination of popular film, and war memorialisation practices in New Zealand, the paper describes some of the primary silences, narratives, and discursive renderings of pacifism and its associated term, nonviolence, in these texts. Overall, it finds that pacifism fits the definition of a “subjugated knowledge” within IR, in that it has been treated as one of those “knowledges that have been disqualified as nonconceptual knowledges, as insufficiently elaborated knowledges: naive knowledges, hierarchically inferior knowledges, knowledges that are below the required level of erudition or scientifi city” (Foucault 1997: 7).

The paper goes on to briefly explore why this is by arguing that the subjugation of pacifism within IR, as in wider society, is functional to the operation of current forms of hegemonic power and dominant power-knowledge structures, and is maintained through a series of disciplinary practices, including scholarly self-censorship, silencing and exclusion mechanisms, and disciplining myths, assumptions, metaphors and cultural repertoires. The paper concludes with a brief examination of why this is an important question, and then provides some suggestions for de-subjugating pacifism within the discipline by, for example, contesting the naïve understanding of violence on which most normative IR theory rests and asserting the moral and practical superiority of nonviolence.

**What is “Pacifism”?**

In this project, I understand the term “pacifism” to refer to a range of ethical positions relating to the rejection of war and organised forms of political violence, as well as a number of different types of theories of politics, and practical programmes for political action and social change. Importantly, it represents viewpoints on a continuum rather than single absolute position on violence (Cady 2010; see also May 2015, Holmes 2013, Wallace forthcoming), it is sometimes used interchangeably with “nonviolence”, and it takes in a range of historical and contemporary thinkers such as Leo Tolstoy, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Dorothy Day, George Lakey, John Howard Yoder, Barbara Deming, Joan Bondurant, Robert Burrowes, Robert Holmes, Duance Cady, and many others (see Cortright 2006). Thus, while some pacifists (or “nonviolentists”, as Holmes (2013) calls
them) reject all forms of war, and some all forms of violence, usually on moral or religious grounds, others reject specific wars (such as the anti-Vietnam war movement) or some forms of war and violence (such as those opposed to nuclear war). Some pacifists make distinctions between types of violence (inter-personal versus collectively organised, domestic versus international, direct versus structural), while others distinguish between violence and force, or between violence and coercion. The reasons for the rejection of war and political violence also vary, from moral and ethical principles, to pragmatic and strategic reasons (see Holmes 2013). That is, some view violence as an inherent moral wrong and reject the possibility that it can be the lesser evil in certain circumstances, while others do not reject violence per se, but view it as a less effective strategy than nonviolent action – what is often referred to as the difference between principled and pragmatic nonviolence.

In addition, most pacifists hold to a normative theory of politics in which the purpose of using nonviolence and the rejection of violence in politics is to create a more peaceful and just political community, and in some cases, more peaceful citizens. That is, pacifism frequently goes beyond the rejection of violent politics to the active promotion of a normatively understood notion of peaceful politics. Stellan Vinthagen (2015: 61), for example, although rejecting the term “pacifism”, defines nonviolence as forms of political action which are simultaneously “without violence and against violence” (original emphasis), thus highlighting its underlying normative orientation. Nonviolence, he argues, attempts to re-moralise the relationship between opponents, and constitute in practice a new form of ethical politics which avoids both direct and structural forms of violence.

Broadly speaking, an examination of the diversity of pacifist and nonviolence writings, both historical and contemporary, suggests that pacifism has a relatively clear analytical framework for understanding contemporary politics. For example, it has a (consent-based) theory of power, a theory of agency, a theory of change, and a broadly constructivist understanding of social action as constitutive, among others. It has an intellectual framework with a relatively clear ontology, and an epistemology that reflects in many respects a kind of post-structuralist, certainly anti-foundationalist disposition. For example, Gandhi’s insistence that satyagraha (truth-force) “excludes the use of violence because man (sic) is not capable of knowing the absolute truth and, therefore, not
competent to punish” (Gandhi 1961, cited in Holmes 2013: 200), expresses “the epistemological point that we lack the requisite knowledge to be justified in resorting to violence” (Ibid).

Second, pacifism has an ethical framework for evaluating real-world political action based on principles such as means-ends consistency, the reversibility of action, treating humans as ends in themselves rather than as means, and a fundamental commitment to equality and dignity, among others (see, among many others, May 2015; Holmes 2013; Wallace forthcoming). In other words, it has a commitment to emancipatory praxis.

Finally, pacifism has a practical policy framework for political action – which is based on its theory of power and agency, and its understanding of the effectiveness of various strategies and tactics as practiced in a great many historical nonviolent movements. In other words, from this perspective, pacifism bears a great many similarities to other theoretical frameworks employed within IR, such as realism, critical theory, feminism, Marxism, constructivism, post-structuralism, and so on, and like these other frameworks, it can be usefully employed in analytical research, normative theorising, and policy advising.

The Analysis of Pacifism as a (Subjugated) Discourse

The analytical approach employed in this paper falls broadly under the mantle of discourse analysis (see Jackson 2015a; Milliken 1999; Laffey and Weldes 1997). A form of critical theorising, discourse analysis aims primarily to illustrate and describe the relationship between textual and social processes, and is particularly concerned with the politics of representation; that is, the ideological consequences of adopting one mode of representation over another. Discourse theorising is employed within a range of different epistemological paradigms – poststructuralist, postmodernist, feminist, and social constructivist – but is predicated on a shared set of theoretical commitments. Among others, these include (see Milliken 1999): an understanding of language as constitutive or productive of meaning and social reality; an understanding of discourse as being productive of subjects authorised to speak and act, legitimate forms of knowledge and political practices, and importantly, common sense within particular social groups and
historical settings; an understanding of discourse as necessarily exclusionary and silencing of other alternative modes of representation; and an understanding of discourse as historically and culturally contingent, inter-textual, open-ended, requiring continuous articulation and re-articulation and therefore, open to resistance and counter-hegemonic struggle.

On this epistemological foundation, the discourse analytic approach employed in this project proceeded in two main stages. The first stage entailed a close examination of a number of different types of texts in IR and politics, as well as some cultural-political “texts”, including popular films and war memorials. Each text was examined for the labels, assumptions, narratives, predicates, metaphors, inferences, and arguments they deployed about “pacifism”, “pacifists”, and “nonviolence”, and the existing cultural-political narratives, metaphors, and cultural repertoires they drew upon.

The second stage of the research involved subjecting the findings of the initial textual analysis to what I have called a first and second order critique (see Jackson 2007 for more detail). A first order or immanent critique uses a discourse’s internal contradictions, mistakes, and misconceptions to criticise it on its own terms and expose the ideas, events, and perspectives that the discourse fails to acknowledge or address, or which it misunderstands and misrepresents.

A second order critique goes beyond this internal critique to reflect upon the broader political and ethical consequences – what might be called the ideological effects – of the representations enabled by the discourse. In particular, it involves an exploration of the ways in which the discourse functions as a “symbolic technology” (Laffey and Weldes 1997) wielded by particular elites and institutions, to: structure the primary subject positions, accepted knowledge, commonsense, and legitimate policy responses to the actors and events being described; exclude and de-legitimise alternative knowledge and practice; naturalise a particular political and social order; and construct and maintain a hegemonic “regime of truth”. Importantly, the aim of this exposure and destabilisation of dominant forms of knowledge opens up critical space for the articulation of alternative and potentially emancipatory forms of knowledge and practice. In this case, exposing and destabilising the discursive subjugation of pacifism and nonviolence opens up space for the potentially emancipatory effects which would flow from taking pacifism seriously.
In this particular study, it is also crucial to recognise that discourses are significant not just for what they say but also for what they do not say; the silences in a discourse can be as important, or even more important at times, than what is openly stated (see Jackson 2008). This is because silence can function ideologically in a number of different ways. For example, silence can be a deliberate means of distraction or misdirection from uncomfortable subjects or contrasting viewpoints, the suppression or de-legitimisation of alternative forms of knowledge or values, the tacit endorsement of particular kinds of practices, setting the boundaries of legitimate knowledge, or as a kind of disciplining process directed against certain actors or perspectives – among others. In other words, the silences within a body of texts, or a discipline or cultural space, often functions as an exercise in hegemonic and repressive power. Revealing and interrogating those silences therefore, is an important part of first and second order critique.

Lastly, it is important to note that when we examine a discourse as a broad form of knowledge and practice, it is never completely uniform, coherent, or consistent; it always has porous borders and often contains multiple exceptions, inconsistencies, and contradictions by different speakers and texts. Some of the scholars and texts discussed in this paper for example, upon a closer reading, articulate more nuanced arguments than are necessarily presented here. The important point is not that each text or scholar can be characterised in the same uniform way, or that all IR scholars agree on a broad set of knowledge claims about pacifism or have the same attitude. It is rather, that taken together as a broadly accepted academic and political-cultural discourse, and a set of texts and ideas that have power and influence in society at this moment in history, the discourse functions to construct and maintain a specific understanding of, and approach to, war, politics, violence, pacifism, and nonviolence, and more importantly, this dominant “knowledge” has certain (ideological) political and social effects.

(The Absence of) Pacifism in IR and Popular Culture
In this section, I provide an initial report on a discourse analysis of some leading IR journals, textbooks, and conference programmes, as well as a brief analysis of popular film, and war memorialisation in New Zealand, in order to try and uncover the primary silences,
narratives, and discursive renderings of pacifist theory in the field. The major finding of this initial analysis is that pacifism, pacifists, and nonviolence – as theory, practice, and historical events – is largely absent from IR and politics texts, which also mirrors its status in the wider society. The terms are rarely, if ever, even mentioned at all. For the most part, there is a powerful silence when searching for how the discipline of politics and IR engages with pacifism.

The first area of research involved examining key politics and IR journals to see how many articles engaged with pacifism and nonviolence, and what kind of narratives and discursive constructions were employed. A composite list of the top 10 politics and IR journals was generated, and in order to gain a snapshot of the field, all were carefully searched from 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2014 for articles which used the terms “pacifism”, “pacifist”, “nonviolence”, nonviolent”, “Gandhi”, and “passive-resistance”. Overall, a total of 3,073 articles were carefully searched. Of these, it was found that only 7 articles discussed pacifism and nonviolence in any way or form. More specifically, in the American Political Science Review during this period, there were two articles out of 437 which discussed pacifism and nonviolence (Mantena 2012; Klausen 2014). The journals World Politics, International Studies Quarterly, and International Organization all had no articles which discussed pacifism and nonviolence over this period, while International Security had two out of 197 (Stephan and Chenoweth 2008; Izumikawa 2010), the European Journal of International Relations had one out of 287 (Svensson and Lindgren 2011), the Review of International Studies had one out of 594 (Ceadal 2011), and the American Journal of Political Science had one out of 580 (Danilovic and Clare 2007). In short, it can be assumed that pacifism and nonviolence, as a political theory and a framework for political practice, is ignored and considered irrelevant by the vast majority of IR and politics scholars.

A similar picture emerges from an analysis of IR and politics conferences. The databases of a number of conferences were searched to determine how many papers and panels were presented which discussed “pacifism”, “nonviolence” (and its derivatives), “Gandhi”, “Satyagraha”, “Martin Luther King Jr”, “Gene Sharp”, “Tolstoy” and “abolition of war”. The conferences examined included the past five years of ISA, the last three years of the ECPR conferences, the 2015 PSA (UK) conference, the 2015 Australian Political Studies

Overall, it was found that less than one percent of papers and panels at these conferences made any reference to the search terms. More specifically, over the last five years of ISA conferences, there were 59 out of 23,403 papers (or, 0.25%) and 45 out of 6006 panels/sessions (or, 0.7%) which mentioned the search terms. As another specific example, the 2015 ISA programme had 22 out of 4,968 papers which discussed these terms (or, 0.4%), and 19 out of 1,332 panels/sessions (or, 1.4%). Similarly, the 2014 ISA programme listed 12 out of 4688 papers (or, 0.3%), and 9 out of 1221 panels/sessions (or, 0.7%) which mentioned these terms. The 2015 PSA conference had one paper out of 536 which mentioned these terms, while the Australian Political Studies Association conference in 2015 had zero papers with the search terms. Once again, this is an indication of the extent to which pacifism and nonviolence is taken as being largely irrelevant to the study of politics and international relations.

Another important area examined was politics and IR textbooks – as an exercise to see if pacifism featured as a core theory or political practice which was considered as essential for students in learning about the field. As a consequence, every major publisher of politics and IR textbooks was searched for its textbook offerings, and a list of 44 popular textbooks was compiled. Each textbook was searched for the terms “pacifism”, “nonviolence” (and its derivatives), “Gandhi”, “Satyagraha”, “Martin Luther King Jr”, “Gene Sharp”, “Tolstoy” and “abolition of war”. In total, the number of textbooks which contained these terms was 21 out of 44, with a total of 90 pages out of 17,908 total pages (or, 0.5%) discussing the terms. However, out of the pages which did contain the search terms, only 34 discussed pacifism in any significant respect, and only one in a sustained and detailed manner which gave serious consideration to the main arguments and evidence put forward by pacifist theorists (Bird 2007: 234-41).

at all of any of the key terms. In particular, with one exception (see Riemer, Simon and Romance 2013: 363-5), there is a noticeable absence of any serious discussion of the work of Gene Sharp and nonviolent resistance, despite the impact which nonviolent movements have had in the overthrow of communist regimes in Eastern Europe, the overthrow of Marcos in the Philippines, the Colour Revolutions, the Arab Spring, the overthrow of Milosevic, and many other cases.

More specifically, in those few texts which did discuss pacifism and nonviolence, many discussions either referred to it in a passing or descriptive manner, or treated it in a negative or rather dismissive way similar to the public criticisms made against Jeremy Corbyn noted above. For example, in John Hoffman and Paul Graham’s *Introduction to Political Theory*, there are only two uses of the word “pacifism”, one of which is in a study box entitled “The State” which notes: “Pacifists naively suppose that brutalised people or states will respond to moral pressures in a purely moral way…” (2015: 29; emphasis added). This reflects the narrative that pacifism is a naïve, unrealistic position, a view also expressed in Chris Brown’s *International Society, Global Polity: An Introduction to International Political Theory*, where he argues that in the historical circumstances of the barbarian threat to Europe, “pacifism moved from being the Christian norm to a stance that individual Christians might still adopt, but which could not be sustained by those exercising authority – a status pacifism still holds in the world today” (2014: 41; emphasis added).

Brown’s text goes on to state: “Pacifism is, of course, a very well-established position with a long and distinguished pedigree, from Jesus to Tolstoy and Gandhi, but it is open to the obvious objection that an absolute rejection of violence, whatever the circumstances, puts power in the hands of those who are not similarly disposed and can lead to the perpetuation of injustice” (2014: 179; emphasis added). Similarly, Stephanie Lawson’s *Theories of International Relations: Contending Approaches to World Politics* has only one reference to pacifism, where in a section discussing Niebuhr, Morgenthalau and Herz, she states: “Niebuhr was also a theologian and is often credited with formulating a modern doctrine of Christian realism which rejects pacifism as unsustainable in a world so evidently filled with evil” (2015: 41; emphasis added). It is interesting that these kind of statements reflect the types of criticism made against Corbyn, namely, that pacifism is a dangerous
approach which can perpetuate injustice because it is incapable of adequately confronting evil.

To this evidence from the academic field of IR and politics can be added a brief examination of the portrayal of pacifism in popular film (see also Martin 2015). A search of the Internet Movie database (IMDB) which contains information on 3,673,322 films and television series from 1874 to 2015 with the term “war”, obtains 24,969 films and television series, while the term “anti-war” results in 337 titles. A similar search for the terms pacifism, pacifist, nonviolent, and nonviolence results in 456 titles, of which 144 were documentaries. Many other films which portrayed pacifism and nonviolence in some fashion were based on real life historical characters, such as the biopic films, Gandhi, Romero, Selma, and Testament of Youth, for example. A more detailed examination of the films reveals only 42 fiction-based films where characters engage in nonviolent resistance or make the attempt to engage in peacebuilding, broadly defined.

In the majority of cases examined, storylines were found to mostly involve cases where a pacifist-type character is eventually forced to renounce their reliance on nonviolence and instead use violence to defend their community, family, or ideals. Post-9/11 films, and the biggest grossing films of the past 20 years, also have very few cases where pacifists are portrayed in a positive light. When pacifism is not ignored in film, it is usually portrayed in a largely negative or dismissive manner, frequently as naïve, weak, or a renunciation of responsibility to protect the innocent. In part, it can be argued that this finding speaks to the way in which it is possible to portray a real-world historical case of pacifism, but much more difficult to imagine a nonviolent “hero” in a fictional situation. That is, our collective cultural imagination, overwhelmed by anti-pacifist narratives normalised within a broader war culture, is limited in its ability to creatively imagine how a person or community could use nonviolence to successfully resist a violent and brutal adversary, despite the fact that such cases are common in the real world. On the other hand, we can easily imagine that in the face of a brutal, violent opponent, a man (usually) could be driven to take up violence in defence of family, community, nation, or principles.
Finally, another piece of evidence comes from a close examination of war memorials and memorialisation practices in New Zealand\(^2\), of which there are hundreds which were erected since the 1860s. The vast majority of New Zealand’s war memorials were constructed and erected following the two world wars with the express purpose of acknowledging and promoting the values of military service, sacrifice for nation, duty, and martial values such as courage, as well as providing a psychological comfort for those mourning loss of loved ones. These values are often expressed in the forms that memorials take (for example, military figures in heroic poses or forms), and the locations in which they are placed (for example, in the centres of towns, or the entrances to boys schools). There were a very small number of memorials which had an obvious message of peace included in their design, but in practice, these memorials (in Auckland and Christchurch, in particular) have re-inscribed a more military-oriented interpretation and actively resisted efforts by peace activists to affirm a pacifist interpretation on them. Apart from a few small recent anti-nuclear “peace memorials” in New Zealand, this research shows that there are still no genuinely pacifist memorials which openly promote anti-war messages, or call for disarmament, and active nonviolent peace-making. In the absence of systematic research, anecdotal evidence would suggest that this finding would be replicated across most Western countries where war memorialisation plays an important political-cultural function.

Along with the ubiquity of war films and television shows, as well many other aspects of popular culture (for example, violent first-person shooter video games, comics, fiction, theatre, art, music, websites, and the like), this is another small indication of the extent to which the narratives of the inevitability of war and the necessity of military protection in a dangerous world – and hence the rejection of pacifism as personally admirable but realistically naïve – is a core cultural-political assumption of contemporary society. Interestingly, it also reflects one of the many criticisms levelled at Jeremy Corbyn during the “pacifist” episode, namely, that he had not demonstrated sufficient respect for the war dead, and that he had worn a white poppy on his lapel rather than a red one on

\(^2\) This research has been undertaken by the journalist Jock Phillips, and is currently under revision for a jointly-authored article to be submitted later this year on the way in which war memorialization in New Zealand reinforces a militaristic message and suppresses pacifist messages.
Memorial Day in November 2015. In this case, war memorialisation functioned to subjugate possible alternative narratives around striving for a world without war, for example, and to discipline those who would deviate from the dominant narrative.

In summary, these initial findings strongly support the argument that pacifism fits the definition of a “subjugated knowledge” within IR and the wider society, in that it has been treated as one of those “knowledges that have been disqualified as nonconceptual knowledges, as insufficiently elaborated knowledges: naive knowledges, hierarchically inferior knowledges, knowledges that are below the required level of erudition or scientificity” (Foucault 1997: 7). Pacifism is rarely even acknowledged in academia or public political discourse and popular culture, and consequently little is known about it (Martin 2015), except that it is naïve, unrealistic, potentially treasonous, and dangerous in practice. In such a discursive context, no serious politician (or scholar) could be a pacifist in their public duties (privately, one could be a pacifist), nor can pacifism be employed to inform actual policymaking or political practice.

Of course, this brief survey is far from complete and there are corners of the broader discipline where pacifism and nonviolence is taken serious and discussed in more in-depth ways. For example, there is a literature which engages with pacifism and pacifist ideas within feminist security studies (see, among others, Frazer and Hutchings 2014), and the nature and success of nonviolent movements has become a major focus of research within the field of peace and conflict studies. Similarly, there are activist sectors of society where nonviolence is studied and practiced as a form of politics, including the anti-war movement, the environmental movement, large parts of the anti-capitalist and anarchist movements, and others.

However, I would suggest that this only reinforces the broader finding that pacifism is a subjugated knowledge that exists primarily in the corners and margins of the broader academic and cultural fields where some scholars and activists “know” a lot about its efficacy, its theoretical sophistication, its practical success, its history and philosophical anchorages. But, this “knowledge” remains largely unknown and unacknowledged in the power-knowledge centres of the field – among its core journals, in its conferences, its textbooks which define the core knowledge of the field, its think-tanks, its research funding processes, and its theorising about real-world politics. (In this sense, it could be argued that
it functions as the constitutive outside of the serious study of politics and IR.) It is also
unknown among the mainstream media, the most powerful cultural producers (such as
Hollywood), and the political and military establishments.

This is something of a puzzle given the description of pacifism provided above
outlining its analytical and ethical utility, and even more so given the increasingly large
body of empirical research which demonstrates that nonviolent political movements are
both more effective in achieving their aims and goals, and appear to produce more
enduring, stable, and peaceful polities over subsequent years than similar violent
campaigns (see, among many others, Schock 2013; Asal et al 2013; Cunningham 2013;
Celestino and Gleditsch 2013; Nepstad 2011; Chenoweth and Stephan 2011; Svensson and
Lindgren 2011; Roberts and Ash 2009; Stephan 2009). It is also surprising in the light of
the existing academic research demonstrating the practical potential of nonviolent, civilian-
based forms of national defence (see Martin 2015; Miniotaitė 1996; Sharp 1990; Salmon
1988; Geeraerts 1976; Boserup and Mack 1974), the effectiveness of nonviolent responses
to security threats such as terrorism (see Hastings 2004; Stephan 2015), and the successes
of nonviolent peacekeeping in situations of civil war and grave human rights violations (see
Julian and Schweitzer 2015; Schirch 2006; Schweitzer et al 2001; Mahony and Eguren
1997; Weber 1996) – among others. This growing research clearly demonstrates the
practical value of pacifism as a guide to dealing with real-world challenges and threats,
even in terms of so-called hard security issues. Maria Stephan’s (2015) recent analysis of
how nonviolent resistance is being, and could be, employed against ISIS is an example of
this.

Additionally, it is a puzzle in the light of the important literatures which interrogate
and critique the role of violence in politics and outline alternative pacifist political theories
for contemporary states, as well as an ethical basis for thinking about the use of force (see,
among others, Wallace forthcoming; May 2015; Holmes 2013; Mantena 2012; Cady 2010;
Howes 2009; Frazer and Hutchings 2008; Jabri 2007). As noted above, pacifism articulates
a credible ethical basis for thinking about the use of force and international politics which
is rooted in means-ends consistency, the reversibility of nonviolent action (in contrast to
violence which is characterised by an inherent irreversibility), treating human beings as
ends rather than means to ends (as violence does), effective functional alternatives to
violence, and holding closely to the values of equality and dignity (see, in particular, May 2015). Pacifism also has a credible theory of power, a theory of agency, a theory of change, and a theory of the constitutive power of social action. In other words, the key question is: why is a political theory and framework that is as (or, in some ways, more) intellectually credible and appealing as any other (such as Just War Theory, or Realism), and which can offer practical and ethical advice for the real-world practice of politics, so routinely ignored, silenced, and in some cases, actively suppressed?

The Functions of Knowledge Subjugation

Brian Martin (2015: 535) suggests that “given the impressive success of people power... it might be expected that academic nonviolence research would be a huge enterprise”, but then goes on to note that in fact, nonviolence research occupies a marginal place within the academy. He also notes that “despite its demonstrated success, nonviolent action receives only a tiny amount of funding compared to military approaches. The same imbalance is replicated in scholarship, with more attention given to violence – wars, terrorism, genocide – than to nonviolent struggle” (Ibid: 534). He goes on to suggest that the reason for this marginal status is because nonviolence research lacks patrons with status and power (like governments), academics gain status and resources by orienting their work towards the priorities of their powerful patrons, peace studies has been largely incorporated into IR and politics, and it is in the interests of states (who have a monopoly on violence) to encourage the widespread belief that violence is inevitably superior.

In this section, I want to similarly argue that the subjugation of pacifism within IR (and the broader society) is unlikely to be the result simply of ignorance, lack of training of scholars or historical accident. Rather, it is a consequence of the fact that it is functional to the operation of current forms of hegemonic power, because in reality, pacifism, even in its milder strategic nonviolence forms, is a potentially revolutionary philosophy in its rejection of militarism and the use of force, its inherent radical democracy, its alternative consent-based conception of power, its implicit anarchism, and importantly, its conception of human agency in which human choices are given equal significance to social structures and historical trends. More prosaically, as Martin (2015) puts it, “governments do not want
principled nonviolence differs from most of the standard ethical theories in one important respect. Most of them (Kantianism, Utilitarianism, Egoism, etc.) leave largely unchallenged the basic structures of society: the police, courts, prisons, economies, armies and war systems of modern states. Nonviolence asks us to reconsider all of these ... [and] it projects a vision of a new world and ask us to join in trying to create it.

From this perspective, pacifism and nonviolence must be subjugated and suppressed, and this condition is maintained through a series of disciplining myths, assumptions, metaphors and cultural repertoires, as well as a series of disciplinary practices within IR and beyond, including scholarly self-censorship, silencing and exclusion mechanisms.

In the first instance, I have briefly alluded to some of the main myths, assumptions, metaphors, cultural repertoires, and argumentative forms which are both popularly and academically deployed as arguments for dismissing the relevance of pacifism. For example, as noted, pacifism is often dismissed as being unrealistic and naïve because it is said to assume a kind of moral force incapable of confronting “evil” people and movements. Here, the Nazi analogy is regularly employed to shut down pacifist arguments and move on to a discussion of the situations when the use of force is justified and necessary (see Holmes 2013: 164-167 for a rebuttal of the Hitler objection). References to ISIS perform the same function at the present historical juncture. The assumption that pacifism rests on a religious moralism is often used as an argument that while it may be an admirable personal value, it is of no use to political leaders who have to deal with the nasty, evil, real world and its multitude of existential threats. Related popular assumptions and argumentative forms suggest that pacifism is a passive stance, and therefore dangerous because it tolerates or
encourages injustice and harm to the innocent. Such narratives and assumptions can be seen in the public treatment of Corbyn, as well as in many of the instances where pacifism is mentioned in politics and IR texts.

In exploring the mechanisms by which pacifism is subjugated, another important strand of the research for this project involved interviewing 40 or so scholars about their views on pacifism and their experiences (in some cases) of being pacifist scholars. Most were IR and politics scholars, but there were also scholars from peace studies, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, and ethics. Unsurprisingly, given the way in which pacifism is often treated publicly (for example, in the Jeremy Corbyn case) and in the field of IR (as described above), most scholars were not comfortable calling themselves pacifists, particularly in public forums. Instead, while recognising that they were sympathetic to pacifism and probably would fit the formal definition of a pacifist, they preferred to qualify their self-identification with terms such as “pragmatic pacifist”, “practical pacifist” or “ethical pacifist”, or to restrict it to the private realm.

For example, a typical response was: “I am not sure I would openly refer myself as a pacifist in IR circles... I am always a bit guarded about it”. Another said: “in conferences or seminars I wouldn’t have said I am a pacifist, but I think it will be pretty clear from my arguments that I am a pacifist”. A female scholar made the following important point: “I think it is harder to take a pacifist position as a female, especially in the very masculine field of IR, because then you’re doubly feminized – with the marginalization that entails”.

In large part this is because many (but not all) of the scholars interviewed perceive that pacifism or pacifist are problematic terms which necessarily imply a kind of radicalism, weakness, impracticality, or political naivety. A number of the scholars mentioned cases where colleagues were “dismissive of pacifism as an approach”; that the “environment I have been in means that making a case for pacifism can result in some dismissiveness from colleagues”; where “I have been in circumstances... when the kind of predominant American approach demeans anyone who talks about pacifism”; and “of course, pacifism is regularly dismissed as ‘unrealistic’”. One scholar was warned: “Be careful, you are beginning to sound like a pacifist”. She went on to recall an incident in which, “I was told by an IR scholar that, it would have been better for me to admit to being a pacifist at the start. My interpretation of this comment was that had he known that from
the start he wouldn’t have bothered listening to the rest.” Another scholar noted that in
normative theorising about the use of force in IR, pacifism is “completely off the table; it is a
crazy view. So if something leads to pacifism so much the worse for it.”

More broadly, the scholars generally agreed that pacifism was more ignored than
ridiculed. One scholar noted: “For my graduate career, especially in IR course it is not
pacifism was treated dismissively, it simply was not treated at all”, while another said:
“when I was a student in an IR department, I cannot recall studying pacifism in any
meaningful way... pacifism as a doctrine, as an ideology, as an alternative to war, didn’t
really feature”. Another scholar made the point that while, for example, Michael Walzer’s
book, *Just and Unjust Wars* “was very concerned with the morality of war and making the
claim that war can be evaluated morally but he has nothing to say about pacifism. He just
basically dismisses it in a sentence.”

In short, pacifists and pacifism is in one respect disciplined into silence through
ignoring and refusing to engage (Martin 2015) – which is a kind of signalling about what is
important. By ignoring pacifism, the message is communicated that it is an irrelevant and
unimportant set of ideas and practices, and scholars who therefore adopt it risk
marginalising themselves and making their work irrelevant in the wider discipline. In
addition, in circumstances where pacifism *is* acknowledged, the IR field follows popular
and political culture in dismissing it as naïve, unrealistic, irrelevant, and even dangerous.
The consequence of this is that many scholars feel forced to self-censor and down-play
their pacifist views for fear of being mocked and ridiculed. In other words, it is reasonable
to conclude that the deafening silence on pacifism, the general ignorance about it which
results from failing to engage meaningfully with it, and the negative characterisations of it
all function to suppress it – subjugate it – as a form of valid knowledge and theory in IR and
politics.

At this point, by applying the popular Critical Theory dictum that “all knowledge is
for something and for someone”, it is possible to deduce what and who the IR and popular
“knowledge” about pacifism works for. First, it works to maintain the dominance of existing
IR theories and approaches such as neo-realism, deterrence theory, liberal institutionalism,
just war theory, and the like – which are themselves closely tied to material and epistemic
structures of power. Related to this, it functions to reinforce the identity of IR and the
boundaries of the field, particularly in terms of its central preoccupations with war, security, power (militarily defined), coercion, balancing, structure, and the like. Third, it works to maintain a whole series of epistemic, political-cultural, and material structures related to the dominance of states, militarism, the military-industrial complex, international organisations, and the current hierarchy of the state system. More broadly, it functions to maintain the current domestic social order and existing elite-dominated forms of (neoliberal) political participation, institutional processes, and social discipline.

From this perspective, pacifism and nonviolent can be viewed as a potentially revolutionary philosophy and practice, given its critique of violence, its challenge to militarism, state power, and neoliberal forms of political participation. Its subjugation therefore, is an expected consequence of the current existing power structure making sure that revolutionary ideologies remain marginal and unable to mobilise for substantive social change. In this respect, pacifism is similar to anarchism, environmentalism, feminism, post-colonialism, and a host of other revolutionary and emancipatory approaches which similarly challenge the status quo or aspects of it. From this perspective, like critical security studies, or feminist security studies, it is a form of “outsider theorising” or “insurrectionary knowledge” that challenges the status quo.

**Conclusion: De-subjugating Pacifism in IR**

If we accept the evidence and arguments presented in the paper that pacifism is a form of subjugated knowledge and a counter-hegemonic, insurrectionary discourse, the question remains: So what? Why is this important? The primary reason this finding is important is because the silencing and subjugation of pacifism within IR – and in politics and society more broadly – limits the basis on which discussions about the use of force, ending wars, peacebuilding after conflict (see Jackson 2016), state-building, democratisation, and other political challenges takes place. In other words, as argued at the start of the paper, a deconstruction of the subjugation of pacifism opens up critical space for the articulation of alternative and potentially emancipatory forms of knowledge and practice in the discipline and wider society which would otherwise remain silenced. The subjugation of pacifism greatly limits our ethical imagination in thinking about politics, with the predictable result
that in attempting to deal with contemporary challenges, in particular, issues such as war, terrorism, and insecurity, we reflexively revert to approaches and solutions based on intellectually inadequate and empirically failed theories and assumptions – such as assumptions about the utility of military force, the separation of means and ends, just war theory, violence and politics, and the like. The subjugation of pacifism thus prevents substantive progressive change in the violence-producing, violence-maintaining epistemic and material structures which currently dominate the deeply pathological international system. It directly impedes progress towards a more peaceful world.

More specifically, the subjugation of pacifist theory in IR puts limits on the horizon of policy options, forcing policy advisers and policymakers into choosing between a narrow range of policies which are based on an inadequate theoretical foundation, and which have empirically proved to be counter-productive. For example, in confronting the challenge posed by ISIS in Syria and Iraq, by rejecting pacifist theory out of hand as unrealistic and irrelevant to such ‘real-world” problems, policymakers are left with a narrow range of options around the employment of greater counter-violence, despite the theoretical naivety of assuming that counter-violence can be predictably employed to engender surrender or deterrence (rather than greater resistance, for example), and despite the historical failure over more than a decade of military effort in Iraq of employing violence in pursuit of what is essentially a political goal (see Jackson 2015b). It is only when pacifism and nonviolence are taken seriously that alternative, potentially more effective and realistic options for responding to ISIS can be seriously considered – as Maria Stephan (2015) demonstrates.

In short, as I have noted above and elsewhere (Jackson 2016), pacifist theorising provides the basis for a more realistic and much less naïve assessment of the limitations of using violence as a political instrument, one that recognises that violence is in fact, the negation of politics (Arendt 1969; Frazer and Hutchings 2008; Mantena 2012), and that means and ends cannot be separated in social practices (May 2015). In addition, pacifist theory and practice provides intellectual resources for imagining and constituting new forms of politics, and for breaking existing cycles and cultures of violence – and thereby mitigating some of the immense costs of violence in the international system today. For example, I have already noted above the literatures on unarmed civilian national defence as an alternative to national militaries, and the literature on the successes of unarmed
peacekeeping as an alternative to humanitarian intervention. In combination with the increasingly large literature on the success of nonviolent movements noted above, it is reasonable to suggest that in a great many areas – national defence, overthrowing authoritarian regimes, establishing democratic governance, changing unjust policies, and protecting people from violence, among others – that there are viable nonviolent alternatives to the use of force. Interestingly, acknowledging such alternatives would undermine the theoretical foundations of just war theory, which is perhaps one of the reasons such nonviolent alternatives remain largely unacknowledged in IR.

In short, the fundamental acceptance of the impossibility of separating means and ends, a realistic assessment of both the limits of violence and the permanence of radical disagreement, and the enshrinement of equality and dignity as core values, provides a powerful theoretical and moral basis for reconceptualising more realistic and more ethical forms of politics (May 2015; Holmes 2013; Mantena 2012). Moreover, the history and practice of successful nonviolence which is now being brought to light in the peace and conflict studies and social movement literatures shows that there are viable alternatives to the use of force. The utility of opening up IR to serious theoretical engagement with such approaches, theories, and forms of practical knowledge and experience is obvious.

The final question therefore is: how do we go about de-subjugating pacifism within the discipline and the wider society? I suggest that the first step is for scholars and activists to challenge and contest the naïve and mistaken understanding of the nature and utility of violence on which the majority of normative IR theory rests, and to assert and demonstrate through empirical evidence and theoretical argument the ethical, theoretical, and practical advantages of nonviolence and pacifism. Individually, scholars need to resist the temptation to self-censor or limit their research and teaching, and instead openly engage with pacifist theory when it is relevant to questions of war, violence, terrorism, security, peacebuilding, gender, and so on. Certainly, pacifism needs to be taught to all IR and politics students as a core theoretical perspective for thinking about world politics. At other levels, an insurrection of knowledge is needed to bring pacifism into the field’s journals, conferences, and debates. More widely, the public needs to be educated about the historical and contemporary successes of pacifism and nonviolence, through media engagement and other interventions into public debate. Lastly, following the lead of other
previous critical interventions in the field (such as critical security studies, critical terrorism studies, feminist IR, post-colonialism, queer theory, and others), a range of institutional practices such as new textbooks, new journals, and new scholarly networks are needed to establish pacifism and nonviolence as a legitimate approach and research area within the discipline.

In the end, it is important to recognise that at this present historical juncture pacifism and nonviolence is still "in the process of invention" (Barbara Deming, cited in Cortright 2006: 121) and is still at a primitive level of development. This is because, as a society and a world, we have hardly begun to try it. While billions of dollars have been invested in research into military conflict, thousands of scholars study it, and throughout history violence has been the usual means of revolutionary change, in contrast, nonviolence has received only a fraction of this kind of attention or resourcing. This means that we don’t yet fully know its full potential, its conditions of possibility, or its limitations. Robert Holmes (2013: 197) puts it bluntly: “No one can foresee what the results might be if a country like the United States were to spend $300 billion a year in research on techniques of nonviolent resistance and on educating and training people in their use”.

However, after 15 years of a fruitless “war on terror”, endless rounds of military intervention to bring security to regions like the Middle East, and expanding military and security budgets at a time of austerity, there is a palpable sense of war weariness in many quarters. Combined with the growth and successes of nonviolent movements around the world, the time may be ripe for scholars and activists to de-subjugate this important approach to politics.

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Bringing Pacifism Back into IR: Post-Liberal Peacebuilding and the Nonviolent ‘State’¹

Richard Jackson

DRAFT PAPER IN DEVELOPMENT

Abstract

In this paper, I attempt to make a case for bringing pacifist political theory back into the centre of IR debates. I make this argument through a critical engagement with post-liberal peacebuilding models, contending that current efforts to go beyond the liberal peace do not extend far enough, particularly to the extent that they implicitly adopt a version of state-building which includes the military as a key actor, the doctrine of the legitimate monopoly on violence, and the permanent prospective resort to violence as the final arbiter of radical disagreement and political conflict. This, I suggest, reproduces the epistemic, discursive, and institutional structures in which violent political conflict first emerges; in particular, the acceptance of the instrumental rationality and legitimacy of violence is the essential first cause of war and political violence. What is required instead, is a radical post-liberal politics in which both the legitimation of, and the means of, violence have been removed from the political sphere. As such, I argue that pacifism offers important theoretical and empirical resources for the future development of peacebuilding theory and practice. In this arena, at least, pacifist political theory has a great deal to offer contemporary IR.

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Introduction
In this paper, I attempt to make a case for bringing pacifist political theory back into the centre of IR debates. I make this argument through a critical engagement with post-liberal peacebuilding models, contending that current efforts to go beyond the liberal peace do not extend far enough, particularly to the extent that they implicitly adopt a version of state-building. This, I suggest, reproduces the epistemic, discursive and institutional structures in which violent political conflict first emerges; in particular, the acceptance of the instrumental rationality and legitimacy of violence is the essential first cause of war and political violence. What is required instead, is a radical post-liberal politics free from (direct, physical organised) violence as a political possibility or practice. As such, I argue that pacifism offers important theoretical and empirical resources for the future development of peacebuilding theory and practice. In this arena, at least, pacifist political theory has a great deal to offer contemporary IR.

The paper is structured as follows. In the next section, I briefly summarise the very large literature which has critiqued the many challenges and problems of liberal peacebuilding. Following this, I explore some of the main conceptions of post-liberal peacebuilding which have been suggested as alternatives to the current dominant peacebuilding template, largely as elucidated in the work of Oliver Richmond and Roger Mac Ginty, two leading exponents of post-liberal peace conceptions. Lastly, I attempt to make the case that contemporary efforts to get beyond the liberal peace do not go quite far enough due to their implicit acceptance of the violent state. Instead, what is required is a radical post-liberal politics in which both the legitimation of, and the means of, direct physical violence have been removed from the political (and social) sphere. In effect, I am arguing for a peacebuilding model in which a radically pacifist, locally-built, agonistic politics replaces the Western-oriented state-building blueprint which is currently hegemonic in peacebuilding theory and practice.

The Problem with Liberal Peacebuilding
The dominant peacebuilding model employed by the international community has four main planks, namely: (1) security sector reform (SSR), including disarmament,
demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) programmes, the professionalization of the military, and the strengthening of law and order practices and institutions; (2) economic reform focused on market reforms and the liberalisation of the economy; (3) political reform in terms of the enactment of political participation and competition, national elections and constitutionally guaranteed civil liberties; and (4) in some but far from all instances, social reconciliation efforts in the form of truth commissions, lustration, amnesties or other transitional justice mechanisms (for a summary analysis of the dominant peacebuilding approach, see Bercovitch and Jackson 2009). The focus on liberal democratic forms, neoliberal economic reform and state-building in this model, as well as its instrumentalist epistemology and ontology, has led many analysts to describe it as ‘liberal peacebuilding’.

However, after at least two decades of peacebuilding theory and practice, a broader analysis of the literature suggests that the dominant peacebuilding model is deeply flawed and problematic (see, among many others, Chandler 1999; Cooper 2007; Duffield 2001; Mac Ginty 2008, 2011, 2012a, 2012b; Paris 1997; Pugh 2005, 2013; Pugh, Cooper and Turner, 2008; Richmond, 2009, 2012, 2013; Richmond and Mac Ginty 2014). In fact, according to Oliver Richmond, ‘The liberal peace project is in disarray, if not in crisis’ (2009: 557), and current forms of peacebuilding after intrastate wars are in many respects, ‘failed by design’ (Richmond 2013: 378). In part, this conclusion is drawn after examining the empirical record of liberal peacebuilding, which clearly demonstrates that peacebuilding results in only rare successes. Most peacebuilding missions have actually failed to prevent violent domestic orders continuing into the post-conflict period, further instances of major violence and instability, repression, unjust social orders (the persistence of structural and cultural violence), failures of democratic consolidation, and in some cases, external war with neighbouring states. Instead, as well as the critical broader literature, liberal peacebuilding efforts have more often than not created new problems and instabilities in already fragile polities.

In addition to this disappointing empirical record, and to the practical challenges of coordination and resourcing in complex peace operations (Bercovitch and Jackson 2009), there are a number of other more substantive theoretical criticisms of the dominant liberal peacebuilding model. First, it has been criticised for operating according to a standardised
blueprint which does not take into account the unique historical and cultural settings in which it is applied. As Mac Ginty puts it, ‘the liberal peace is operationalized in highly standardized formats that leave little space for alternative approaches’, follows ‘set templates’ in applying reforms, and adopts ‘a formulaic path’ (2008: 144). He suggests that the result is often a kind of ‘peace from IKEA: a flat-pack peace made from standardized components’ (Ibid: 145). Related to this, liberal peacebuilding most often occurs in a ‘technocratic and top-down nature’ (Ibid: 157) which fails to take account of local actors and their preferences and contextual knowledge.

As a consequence, it has been suggested that, in many respects, the liberal peacebuilding model is probably more accurately conceived of as a state-building project (see Richmond 2013), rather than a peacebuilding project in the peace theory sense. In support of this criticism, analysts point to the ‘fetishization of state and institution-building’, the way that ‘internationally led peace-support interventions fail to transcend a top-down bias’ (Mac Ginty, 2008: 158), and the fact that ‘statebuilding is far more focused on security and market institutions than on representative, democratic norms or human rights’ (Richmond, 2012: 116). As Richmond posits, this is in large part because:

The liberal peace framework and its gradations converge on a notion of peace-as-governance. This is both biopolitical and governmentalizing in the Foucaultian sense of these terms... it is also a disciplinary framework that often rests on coercion, a lack of consent, conditionality, and the prioritisation of elites over the interests of the many. (2009: 561; emphasis added).

From this perspective, liberal peace(state)building can be seen as a continuation of longer historical processes of imperialism, neo-colonialism and Westernisation, in that ‘liberal peace has followed liberal imperialism in asserting a superior moral order, knowledge, justice and freedom and devaluing, indeed discounting, local experiences of peace and politics’ (Richmond, 2012: 117). More specifically, there is no doubt that the ‘promotion of marketization, austerity programmes and the notion that the market will provide the motive force for peace and reconstruction’ functions primarily as ‘a mechanism for the transmission of Western-specific ideas and practices’ (Mac Ginty, 2008: 144), as
As a means of forcibly incorporating local economies into the global capitalist order. At the same time, 'Local participation, ownership, identity, norms, and historical systems of power, social organisation and peacemaking are excluded by this version of peacebuilding. Peace instead reflects Western/Northern concerns and priorities' (Richmond and Mac Ginty, 2014: 8).

In part, reflecting Western ideas and perspectives and the state-building focus, liberal peacebuilding is guided fundamentally by a negative rather than a positive or transformative version of 'peace'. That is, ultimately rooted in a realist, Hobbesian perspective which takes seriously the risk of a 'coming anarchy' (Kaplan, 1994) and the permanence of the security dilemma between identity groups, liberal peacebuilding has prioritised security and distributive communalist politics over integrative, cosmopolitan or agonistic politics. A direct consequence of this ideological orientation is an 'acceptance of grudging inter-communal co-existence rather than an ability to effect genuinely transformative peace' (Mac Ginty, 2008: 157). Such an orientation also involves 'a disciplinary imperative' which 'rests on assimilation to the status quo rather than difference and alterity', meaning that in contemporary peacebuilding, 'Pacification rather than peace has been its aim' (Richmond, 2011: 425). Richmond goes on to argue that 'The net result has been to support the power of nationalist, authoritarian, and inflexible elites' (Richmond, 2012: 117), and the creation of a simulacra of peace based on state institutions, the monopoly of violence, and elite pacts. Such a peace is always bound to be largely negative and prone to instability and crisis.

A key problem here is the ever-present, but often unacknowledged view that military violence, discursively constructed as 'security' or 'law and order', forms the foundational basis of political community and politics – that, following Hobbes, a centralised monopoly on violence provides the necessary framework for dealing with difference, radical disagreement, or threats. One of the problems with this is, as Richmond expresses it,

Many of the subjects of recent statebuilding experiments regard the liberal peace as an ideology that degrades into violence because its universal aspirations are not mirrored on the ground. This results in the re-securitisation of the post-conflict liberal state whereby
politics is deemed to start from security and institutions, rather than from individual agency, social justice, community and everyday life. (Richmond, 2009: 562; emphasis added).

In other words, the ontology and epistemology of the liberal peace rests on a Hobbesian view of human nature, community, and the international system, as well as a naïve instrumental conception of the nature of violence, and which therefore retains a permanent place for violence within politics (see Jabri 1996). This is our first indication of the need for a new ontology and epistemology of both politics and peace, one that roots it in the inherent agonistic peacefulness of everyday life and community relations (see Mac Ginty forthcoming), and the rejection of direct physical violence as the final arbiter of difference or disagreement.

Of direct relevance here is an institutionally-embedded biased and flawed analysis of the nature and origins of violent political conflict (Mac Ginty 2013: 57). Specifically, liberal peacebuilding is implicitly based on a view of conflict as being caused by macro-level structural factors, particularly dysfunctional state institutions or state breakdown and its consequent ethnically-based insecurity dilemmas. In fact, a more plausible approach to conflict analysis involves looking at the social construction of war across all levels of society (see, among others, Jackson 2004; Jackson and Dexter 2014; Demmers 2012). Of particular importance in the construction of organised violent conflict is the role played by collective beliefs, public narratives, everyday social and cultural practices, history, symbolism, conflict discourses, and other discursive factors and meta-structures. Within the matrix of culturally and historically contingent discourses and narratives which make political violence possible in specific localities, is the almost universally accepted doctrine of the legitimacy and efficacy of the instrumental use of violence as a means of attaining political goals (Jabri 1996; see also Arendt 1969). Most frequently, this narrative appears as the so-called ‘just war doctrine’, as well as notions of legitimate national defence and the state’s monopoly on violence.

The important point is that as a consequence of this fundamental and initial conflict misdiagnosis, comparatively little effort is put into attempting to transform the social and discursive bases of violent conflict, including the collective belief that violence is a legitimate tool of deciding political conflict and radical disagreement. Instead, macro-level
(state-level) factors such as institutional reform, economic underdevelopment, security sector reform and the like receive the lion’s share of attention and resources. Or, as Mac Ginty expresses it,

orthodox... approaches to peace-making and peace-building emphasize state-building and state-reform as their main methodology. This is essentially a ‘problem-solving’ approach which accepts the parameters or structures within which the conflict occurs and is content to ‘fix’ the immediate problem without challenging the meta-structures that support the conflict. (2008: 146).

These meta-structures clearly include the violent, militarised state and its legitimising political doctrines and discourses; violent politics is an implicit conceptual underpinning of the (post-conflict) state to the extent that it is based on the Weberian notion of the monopoly of violence and the accompanying myths of Westphalian statehood (see Jabri 1996, 2007).

The crucial point for this paper is that the (frequently) self-defeating nature of liberal peacebuilding is that it attempts to construct a peaceful, nonviolent ‘post-conflict’ society while asserting and holding onto the doctrine and practice of ‘legitimate’ forms of political violence which in large part enabled and precipitated the violence in the first place. Ironically from the perspective of the Charles Tilly school of historical sociology of the state, liberal peacebuilding believes that ‘statebuilding is now the antidote for the often violent processes of state formation’ (Richmond 2013: 391). This is perfectly understandable because ‘The ethical and policy metanarratives about liberal peace derive from the founding myths of Westphalia, its state-centric elitism, its focus on territorial boundaries and sovereignty, and its disciplinary nature’ (Richmond, 2009: 564). That is, basically, the international community tries to convince the warring parties to give up using violence to settle their political differences in the new post-conflict state, while at the same time, giving them a Westphalian/Weberian state structure in which such violence may be used for a great many prescribed political goods, including national defence, law and order, peacekeeping, humanitarian intervention, and ultimately, settling radical political disagreement and conflict.
In addition, the international community insists on the legitimate right to use violence itself to enforce or make ‘peace’, disarm the factions, maintain security, impose democracy, and the like, thereby demonstrating that political violence remains an essential and legitimate tool of politics. Peacebuilding, at least in its dominant state-building form, rests on ‘the application of force’, as Richmond (2013: 383) argues, or the widely accepted but naïve belief in the rational utility of political violence by the state.

In sum, liberal peacebuilding processes function to reinforce many of the same narratives and discourses which created hostile self/other identities and legitimised the use of political violence as a means to settle conflict. Through the reification of the militarism and monopoly on violence at the heart of the modern state, it can be argued that liberal peacebuilding actually (re)constitutes an inherently violent form of politics anew, rather than establishing a clear break with previous cycles of violent politics. In this context, the continuing violence and violent disorder in a great many states who have experienced peacebuilding interventions is not unexpected. It is the direct result of the reification of violent politics in the form of the modern Westphalian state.

In effect, there is an inherent paradox in the dominant model of peacebuilding, namely, that it attempts to create a nonviolent ‘peace’ on the foundation and basis of the inherently violent Weberian state and international state order, whilst employing internationally-sanctioned, legitimate violence in an effort, ostensibly, to create an essentially nonviolent domestic polity. From this perspective, it is no surprise that peacebuilding practice has such a poor empirical record of creating stable, positively peaceful, nonviolent societies. The reality is that the liberal peace model is rooted in a contradiction in that it entails an approach, an ontology, and an epistemology which accepts the legitimacy of organised violence as a tool of politics (including just war thinking), ‘security’ as the foundational condition of politics, and the resort to military force as the final arbiter of radical disagreement and political conflict – not to mention the necessity for the maintenance of all the social, political, economic, and cultural institutions and practices needed for constant military readiness.

In addition, central to just war thinking and the peace-through-violence paradox of liberal peacebuilding is an unquestioned but ultimately indefensible means-ends distinction in the use of violence. As a variety of social theory approaches make clear,
beliefs and actions are not ontologically separate from the actor; rather, actors are
constituted wholly or in part by their discourses and discursive practices. This implies that
social institutions and social practices like war and politics are also constituted in large
part by their practices (while also leaving room for considering the material bases of social
institutions and practices). What this ultimately means is that violence can never be
employed as a neutral tool of politics, like a scalpel in a medical procedure which is
subsequently put back into a broader tool-box of political instruments after it has been
used to ‘make peace’ or enforce ‘security’. Rather, its use is constitutive of the very thing it
attempts to construct, namely, a ‘peaceful’, nonviolent political system. The implications of
the inseparability of means/ends for peacebuilding – and politics in general – are radically
disjunctive: violent practices (such as peace enforcement or humanitarian war) and violent
structures (such as peacekeeping forces or national militaries) are constitutive not of
peaceful, but by definition, of violent politics and political structures.

Interestingly, there is growing empirical evidence in the broader peacebuilding
field, as well as elsewhere, to support this contention. For example, apart from the growing
literature on PTSD and moral injury among the practitioners of violence, it is well-
established in the empirical literature on civil wars that bouts of sustained political
violence are highly correlated with, and strong predictors of, future bouts of violence (see,
for example, Walter 2004). In addition, a growing body of empirical research has
demonstrated that violent political transformations tend to produce polities that are
characterised by further violence and political instability, widespread human rights abuses,
and absence of democratic consolidation (see Celestino and Gleditsch 2013; Stephen and
Chenoweth 2008). This data provides strong evidence of the means-ends relationship in
political transformations (see Schock 2013: 279), whereby the use of violence appears to
precondition actors to future uses of violence. The upshot of all this is that perhaps the
primary problem with liberal peacebuilding is that it purports to build ‘peace’ on a
sublimated but discernibly violent constitutive basis.

In the final analysis, as Richmond (2009: 558) caustically describes it, the liberal
peace has been shown to be ‘ethically bankrupt, subject to double standards, coercive and
conditional, acultural, unconcerned with social welfare, and unfeeling and insensitive
towards its subjects’. He goes on to argue that ‘an ethical reading of the liberal peace
exposes its significant flaws and opens up the need for a pluralist reflection on who peace is for, and what it means’ (Ibid; emphasis added). I would argue that the central problem goes even further than this, in that none of the major critiques of, or alternatives to, the liberal peace suggested by Richmond, Mac Ginty and others – such as the ‘hybrid peace’, the ‘local peace’, or the ‘post-liberal peace’ (see below) – take the ethical reading or political critique quite far enough. This is because all of these critiques and alternatives leave largely unquestioned the centrality of militarism and legitimate political violence to the ontology and epistemology of peace. In contrast, I would argue that until the principal role of violence in the constitution of the state and politics is thoroughly and critically interrogated, post-liberal forms of peace will ultimately fail to get beyond the dominant paradigm – with predictable consequences for peacebuilding practices.

Towards a Post-Liberal Peace
As a consequence of the many failures and weaknesses of liberal peacebuilding theory and practice briefly outlined above, a number of scholars have started to articulate alternative forms of peace which could potentially replace the dominant liberal peace paradigm. An initial reformulation is the so-called hybrid peace, or a ‘hybrid local-liberal peace’ (Richmond, 2012: 121) in which the inevitable clash between the local and the international, the internal and the external, produces unexpected, new, hybrid forms of peace which take on forms and expressions not necessarily prescribed or accepted by the dominant powers, and which are constantly in flux (Mac Ginty 2010). In part, the hybrid peace emerges from the everyday resistance and adaptations of local actors to the imposition of political and economic conditionalities, as well as the disciplinary transformations imposed on local communities (see Mac Ginty 2012b). The hybrid forms of peace which emerge from this process are context-dependent, and therefore contingent upon, a matrix of power and incentives between external and local actors (Mac Ginty 2010). Interestingly, Richmond notes that such infra-political resistance from local actors often involves the rejection of the inherently violent politics of the liberal peace:
The infrapolitics of peacebuilding indicate the development of critical agency of a discursive nature whereby individuals and communities mobilise in hidden and fragmented ways for contextual and effectively hybrid forms of peace... These approaches may not necessarily reject violence, but they often do. They operate because of and in spite of power, and often despite their proponents experiencing bare life. (Richmond, 2012: 118-119; emphasis added).

Nevertheless, the theoretical limitations of the hybrid peace seem clear. It is less a theoretically informed prescription for peacebuilding theory and practice, than a post hoc description of often unexpected and highly contingent forms of peace which emerge in specific historical formations. There are also questions surrounding whether hybridity reifies power asymmetries through co-option, thereby in practice strengthening and legitimising the liberal peace (see Peterson 2013). Most importantly in the context of the argument in this paper, the hybrid peace only challenges the acceptance of violence at the heart of the state and politics insomuch as local actors do so in the context of their struggles against the imposition of liberal peacebuilding. There is no systematic critique or deconstruction of the inherent violence of liberal peacebuilding, nor a systematic attempt to construct an alternative pacifist or nonviolent politics.

Richmond, among others, has recently started to explore the concept and framework of ‘peace formations’, which is a kind of ‘grass-roots peacebuilding’ by a range of local actors where ‘nonviolent, peaceful change is sought’ in order to ‘negate local violence’ (2013: 380). More specifically, he suggests that,

peace formation processes, [are] where indigenous or local agents of peacebuilding, conflict resolution or development, in customary, religious, cultural, social or local political or local government settings, find ways of establishing peace processes and dynamic forms of peace, which are also constitutive of their state. (Ibid: 383; emphasis added).

In other words, peace formation – sometimes referred to as the local peace – is a bottom-up approach to peacebuilding which builds on the kinds of small-scale, nonviolent ‘everyday peace’ practices (Mac Ginty 2013) which exist in every society, relies primarily on local
critical agency and which is frequently ignored in large-scale, externally imposed peacebuilding missions (Richmond, 2011; Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013). Importantly, Richmond is here acknowledging the way in which practice is constitutive of politics and political community: nonviolent practices help to (re)constitute the violent state. As he goes on to note, ‘peace formation thus implies a reconstruction of political community, the state and international organisations from the ground up’ (2013: 389; emphasis added).

A step beyond the hybrid peace inasmuch as it actively seeks out peaceful practices and forms, and attempts to build on local agency, the local peace holds real potential for beginning to formulate a post-conflict peace which is not necessarily dependent upon state structures or the acceptance of a monopoly on violence. Nevertheless, in its current formulation, the local peace once again appears as a highly contingent, unsystematic form of peace which appears in specific localities, but which often lacks institutional or ideological power. More importantly, it does not necessarily entail a thorough critique of the violence inherent to contemporary political forms, or advocate a pacifist alternative.

Building on notions of peace formation and the local peace, Roger Mac Ginty and others have recently started to conceptually scope the empirical and theoretical terrain of what they call the everyday peace, which refers to the practices and norms deployed by individuals and groups in deeply divided societies to avoid and minimise conflict. Arguing that everyday peace techniques are universal in the sense that they can be found in every human society, Mac Ginty conceptualises everyday peace as ‘unwritten and constantly evolving systems of governance that apply to inter and intra-group relations’ (emphasis added). Noting that it ‘is dialogic in the sense that it relies on interaction, social recognition and social responses’, Mac Ginty argues that everyday peace is conflict calming and integrative to society (Mac Ginty forthcoming). He goes on to suggest that the identification and adoption of everyday peace indicators could not only lead to a more locally-sensitive identification of peace, but could also provide a mechanism for generating inter-communal peace (Mac Ginty 2013). Of course, the everyday peace is in its nascent phase of conceptualisation, and it does not yet pertain to the larger processes of peacebuilding at the national level, except that it argues for a more locally-sensitive epistemology and ontology of peace. Moreover, it does not speak directly to the question of whether violence
and militarism ought to be removed from politics; it some cases, everyday peace is maintained in the context of highly militarised societies.

Finally, drawing together these alternative conceptions of what peace means in different localities, and to different actors, Richmond, Mac Ginty and others have recently begun to explore the theory and practice of what they refer to as the post-liberal peace. This kind of peace is not focused on the state as the organising principle, but instead ‘highlights the importance of local voices and narratives (not just local elites), and enables self-government, self-determination, empathy, care, and an understanding of cultural dynamics within the everyday’ (Richmond 2009: 570). Such a peace, it is argued, enhances the capacity of the local to resist violence, struggle for social justice, and promote empathy, solidarity and respect for life (see also Jabri 2007). Interestingly, Richmond argues that a more radical post-liberal peace ‘cannot develop while clinging to notions of territorially bounded, sovereign and state-centric international space’, but must instead go ‘beyond Westphalia’ (Ibid: 569-570). This is a clear indication of the direction in which critical peacebuilding theory is headed, even if it is not yet explicitly articulated: beyond states and militaries and their monopoly of violence and doctrines of just war.

However, in the process of reformulating alternative peaces to the liberal peace, the danger is that ‘Such theories offer an immanent critique which may ultimately be compliant with, rather than resistant to, power, whether power is represented by military force, material capacity or normative superiority’ (Richmond, 2011: 421). I would argue that such a danger is particularly acute when the critique of the liberal peace ‘enables an investigation of modifications to the liberal peace without necessarily calling for its abandonment’ (Richmond 2009: 565), particularly in relation to the centrality of organised violence to the Westphalian state and its politics. This is, to my mind, the key problem with most of the current conceptions of a post-liberal peace: by ignoring an ethical (and pragmatic) consideration of militarism and the genuine possibility of nonviolent, pacifist politics, they situate their models within the militarised, violent status quo and simply reproduce the first conditions which make political violence possible. In other words, at best, they are reformist solutions to the deep problems of the liberal peace.

Nevertheless, in the end, the point is not to dismiss these alternative conceptions to the liberal peace out of hand; in fact, they contain a number of crucial elements that can and
should be built upon in order to reformulate current peacebuilding theory and practice. In addition to more effectively incorporating local agency, hybridity, resilient peace formations, an ethics of care, and everyday peace indicators, among others, peacebuilding theory and practice going forward needs to focus on an explicit commitment to building from the ground up nonviolent political forms and practices, and conflict-resolving alternatives to state-based and institutionalised military force. After all, without romanticising them, it can nonetheless be argued that local peace formations and everyday peace are inherently pacifistic and reject violence by design; they are defined and identified by their peacefulness. Therefore, if we are to construct a new, post-liberal peacebuilding framework on these foundations, building up from the everyday, community levels, then pacifist politics and the absolute renunciation of violence must be carried upwards into the broader collective, institutional level. One of the problems with the current peacebuilding model is that it imposes in a top-down manner, (violent) political institutions and political forms on (violence-rejecting) local communities.

**Post-Liberal Peace+: A Radical Proposition**

In this section, I attempt to briefly explore the possibilities for thinking radically about a post-liberal peace *plus* approach which moves ‘beyond merely criticizing the failings of the liberal peace to scoping the extent to which alternatives... are possible’ (Mac Ginty, 2008: 159), and which takes nonviolent, pacifist politics seriously. My starting point is the already firmly established need for a new epistemology of peace (see Odendaal 2013), as well as, crucially, a new ontology of the state and politics. That is, following Richmond, I argue that we need to ‘reconstitute politics’ (Richmond, 2011: 422) in the ‘attempt to theorise... [and] empirically point to what the different possibilities for an alternative, emancipatory, framework for peace would look like’ (Richmond and Mac Ginty 2014: 5). Importantly, this initial task entails placing ‘the state itself into a zone of negotiation, where legitimate authority is to be remade, in a more inclusive and pluralist mode than before’ (Richmond, 2014: 3; see also Odendaal 2013). An essential part of this re-negotiation, I would argue, entails interrogating the state’s monopoly of, and reliance upon, and purported need for, violence and military force.
In other words, in the pursuit of a theory and practice of peacebuilding which ‘might lead to a state or polity built from the bottom-up’ (Richmond 2012: 125) and based on local, pacifist peace formations and everyday peace, the radical proposition is that it may be a polity that does not look or act like a modern state at all; a post-liberal peace is likely to be a post-Westphalian, post-Weberian state peace. This is certainly a possibility if we take seriously the need for ‘post-liberal forms of peace in which there is no central authorial voice’, and which is guided by ‘forms of non-sovereign self-determination’ (Ibid: 126). Richmond also speculates that the hybrid, post-liberal peace may entail

new foundations for political organization that do not necessarily rely on modernist conceptions of territorial sovereignty. Perhaps they will be deeply decentralized and reflect alternative lifeworlds or forms of political actions... whether ‘post-Westphalia’ or federal, confederal, and overlapping. (Ibid: 127; emphasis added).

In other words, in a radical rethinking of both the state and the international sphere, we require a new ontology of peace which accepts that ‘an ethical critique of the liberal peace [and an alternative post-liberal peace] probably cannot develop while clinging to notions of a territorially bounded, sovereign and state-centric international space’ (Richmond 2009: 569-70). Thus, the notion of post-liberal plus peace I am suggesting here is ‘an emancipatory form of peace without modernist (or modernizing) notions of sovereignty and the territorial state’ (Richmond, 2011: 433; emphasis added). It is, in effect, a post-state – or, an anarchist – peace, the kind which Gandhi, Tolstoy and others gestured towards in advocating for principled nonviolence as the basis for political community (see Holmes 2013: 180-181).

Some Key Assumptions for a Radical Post-Liberal Peace+

In addition to such a radical re-thinking of the state and the basis of politics, my speculative theorising about a post-liberal peace plus involves some other important sets of assumptions. First, it involves abandoning the framework of conflict management or conflict resolution which the liberal peace is rooted in, in favour of complexity theory and conflict transformation (see Aggestam 1999; Botes 2003; Lederach 1997). This is more
radical than it might sound, as it entails a commitment to accepting the permanent existence of social and political conflict, including radical disagreement (see Ramsbotham 2010), and working towards its transformation into nonviolent and non-destructive forms. As such, it deviates from the assumption that conflict must be controlled, suppressed, minimised or ‘resolved’ to the point where it disappears. That is, it adopts a notion of ‘positive peace’ based on a just social order and nonviolent norms, rather than simply ‘negative peace’, and it aims at the construction of a ‘culture of peace’ to replace existing ‘cultures of violence’ which accept the permanent normality of state violence and militarism.

A second set of assumptions revolve around the social construction of violent conflict and peace, and in particular, the notion of radical contingency (see Demmers 2012). These assumptions recognise that conflict and peace is constituted in large part through social practice and discourse (Jackson and Dexter 2014), rather than being a feature or, or exogenously caused by, structures or external agents – as the established peacebuilding conflict analysis paradigm most often assumes. They also recognise the importance of taking account of spatial and historical context – the givens of political life – as the foundation for developing political strategies, rather than pre-ordained principles or programmes (Mantena 2012: 468). Together, these assumptions give centrality to both the means/ends connection and local considerations in post-liberal peacebuilding.

**Theoretical Foundations for a Radical Post-Liberal Peace**

On these conceptual foundations – initial post-liberal peace conceptions, such as the hybrid peace, the local peace, and the everyday peace; an acceptance of the need to go beyond the state as the basis for political organisation; a need to interrogate the nature and role of violence at the heart of contemporary political forms; the importance of a conflict transformation paradigm; and a conflict analysis approach which takes in social construction and radical contingency – it is possible to discern a number of potentially productive theoretical and empirical bases on which a post-liberal peace plus paradigm could start to be conceptualised and enacted. Theoretically, for example, there is a wealth of pacifist writings which provide the basis for re-thinking politics, political community,
and the state (see, among many others, Howes 2009; Cady 2010; Mantena 2012; Holmes 2013; May 2015; Wallace forthcoming).

For example, rooted in the fundamental acceptance of the impossibility of separating means and ends, a realistic assessment of both the limits (and constitutive nature) of violence, and the permanence of radical disagreement and difference, Mantena's (2012) exposition of Gandhian realism provides a powerful basis for reconceptualising the foundations of politics, particularly in polities emerging from civil war. At the heart of Gandhian realism is a self-limiting political principle, specifically, the self-limitation of abolishing military force and the final resort to political violence. That is, Gandhian realism reformulates politics on the basis of complete disarmament and demilitarisation, and adopts a genuine commitment to renouncing the final resort to violence in the face of political deadlock. The problem with Weberian state politics, rooted as it is on the monopoly of legitimate violence, is that in an intense political crisis, or under conditions of perceived threat, the governing party (or elite factions) can always resort to the use of violence as the final form of arbitration – as occurred in South Sudan soon after independence (among many other examples).

The resort to force can be conceived of as the negation of politics in its ideal form (Arendt 1969) and one of the key reasons for further outbreaks of violence. This is because violence is, from one perspective, the constitutive outside of politics: ‘it sets the limits of politics’ and is inherently destructive of politics (Frazer and Hutchings 2008: 92). Expressed differently, the essential characteristics of violence are the opposite, or the negation of, the essential characteristics of politics: violence negates dialogue, while politics is a form of dialogue; violence destroys the public sphere and peoples’ participation in it, while politics is participation in the public sphere; violence destroys bodily integrity, equality of persons, and human dignity, while politics seeks to maintain the integrity, equality, and dignity of others; violence treats people as a means to an end, while politics treats people as ends in themselves; violence is antagonistic, while politics is agonistic; violence is final and irreversible, while politics is open-ended, experimental, and provides for reconsideration and reversibility; violence ends relationships, while politics is inherently relational; violence involves domination and rule, while politics involves

...
participation and engagement; violence is centralising and elitist, while politics is
democratising and participatory; and so on.

This is why at the domestic level at least, it is a common feature of political
discourse to contrast politics as the polar opposite of violence, as in: ‘demonstrators or
terrorists shouldn’t engage in violence to pursue their goals, they should instead engage in politics’. As Frazer and Hutchings (2008: 102) summarise it, ‘regardless of whether
violence may have its uses and justifications in relation to politics, the crucial point is that it
should never be conflated with politics itself. Politics is conceptually and theoretically
distinct from violence’.

In other words, without the ability or the legitimacy of any use of violence, politics
instead becomes the arena for forms of political discourse free from the threat of
adjudication or interference by violence; it transforms from pseudo-politics, or faux politics
(the simulacra of politics), to a more authentic, normative kind of politics. Institutionally,
this entails the replacement of formal militaries with other nonviolent civilian forms of
national defence and security, on which there is by now a large literature outlining
potential forms and empirical examples (see, among many others, Stephen 2009; Schock
2005; Sharp 1990, 2005; Salmon 1988; Miniotaitė 1996). In sum, the argument here is that
radical post-liberal peace theorising needs to seriously explore the necessity for the
complete disarmament and demilitarisation of politics as one of its foundational principles,
and make it one of its formative practices.

Additionally, in the context of Gandhian self-limitation and a radically nonviolent
politics, agonistic forms of democratic participation and dialogic politics become crucial
(see Schaap 2006; Shinko 2008). Apart from providing a nonviolent framework for dealing
with radical disagreement (Ramsbotham 2010) and the permanence of difference, another
advantage of agonistic political forms and processes lies in its potential for including
subaltern and marginalised groups who would normally be excluded under the terms of
deliberative democratic forms and who might have undertaken violence in the very first
place due to political exclusion. Agonistic political forms are also potentially transformative
in the way they turn violent military conflict into discursive conflict by turning enemies
into opponents, and antagonism into agonism. The Northern Ireland Assembly is held by
some to be an example of a slow but tangible transformation of deeply antagonistic
political conflict into something resembling agonistic democracy (see Hayward and O’Donnell 2011).

Lastly, a growing literature is exploring the ways in which nonviolent resistance and nonviolent movements, embodies, practices, and constitutes a political form based on the values of equality and dignity. That is, the advantages of nonviolent politics are that they maintain means-ends consistency, recognise the constitutive nature of social practices and discourses, they put the values of equality and dignity at the centre of politics, they are bottom-up and participatory, and more importantly, in practicing them they bring into existence – constitute or instantiate – a more pacific political community and way of dealing with conflict and social injustice (see May 2015). In essence, pacifism or nonviolence is an ethical politics: ‘Nonviolence seeks to be an ethical form of political action. It strives to act politically in a way that sees its adversary in ethical terms. In nonviolence, the ethical and the political are woven together’ (Ibid: 107; see also Holmes 2013). Moreover, the ethical vision of how people might relate to one another in nonviolence is not only envisaged, but it is also enacted and modelled in the very practice of doing politics (May 2015: 109).

**Empirical Resources for a Radical Post-Liberal Peace+**

In addition to the theoretical bases provided by pacifism and agonism, among others, for thinking about a post-liberal peace plus paradigm, there are also a number of empirically-based resources which can inform its further conceptualisation and potential translation into actual peacebuilding practices. First, we have already mentioned local peace practices (Mac Ginty 2008) and peace formations (Richmond 2013: 380) in which local actors have mobilised and established forms of peace rooted in nonviolence, social justice, agonistic political forms and the like. Similarly, Odendaal’s (2013) study of the role of local peace committees and the way they function in everyday life, mobilising social actors and networks for peace in ways that can actually be formative of the state, is another empirical example of locally-built pacifist political forms.

Related to this, there are a number of nation-states without national militaries. Although most are small states and/or island states, such as Andorra, Samoa, Panama,
Iceland, Haiti, and others, this does not necessarily detract from the argument that it is possible to have a nation-state that does not accept the necessity of a formal military. Costa Rica, for example, abolished its standing army in 1949 following a civil war, and has remained free of large-scale violent internal conflict since (Celestina and Gleditsch 2013: 386-87). Its military budget was subsequently re-allocated to security, welfare and culture, and it has become one of the most peaceful, stable, democratic and prosperous nations of the region. Such examples lend further weight to the argument that means and ends are not unrelated, but rather means prefigure ends (Schock 2013: 279; see also Arendt 1969). That is, eliminating the military as an institution and adopting nonviolent forms of defence instead can help in the project to construct and constitute a broader nonviolent national politics.

Following on from this, there is a theoretical and empirical literature on civilian national defence models (Bartkowski 2015; Boserup and Mack 1974; Salmon 1988) which demonstrates possibilities for thinking beyond military forces as the primary tool for national defence, national identity, external engagement and the like. In many ways, this also links to the growing literature on the success and benefits of nonviolent civil resistance and reform campaigns (see Schock 2013; Stephan & Chenoweth 2008; Celestino and Gleditsch 2013). This literature demonstrates the potential for constructing mechanisms for political change and reform which do not depend on the use of organised political violence. Importantly, it demonstrates empirically that not only can nonviolence be more effective than violence – a finding which challenges myths surrounding the instrumental rationality of violence – but it also demonstrates that nonviolence is correlated with more peaceful societies in the long-term – a finding which validates the importance of the means-ends connection in peacebuilding.

Finally, there is an important but neglected literature on the success of unarmed peacekeeping and nonviolent peaceforces, even in situations of extreme government repression (see Wallace forthcoming; Julian and Schweitzer 2015; Venturi 2015; Schirch 2006; Mahony and Eguren 1997; Schweitzer et al., 2001; Weber 1996). This literature suggests that there is real potential for thinking about forms of external intervention in civil wars and violent conflicts which does not rely on preponderant military force and the use of counter-violence to establish (liberal) ‘peace’. Developing and expanding the use of
such an approach would go a long way towards delegitimising the use of force more broadly in international politics, and consequently in post-conflict peacebuilding efforts as well. To this end, among other possible suggestions, the United Nations could establish a Department of Unarmed Peacekeeping in which personnel were trained and resourced for nonviolent interventions and peacebuilding, or which could provide support to local peace groups and peace forces. At the very least, a post-liberal peace plus approach to peacebuilding after civil wars ought to include proposals for unarmed peacekeeping, demilitarisation and disarmament, and the replacement of national militaries with civilian defence plans.

In addition to helping to constitute a more positively peaceful polity, the potential advantages of adopting civilian defence models rather than national military defence, include, among others: expanding democratic participation, civic education and inclusion in politics through dispersing and decentralising power; breaking down hostile group identities and forging a new national identity based on peace rather than war; freeing up resources for welfare and human security; re-building trust between adversaries through a nonthreatening external and domestic defence posture; building local capacity and strengthening local peace; and the like.

More broadly, the post-liberal peace plus approach I have sketched out here grows directly out of ‘an understanding of peacebuilding-as-liberation. Rather than producing subjects, this enables subjects to produce peace’ (Richmond, 2012: 115) on their own terms. That is, it is based on local agency and contingency, and is potentially empowering and emancipatory. Moreover, and inevitably, such an approach involves ‘a repoliticization of post-conflict subjects’ (Ibid: 126), and is a ‘peace-with-politics rather than a peace-as-governance’, because it emerges from ‘an engagement with non-Western, non-liberal modes of politics and peace’ (Ibid: 127). And, as Richmond, Mac Ginty and others have already demonstrated, the actors and spaces for such a reconstruction of radically pacifistic politics lie in popular organisations, student movements, trade unions, peasant cooperatives, NGOs, religious and cultural movements, communities and communes, and a multitude of other civil society formations and processes. In other words, the actors and building blocks for such a transformation in peacebuilding already exist in multiple locations. Certainly, the post-liberal peace plus conception I have mooted here has the
potential to be a more sophisticated form of peace than the liberal, negative peace currently provided for in the dominant model we see today.

**Conclusion**

In this paper, I have summarised some of the central challenges and weaknesses of the dominant liberal peacebuilding model. I have also suggested that a number of post-liberal peace conceptions, while a vast improvement on the liberal peace, nonetheless do not go far enough in deconstructing the violent foundations of the state and politics. Lastly, I have attempted to scope out and suggest some of the theoretical and empirical bases on which we might start to conceptualise a radically pacifist post-liberal peace plus approach to peacebuilding. Of course, in taking this emancipatory project forward, a number of key challenges will need to be overcome. These include: the deep cultural acceptance of the necessity of military violence by political elites, the general public, states, and international organisations; the determination of the great powers to maintain hegemony through military superiority; inertia, institutional interests, and the institutionalised problem-solving practices of contemporary liberal peacebuilding; and the material interests of the military-industrial complex – among others.

However, the crisis of the liberal peace, the evident success of nonviolent civil resistance in recent years, the manifest costs of modern militaries in an age of austerity, as well as a palpable sense of war weariness among global publics, suggests that the present historical juncture may be ripe for pushing such a radical nonviolent politics agenda forward. Certainly, there are a number of key spaces – epistemic, political, and cultural – in which conceptions of post-liberal peace can find purchase. For example, as Mac Ginty notes,

> interest in alternative approaches to peace-making seems to be increasing as a greater evidence of the limitations and costs of orthodox approaches continues to emerge. While the liberal peace has a standardizing dynamic, it is also interested in lowering costs and devolving responsibility... this creates a space... (Mac Ginty, 2008: 159).
Similarly, Richmond sees space for a critical reconceptualization in a ‘resistant, critical subjectivity ... [within] an emergent “post-colonial civil society” and its networks and qualities’ (Richmond, 2011: 420). In either case, what will be required in the next few years is to try and force ‘a recognition by powerful international actors that peace can be plural rather than singular’, and that ‘alternative versions of peace to the liberal peace can have legitimacy’ (Mac Ginty, 2008: 159). As I have tried to suggest, the basis for making such radical claims and pressing the case forward are already in existence. It is up to critically-oriented peace researchers and practitioners to take up the conceptual and practical challenges involved in forging a new, radical post-liberal peace.

References


Professor Jackson has also kindly provided the following list of supplementary for anyone keen to follow up on the subject:


