The Cascade of Peacebuilding Norms:
Processes and Impacts of Norms Dissemination in Peacebuilding Interventions

Panel to be proposed to the section: Intervening in the Future – the Future of Interventionism - details here: http://www.eisapec18.org/section-list.htm

Keywords: Peacebuilding, norms dissemination, international interventions

Panel Abstract:

As a still very young field, peacebuilding has rapidly developed into various sub-fields of practice such as transitional justice, peace education and DDR, and has become associated with sub-fields related to statebuilding such as power-sharing, transitional arrangements, SSR and minority protection. Such peacebuilding programmes are now being deployed in many conflict-affected areas, particularly in the 'Global South'. This panel reviews how the overall field of peacebuilding, and its constituting sub-fields, are driven by recently constructed norms on how to address long-term consequences of violence and guarantee its non-repetition. Going beyond the understanding of peacebuilding as international interventions and practices, this panel scrutinises how peacebuilding has been consolidated around a specific set of underlying assumptions and how resulting – and at times contradictory – norms have been disseminated across diverse contexts. A clarification of the processes and impacts underpinning the 'cascade of peacebuilding norms' is crucial for the re-conceptualisation of future peacebuilding interventions on innovative grounds.

The successful consolidation of peacebuilding fields has been praised by their constitutive networks, exalting the resulting cascade of norms. However, peacebuilding interventions based on these norms and assumptions have had limited tangible impacts. Based on empirical research from critical, feminist, comparativist, and post-colonial perspectives, this panel addresses the conceptual constructions of these norms, the processes bringing peacebuilding assumptions together, and the ways in which power dynamics between international organisations and domestic politics play out in the dissemination and implementation of these norms – and to what socio-political consequences.

Papers' Abstracts:

Social Institutions, Norms, and the Reproduction of Violence in Peacebuilding Contexts
Gabrielle Daoust - Department of International Relations, University of Sussex

Critics of 'liberal' interventions have called for attention to inequalities underpinning conflict, 'local' participation, and 'everyday' priorities as part of peacebuilding efforts. References to the role of social institutions in these discussions, while limited, are based on assumptions about the positive role of 'social service provision' as a form of socioeconomic distribution, contributor to state-society relations and participation, and response to people's 'everyday' needs. These assumptions are reflected in the discourses and strategies of intervention actors. This paper challenges these assumptions about the peacebuilding role of social institutions by examining the case of education (as a core social institution) and peacebuilding in South Sudan, with a focus on norms and assumptions – and associated

tensions and resistance – reflected in the narratives, strategies, and experiences of donors, NGOs, and government and community actors. This paper highlights the ways in which norms and assumptions about education's peacebuilding role are articulated in policy and practice, and the ways in they serve to reproduce – and depoliticise – political, economic, and cultural forms of inequality and violence, and to undermine peacebuilding aims. This paper considers the complexity of social institutions, and associated norms and assumptions, in peacebuilding processes, drawing attention to the significance of an area largely sidelined in (post-liberal) peacebuilding debates and interventions.

Norms and Nuances of Return:
The Unravelling of the Rhetoric of Repatriation and Concomitant Strengthening of the Congolese State
Patrycja Stys, London School of Economics

Most developing states in the international system are characterised as 'fragile', if not 'failed' – incapable of controlling the territory within their borders; ineffective in providing security, welfare, and representation to their citizens; and ruling a population constantly in flight. Despite the realities of this context, refugee repatriation is vehemently promoted as the optimal solution to protracted displacement, reinstating citizenship rights whilst offering opportunities for restorative justice. This paper examines the apparent discrepancy between the practical and philosophical aspects of repatriation through the cases of Congolese returns from Rwanda (1999 – 2017); it is based on two and a half years of fieldwork in Africa's Great Lakes Region. It analyses the degeneration of 'repatriation' – political return actively negotiated and encompassing reparation, resulting in a more durable reintegration and a reformulation of the social contract – to not just 'return' – the apolitical act of crossing an international border – but coerced remilitarisation. Paradoxically, this degeneration was inversely proportional to the strengthening of the political centre in the capital Kinshasa, as opposed to its weakening, and only reinforced the process. I argue that this continuing and ever expanding gap between rhetoric and reality fails in not only fulfilling the potential of repatriation, but foments the cyclic remobilisation that has been at the heart of pervasive and intractable conflict for decades.

Mapping the Crusade of Transitional Justice Experts: Global Dissemination of Norms and their Questionable Claimed Benefits
Astrid Jamar, Political Settlements Research Programme, University of Edinburgh

In this paper, I examine the fundamental assumptions and the purposes of transitional justice (TJ) norms. I argue that the TJ project is an ideological guide for action that claim to redress a 'broken' society seeking truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition with the help of international legal experts. Emerging first as an idealistic policy agenda, the TJ project is now being promoted as a set of international norms to deal with accountability for the most serious crimes. While the claims in these norms have been highly contested, they are still disseminated by global experts. The paper reviews TJ provisions in all peace agreements signed since 1990, providing empirical evidence of successful dissemination by TJ crusaders. It will map chronologically and historically the development and dissemination of TJ norms, aims, claims, and institutional and legal tools promoted in conflict-affected contexts in the global south. Based on TWAIL (Third World Approaches to International Law), I will

underline the limitations and contradictions of such a normative framework, as well as clarify how weaknesses within it to impose, call for political navigation, as well as the self-fulfilling role of the disseminated claims.

Add Groups and Stir? Conflict Management Interventions through 'Inclusive' Peace Agreements
Laura Wise, Political Settlements Research Programme, University of Edinburgh

This paper analyses the adoption of ethno-national minority rights norms and values through peace agreement provisions, as conflict management 'interventions' in deeply divided societies. Recent decades have seen a large number of mediated peace settlements responding to inter-communal conflict, across jurisdictions worldwide. Peace agreements – documents resulting from processes whereby the terms of political settlements are negotiated – can be considered as both potential sites of intervention for challenging the exclusion of marginalised groups, and outcomes of bargains in which this exclusion is reified. Whilst there is an increasing focus on the inclusiveness of peace agreements regarding their 'gender perspective', similar consideration of how agreements deal with ethno-national minorities has often been done on a case-by-case basis. Meanwhile, literature on international legal frameworks for minority rights protection scrutinises the marginalisation of ethno-national minorities, but these often does not comprehensively address peace agreements.

Using qualitative analysis of texts from the new PA-X: Peace Agreement Access Tool, this paper explores how national minority issues are addressed in over 1400 peace agreements signed between 1990 and 2016, focusing on the 'inclusiveness' of provisions which refer to national, ethnic, and linguistic minority groups. In particular, it questions to what extent peace agreements provide for meaningful inclusion and representation of ethnic minorities in political settlements, and effectively manages conflict in deeply divided societies.

Monalisa Adhikari, University of Edinburgh
International Relations(IR) scholarship has increasingly emphasized on diffusion of norms as a key variable to explain behaviour and interests of states through concepts of norm cascade, socialization, localization and subsidiarity amongst others. Engaging with this scholarship, this paper examines the processes of norm diffusion in fragile and conflict affected states. Though an examination of norms of 'transitional justice' and 'inclusion and powersharing', which form the core of liberal peacebuilding projects, this article brings out three key assertions, which differ from the more established discussions on norms in IR. Firstly, it argues that norms cascade as a process is circular and that norms are not only localised or socialized into countries but they undergo changes through its diffusion in practices. Secondly, it explains through empirical examples that norm diffusion in fragile and conflict-affected contexts is a highly intrusive process. Thus the studies on norm socialization need to take these external intrusions into considerations. Thirdly, norms as currently discussed in IR, cannot be segregated from the institutional arrangements they establish to bring it into realisation. The diffusion of the norms of transitional justice, thus, cannot be separated from the legislative bills, mechanisms like Truth Commissions that are formed to diffuse the norms into practice.