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Democratization after Civil Wars – Key Problems and Experiences

JOCHEN HIPPLER

Democratization and peace-building in post-civil war situations are closely interlinked. To analyse the difficulties of post-war democratization, and especially democratization as attempted by external and international actors, this article deals with the problem in several stages: first, it will provide a brief overview of the recent discourse on the topic, to place the discussion into the political and academic context. Second, it will focus on the reasons for and the types of civil wars, and the actors involved, because these provide the starting points of any attempt of post-war democratization and will determine the conditions for success and failure. Third, the key structural problems for post-civil war democratization will be explored, including ethnic fragmentation, followed by a brief analysis of the specific role, opportunities and limits of external actors in democratization. Finally, we will try to formulate a few hypotheses and conclusions to help explain the limited success of external democracy building in post-war societies, concentrating on the cases of Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq. The account concludes that without the necessary preconditions for democratization in post-conflict societies, external attempts will be of little success. Among the key requirements is the need for a strong and organized social base for democratization to build on. On the other hand, contradictions in the policies of intervening powers are a major hindrance.

Key words: civil war; insurgency; guerrilla; state-building; nation-building

Introduction

> To put the matter bluntly, for all our commitment to democratic values, we do not know what is required for a society to move from a traditional and authoritarian basis to the establishment of democratic institutions and representative institutions. ... Unfortunately, with the passing of colonialism we find we have little advice to give to the leaders of the newly emergent countries who are struggling to realize democratic ways. We have no doctrine to offer them, no strategies for action nor criteria of priorities, no sense of appropriate programs nor sets of hypotheses for explaining the paths to representative government.[1]

This pessimistic view of the conceptual weakness of building functioning democracies in the Third World is not of recent origin. Lucian Pye expressed them nearly 50 years ago, during the era of decolonialization. But are we so much more advanced today? To some degree, we have progressed considerably since the early 1960s in

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regard to understanding processes of democratization. There now is a wealth of literature on the topic, case studies, theoretical and policy-oriented works. But when we look at current experiences of attempts to create democracies we have little reason to be overly optimistic: Bosnia, Kosovo, East Timor, Cambodia, Afghanistan, and Iraq are only a few problematic cases where the international community or some major actors have been attempting to create democratic rule. Since Pye's time the context generally has shifted from decolonialization to post-conflict and post-war democratization (with the partial exception of East Timor, which included elements of belated decolonialization). In many historical cases there has been a link between war and democracy, as Charles Tilly emphasizes:

> Surges of democratization often follow violent interstate wars, civil wars, and revolutions; cases in point include the partial democratization of Switzerland after the Sonderbund civil war of 1847, of the United States after the Civil War, of France after the Commune of 1871, and of Japan and Germany after World War II. Struggle both precedes and accompanies democratization.[2]

Indeed, there are many examples of political reform and (at least partial) democratization as a result of war or civil war. This is the result of two factors coming together: first, increasing demands by large sectors of the population because of humanitarian, economic, and political suffering, costs and restrictions caused by war; and second, a weakening of formerly stable elites in the same context.

On the other hand, it is quite obvious that in many situations after wars and civil wars democracy does not develop; not by itself and not even with massive foreign support or pressure. The Russian (1918–1922), Spanish (1936–1939), Chinese (1927–1950) Nigerian (1967–1969/70) and the Somali (1988–) civil conflicts have not led to democratic rule. The new dynamic since the end of the Cold War in regard to democratizing (post-conflict and other) societies has been an active involvement of western governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). It is important to note that in this regard the results have often been disappointing. Do we still lack the conceptual tools, as we did in the 1960s, despite decades of research on democracy and democratization? Are we following strategies that could work in principal but are simply not applied, or not properly? Or are we trying to achieve a 'mission impossible' because post-war situations are just not the right time to start democratic rule?

This article will try to shed some light on these questions. It will analyse the problem of democratization after civil wars in five stages. First, it will provide a brief overview of the recent discourse on the topic, to place our discussion in the political and academic context. Second, it will focus on the reasons for and the types of civil wars, and the actors involved, because these provide the starting points of any attempt of post-war democratization and will determine the conditions for success and failure. Third, the key structural problems for post-civil war democratization will be explored, followed by a brief analysis of the specific role, opportunities, and limits of external actors in democratization. Finally, it will try to formulate a few hypotheses and conclusions to explain the limited success of external democracy-building in post-war societies.

The Peace and Democracy-Promoting Discourse

Western development and foreign policies since the end of the Cold War have expressed a special interest in strengthening or introducing democratic forms of governance in (formerly) autocratic states, in post-conflict states and in developing countries generally. In one of the key foreign policy documents of the Bush administration in the US, for example, the National Security Strategy of 2002, the word 'freedom' is used 64 times, 'liberty' 14 times, and 'democracy' is mentioned 36 times.[3] Other important official statements use rhetoric along the same lines, e.g., the State of the Union Address of the president for 2005. At the same time, western foreign, security, and development policies have strongly emphasized humanitarian interventionism, peace-building, and peace-enforcement in conflict areas. This double agenda of strengthening both peace/stability and democracy has been followed by more liberal or social-democratic (e.g., President Bill Clinton) and by conservative or neo-conservative governments (e.g., Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush), by governments and non-governmental organizations alike, and – to a lesser degree, by international organizations such as the European Union. Recently an article in *NATO-Review* magazine made this point in regard to the fight against terrorism, which obviously goes beyond mere peace-building: 'To prevent new havens from being established', the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Allies 'must achieve more than victory in the traditional sense of defeating an enemy's forces in combat. The tasks of *state-building and democratization* cannot be accomplished with purely military means. Sustainable security requires *stabilization*, reconstruction, economic and social development, and *good governance*. Constructive intervention requires the contributions of multiple international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).'[4]

While there seems to be a broad consensus about the importance of both peace/stability and democratization rhetorically, it is less than clear that all international actors take them equally seriously, or to which degree the rhetoric of peace- and democracy-building has also been used as a cover for less agreeable policies. At least in many parts of the third world, we can observe a growing scepticism in regard to western (and especially US) democracy promotion, which has reached its height after the US conquest of Iraq and its consequences.[5]

The optimism and activism in regard to democracy promotion resulted from two independent experiences. First, the breakdown of the Soviet Union and its brand of authoritarianism in eastern and central Europe and a resulting weakening of authoritarian systems in many third world countries – and not just of pro-Soviet regimes. Second, a gradual reconsideration of the role of the state in the global development discourse. The free-market fundamentalism and anti-statist leanings of the so-called 'Washington Consensus' on economic policy began to weaken during the 1990s, and the World Bank and other key actors re-discovered the state as an important agency of development. Stressing problems of governance became fashionable. 'Good governance' emerged as a key concept, and this did not just include anti-corruption policies, but also transparency, accountability, rule of law, and other elements, which were easy to link to democratic rule.[6]

After the end of the Cold War an additional discourse emerged, which at the beginning was not linked to democratization. International organizations and western powers began to pay more attention to humanitarian emergencies, with a resulting discussion – and practice – of 'humanitarian interventionism'.[7] Northern Iraq (after the Second Gulf War, 1991), and Somalia (1993) were the beginning, but the new interventionism soon broadened to include other areas, such as Bosnia and Kosovo. Justifications for military and non-military interventions also became less and less narrowly defined and soon included not just humanitarian disasters, but also assistance in situations of instability, in connection with the transfer of power, elections, and state-building, as in East Timor (1999–2002), Cambodia (1992–1993), or Congo (2006). Peace-building and peace enforcement were added to the list of reasons for interventionism in the Balkans, several countries in West Africa, Afghanistan (2001), Lebanon (1982–1983 and 2006). Iraq was an example where the threat of weapons of mass destruction (though non-existent) and democratization were given as reasons for military intervention.[8] In summary, we can conclude that interventions were justified by humanitarian reasons, reasons of stability and security, and by reasons of democratization and governance. It was quite obvious that these justifications were sometimes mainly pretexts for imperial and interest-driven policies, as the Iraq war and occupation clearly demonstrated. But we still can conclude that local and regional violence, civil war and other forms of major bloodshed figured prominently in justifications of external involvement or outright intervention. And that was increasingly linked to questions of governance under the headings of democratization, nation-building, and 'good governance'.

The concepts of failed and failing states provided a conceptual link. Failed states would create humanitarian emergencies and threats to local, regional, and global security (including terrorism). They could easily result in ethnic cleansing and civil wars, which the international community (or external powers) would have to deal with by force, by strengthening development, and by state- and nation-building. Democracy-building in this context was perceived as a tool to create stable and sustainable forms of governance, which in the long run could prevent more violence; and as a goal in itself. US President George W. Bush forcefully made this point in regard to Iraq:

> By helping Iraqis build a democracy, we will deny the terrorists a safe haven to plan attacks against America. By helping Iraqis build a democracy, we will gain an ally in the war on terror. By helping Iraqis build a democracy, we will inspire reformers across the Middle East. And by helping Iraqis build a democracy, we'll bring hope to a troubled region, and this will make America more secure in the long-term.[9]

Here the export of democracy clearly is described as a matter of self interest.[10]

Civil wars, especially in a context of fragmenting and failing states were increasingly perceived as security threats in addition to their negative humanitarian and development effects. The establishment of – preferably democratic – states was seen as a way to deal with these threats and provide stability. These security considerations increased in importance after 11 September 2001 and could be easily linked to the parallel discourses

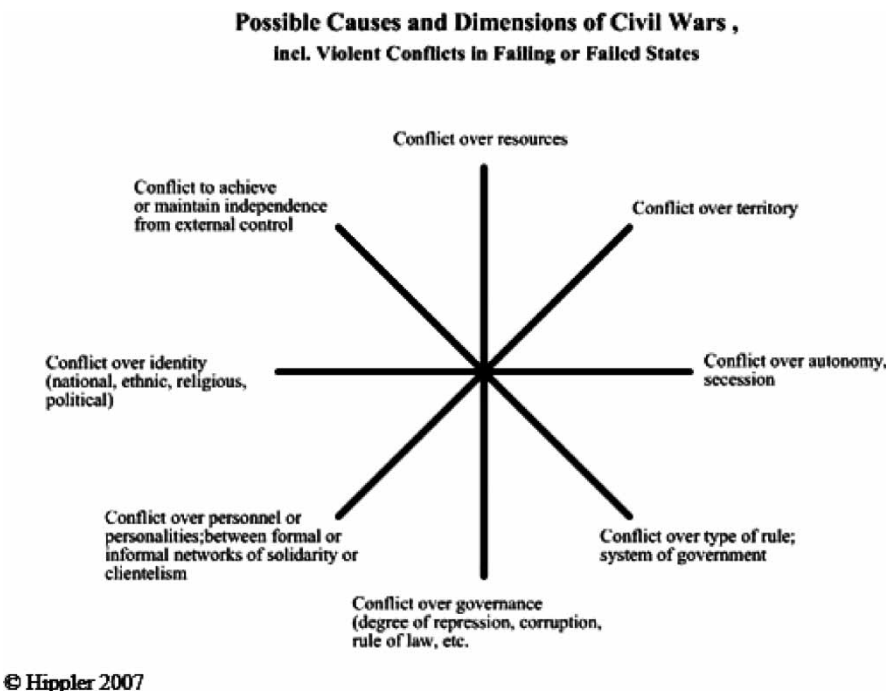
in the development field mentioned above, and to the ideological crusade for democracy that sprang up after the breakdown of the Soviet Union.

Causes of Civil Wars

Discussions about success and failure of democratization after civil wars have to take their specific character into account. Political alignments or confrontations that might be important in the context of democratization after the end of a war are often formed during the time of violent confrontation, as are public perceptions and mentalities. Also, most civil wars are basically struggles over the control, creation or destruction of states. Any future attempt to democratize a given or new state structure will be perceived from this perspective. For many reasons therefore, thinking about post-war democracy has to start with the war itself. The following chart presents an overview of causes and dimensions of civil wars, which, to a large degree, will shape their dynamics and influence the chances for democratization.

The causes of civil wars can be very diverse, ranging from a simple competition over resources or territory to matters of governance, and to culture and identity, as shown in Figure 1. A specific core conflict will generally influence both the conduct of war, and the post-war reconstruction and democracy-building. Generally speaking, conflicts over

FIGURE 1
CAUSES AND DIMENSIONS OF CIVIL WAR



ethnic or religious identity can be bloodier and more difficult to end than conflicts over resources. In regard to conflict over resources, it may be possible to negotiate a compromise on how to divide or share specific resources, or to increase the amount of resources available through foreign assistance. Compromise in regard to identity is much more difficult. 'Identity' could mean ethnic or national identities, religious or ideological ones, or sets of basic values rooted in tradition and culture. People and groups find it very difficult to negotiate about who they are, compared to what they want. For example, the difficulty in resolving the conflict between Israel and Arabs in regard to Jerusalem/Palestine very much results from the fact that it is not just about territory but has important dimensions of religious and cultural identity at its core.

Indeed, the causes of civil wars often overlap and are difficult to distinguish. We therefore should not expect to find only one underlying cause, but several interconnected causes. For instance, conflicts over resources, over territory and over autonomy or secession may be closely interwoven, since secession is tied to a specific territory, and the area in question might be of interest because of its potential resources. The question of autonomy or independence for Kurdish areas in Northern Iraq is a case in point, especially in regard to Kirkuk, where a third of Iraqi oil is located. Conflicts that result from competition over resources, and perhaps the feeling that a group is not receiving its fair share, can express themselves in cultural, religious or ethnic language. These overlapping causes of violent conflicts have to be taken into account in both peace-building and democratization, since sustainable peace generally requires addressing at least some of the most important causes of violence. Without resolving these causes, democracy might be perceived to be of secondary importance in large sectors of societies.

Finally, we should be aware that violent conflicts are not stable, but develop over time. What starts as a war between a government and an opposition movement can develop into quite a different one. For instance, what started as a conflict over forms of governance and participation can later add a dimension of resource competition, and even, later, of identity. To analyse the beginning of post-conflict peace- and democracy-building, it is not enough to understand the original sources of violence; the changing character of a given war must also be taken into account.

As soon as violence begins, any conflict changes its character to some degree, and any war that lasts for a longer period acquires different characteristics and even goals. The emergence of a war economy that feeds the war itself by weakening civilian economic activity is a case in point, like in Afghanistan in the 1980s, where civilian economic infrastructure was destroyed to a large degree, and weapons and drug-smuggling became the main economic activities, perpetuating the war. Civil war can and often does change the demographic and social composition of a given society, and this by itself creates new challenges that have to be taken into account, on both the analytic and the policy levels.

Types of Civil War

The term 'civil war' is not easy to define. It will be used here in the sense that it must be a *war* following the definition of the Stockholm Peace Research Institute,[11] which

is somewhat formal but has been widely accepted in contrast to other forms of violence, which implies at least 1,000 people killed per year.[12] But as a *civil* war it has to take place between groups within one country or society. The difficulties arise because a civil war can take very different forms, aside from the diversity of reasons that I already discussed. It can be a war between a government and an army or militia trying to overthrow it. It could also be a guerrilla war or a campaign against terrorism. Typologies of wars and civil wars can be developed according to their causes (see above), their intensity,[13] or their main strategies and means of warfare (nuclear war, guerrilla war, etc.). These differentiations all have their uses, but for the purpose of analysing post-conflict peace- and democracy-building, the analysis will focus on the configuration of the main actors. This analysis is less interested in the military side of civil wars than on their political dimension. This to a great degree will depend, in addition to the causes of and interests in the war, on who the parties to conflict are. The approach is to analyse the interplay of governments/regimes with opposition forces. On the government side, it differentiates according to effectiveness and degree of state control over its own society, and according to its support or control by domestic or foreign actors. In regard to the opposition, the account distinguishes its degree of unity/heterogeneity, and whether it is concentrating on fighting the government or is also fighting within itself.

The distinctions between the kind of government and the number and relationship of armed opposition groups will, to a large extent, determine the character of a specific civil war. If a strong and effective government is, for instance, fighting a united opposition, the conflict will develop in a different political context compared to a weak or fragmented regime fighting a united or fragmented opposition. Also, if the struggle is between two sides only, the conflict will be very different from a conflict among many independent groups. It will also make a big difference if a government or major opposition group is dependent on, or independent of, outside support or control. In the context of a failed or failing state, a civil war will take a different character, because the fighting will not be primarily against the weak or non-existent government, but between several militias, warlords or other armed groups.

The table below highlights the key possible constellations of insurgencies and civil wars.

The type of insurgency or civil war depends on the type of armed opposition a government faces. If it is confronted by only one major group, the result is a politically polarized conflict and potentially a relative high degree of control of the conflict parties over their respective forces. In this case it is possible – though not always the case – that the population will be less affected by violence. Only if a war is fought between two or very few parties, can it be of a more conventional character, waged between regular armies or militias trying to operate in the same way. The goal in this case is to destroy the enemy's fighting force (e.g., American civil war, 1861–1865). But if the two conflict parties considerably differ in military strength, the civil war will be fought in a non-conventional way, generally as a guerrilla war (e.g., El Salvador, Guatemala in the 1980s).

If, on the other hand, a civil war is a conflict between a government and insurgent groups, it can change the political dynamics. For instance, the several opposition

TABLE 1
KEY ACTORS AND REGIME TYPE IN CIVIL WARS

Government \ Opposition Actors		One organized key insurgent group	Few insurgent groups	Multitude of autonomous armed groups, primarily fighting for a common goal	Multitude of autonomous armed groups, primarily in conflict among themselves
Functioning indigenous and largely autonomous government	Effective statehood	West Pakistan vs. East Pakistan (Bangladesh, (1971); Kosovo (up to 1999)			
Functioning government with strong external backing/dependency	Effective statehood	Vietnam 1960s	El Salvador (1980s); Spanish Civil War (1936–1939); Somalia (1986–1991)		
Functioning government directly or indirectly run and dominated by external actors	Effective statehood	Algeria (1954–1962)			
Weak indigenous government	Weak or potentially failing state	Mozambique, (1975–1992)	Bosnia (1992–1995)		Lebanon (1975–1990)
Weak government with strong external support/dependency	Weak or potentially failing state			Iraq (since 2005)	
Weak government directly or indirectly run or dominated by external actors	Weak or potentially failing state		Iraq (2003–2005); Afghanistan (since 2001)	Afghanistan (1980s)	
Extremely weak or no relevant government	Failed state				Somalia (since 1991); Afghanistan (1992–1996)

groups will not just fight the government, but to some degree are political competitors inside their own camp, which will alter their behaviour and complicate both peace-making and political integration in a post-conflict setting. With several or many armed opposition groups, the likelihood of conventional military strategies decreases considerably and a non-conventional war becomes more likely. The terminology is less than clear, oscillating between ‘guerrilla war’, ‘small war’, ‘low-intensity warfare’, ‘low-intensity conflict’ (LIC), ‘military operations other than war’ (MOOTW) which can be differentiated in several sub-categories.[14] The commonality is the more direct political character compared to conventional war. Fighters, who are forced to attack their enemy by unconventional tactics, such as guerrilla or terrorist means, because of their military weakness, cannot hope to destroy a conventional army directly in open battle. This kind of civil war is not a war for military victory, but a war to control the population. An insurgent guerrilla force can hardly

ever beat a government army militarily – but it can make it lose a war politically. Such a force may not destroy an army, but it can try to destroy its morale, its loyalty, and its legitimacy. This was amply demonstrated by the Cuban Revolution (1958), when a tiny group of armed insurgents had no chance of achieving military victory but won politically.

If the armed groups are not only competing politically but also fighting among themselves (e.g., Afghan mujahedin groups during and after the Soviet occupation, or more recently, some of the insurgent groups in Iraq) the bipolar structure of conflict (government vs. opposition) will be transformed into a multi-polar structure, and the danger of a complete social breakdown is high. Again, this would gravely shape the political framework for peace-making and democracy-building. The problem resulting from the prevalence of motley groups and broad coalitions of an armed opposition has been emphasized by Hironaka:

> The patchwork coalitions that typically form the opposition in civil wars reflect a general lack of social organization and coherence. Rather than forming a tightly organized body with a cohesive set of leaders, these patchwork coalitions are frequently composed of coalitions of groups that may agree on their distaste for the existing government but disagree on all else. These coalitions may differ in their composition, their tactics, and their vision of the future, making negotiations between a unified opposition front and the state impossible.[15]

A multitude of independent armed groups fighting the government and simultaneously one another tends to 'depoliticize' a conflict and emphasize narrow group interests over national interests. It often will develop strong dimensions of greed and personality clashes motivating some of these 'warlords'.[16]

The character of a government or regime will also shape the dynamics of conflict, and the post-conflict situation. Effectiveness of government and degree of control over its own institutions and society is a key factor. It will be important to what degree a government and its state apparatus are of indigenous character or if they are dominated by foreign forces. A functioning, fully integrated and capable government/state will result in a quite different kind of warfare compared to a weak or fragmented government that might lack control over its own forces. The quality of the state apparatus is of special importance, since it is generally the key reference point for insurgents fighting over control of the territory and the state. The quality of the state and its effectiveness is not just a matter of technical and administrative competence (though they are important), but its role and function in a given society is also of importance. Is the government attempting to serve the needs of society or does it merely want to control it? Does it want to provide social and political integration for the whole society or is it the tool of some particular groups and interests to suppress and control others? These questions are decisive for winning a civil war politically and for democratizing the state once the war is over.

Scenarios for Ending Civil Wars

If the possibilities for and limits of democratization depend on the characteristics of a specific war, a second important point is the specific way a civil war ends. This will influence both the development from a preliminary end of violence to a more sustainable peace, and the chances for and dynamics of democratization. To keep the argument simple, it will be necessary to collapse all possible ways that civil wars can and do end into a set of four scenarios, which highlight the most common determinants. These scenarios are only heuristic tools of analysis and they will be only rarely observed in their pure forms. In reality, hybrid forms of war endings will generally be more likely.

Scenario 1: The War Produces a Clear Victory for One of the Parties

This is more likely when a civil war has been fought along conventional lines between only two sides, like the American civil war or the Biafra War in Nigeria (1967–1970). But this might also happen in more complex settings, like the Algerian war of independence (1954–1962), which at the same time had elements of a civil war. The Chinese civil war (1927–1950), the Pakistani civil war that led to the creation of Bangladesh (1971), or Saddam's successful crushing of the Kurdish uprising in Iraq in the 1970s might be examples. This scenario might actually be favourable for creating future stability (at least for some time), since the question of distribution of power within society has been answered decisively. When the victorious party is not too selfish and is not too hard on the losing side of the war, peace may result, if not justice and equality. But the obvious danger is that democracy might not be easy to achieve. Military success might make the winning side highly confident, leading it to exclude, marginalize or discriminate against the humbled opponent. The outcomes of the Russian and Chinese civil wars are obvious examples. Decisive military victory by one side could lead to an authoritarian rule by the elite of the victorious side over all of society, playing off the other elements of society against each other. Or, it could lead to a limited democracy of the victors, while excluding the ethnic or religious or political groups that lost the war.[17] A clear victory in civil war can create space for democracy (e.g., the American civil war), but might reduce the need for and likelihood of it. Scenario 1 has become less likely, at least after the end of the cold war, because in many cases, external intervention will occur politically or militarily for humanitarian or other reasons, and make outright victory of one party unlikely or impossible.

Scenario 2: The War may come to an end because of a Compromise

This option has become more likely after the end of the Cold War; it is closely linked to the interventions of external actors (see scenario 4, below): 'Between 1946 and 1990, twice as many conflicts ended through victory than through negotiation, whereas between 1995 and 2004, negotiated settlements were three times as likely to end war as outright victory.'[18] The trend toward negotiated settlements after the Cold War created effective entry points for international peace-building.

If the conflict has been resolved by compromise and a negotiated settlement, the chances for both peace and democracy will depend on two things: who has been involved in reaching the solution – all or only some parties, small numbers of elite people, or large sectors of society; and whether the root causes of conflict have been addressed or merely glossed over. In the latter case, the result of compromise generally will be only to win time, not a durable peace, and democracy will be difficult to achieve.

If peace has been brought about not just by small numbers of elite people with the warring parties but also by popular involvement, it can be more sustainable and the chance for democratic development higher. If the compromise has been negotiated only by small numbers of elite figures (e.g., the warlords responsible for the war) the prospects for peace might still be good, but democracy would probably be unlikely, since these actors generally are interested in their own power and enrichment, not in democratization. It is not uncommon in this scenario for non-democratic military leaders of the opposing sides to arrange to divide the spoils while excluding the majority of the population. The civil wars in Mozambique (1975–1992) and El Salvador (1980–1991/92) seem to be cases in point where compromise has created space for the development of peace and for the establishment of some democratic form of governance. However, as Torres-Rivas explains, in El Salvador and its neighbouring countries, the democratic reforms that followed peace are not reaching the whole of society: 'In Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, democracy is practiced at the centre (the capital cities, small towns) and is weaker in the (rural) periphery. The upper classes make use of it, now enjoying direct participation; for the peasants, there is still just the politics of clientship, the merely formal exercise of the vote, and repression.'[19]

Scenario 3: The War ends because of General Exhaustion without a Conclusion

This scenario can result from a judgment by the warring parties that a continuation of the war has no advantage over an end to the fighting. Lebanon (1990) and some of the West African civil wars have to be seen from this perspective; Bosnia was very close to this point just before the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) air strikes of 1995. Similarly, the end of the civil war amongst the Kurdish parties in Northern Iraq (1995) illustrates that war can end because victory may be impossible; war no longer serves any purpose and might even harm the interests of the parties to the conflict.

In this scenario, much depends on the relationship of the political elites on all sides to the segments of society they represent or pretend to represent. If the respective elites have been discredited by the war and its inconclusive results, this might either bring broader participation in politics and open up opportunities for democracy-building, or provide an opening for alternative elites to seize power. If the population is more exhausted by war than the elites, a door can open for inter-elite 'horse-trading' along the lines mentioned in scenario 2.

Scenario 4: The War has been ended by External Pressure or Force

Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan would fall into this category, along with cases like Lebanon (the US intervention in 1958) or Cambodia (Vietnamese intervention in

1979). These examples demonstrate that the scenarios depicted here are not clear-cut in many cases. Bosnia, for instance, was quite close to scenario 3 just before the NATO bombardment, but after was transformed into scenario 4; and Afghanistan demonstrates that what looks like the decisive end of a war[20] can in fact usher in a new war: an insurrection by the Taliban and its allies against the foreign forces and the new Afghan government.

In this scenario, peace- and democracy-building can become even more complex, since all the above factors are still present, but the number of actors increases. The external actors can be one interested country (Vietnam in Cambodia, USA in El Salvador), a 'coalition of the willing', and/or an international organization like the United Nations. In many cases, they can also include numerous non-governmental organizations, which, all combined, can produce a multi-layered mix of foreign interests. Foreign involvement in local peace- and democracy-building might be useful if it focuses on support for indigenous development of peace and democracy. But this does not only depend on the wisdom, strategies, commitment, and resources of the foreign actors, but also on the existence of local forces that are both worth supporting and politically relevant. This precondition, as many countries have demonstrated, cannot be taken for granted. This is true for Afghanistan since 2001, for Iraq where inter-state war was transformed into a mix of insurrection against foreign occupation and civil war after 2003,[21] and for Pakistan, where a local war in the north-western province and the tribal areas has sprung up as a by-product of the Afghan war. But if reliable domestic partners are missing, foreign intervention may easily be either irrelevant or harmful.

It should be stressed again that these scenarios, as the categories of the civil wars themselves, are rarely clear-cut. Quite often, political compromise only happens when the key antagonists are exhausted, or when foreign or international actors apply pressure on them. Often it also is less than clear whether a 'victory' of one party is decisive or only temporary. The same applies to foreign intervention, which might appear for a while to have been successful, only to trigger another round of war later. Afghanistan or, under different circumstances Iraq, are examples of this.

Key Problems of Democracy-Building after Civil War

The link between peace and democracy is complex. Peace can simply be a precondition for democracy, since war or the threat of war tends to make questions of security much more important than questions of democratic governance. The literature is contradictory in regard to the relationship of peace-building and democratization in post-war situations. Democracy – or democratic elections – can be an important instrument to achieve peace: 'If conflict is about power, then elections are a peaceful method of allocating power. They can be a first step in the peace-building process where political institutions are created to represent political positions and manage diversity without violence.'[22] But Collier *et al.* stress that in 'many low-income countries, reducing the risk of civil war is thus a necessary precondition for democracy rather than the other way round'.[23] The question is whether either peace or

democratization can be instrumental in creating the respective other, and which one should be the strategic starting point. It is generally accepted that both are desirable goals of policy, but it is unclear whether policies should focus first on one of these goals to achieve the other.

Some authors would object, and observe that in post-conflict situations peace and democracy often contradict each other[24] and that early introduction of democracy could increase the danger of fresh hostilities,[25] or that the price of peace may be power-sharing between the conflict parties, no matter what their democratic credentials or numerical support in the population are. Roland Paris remarks quite pointedly that '[what] is needed in the immediate post-conflict period is not democratic ferment and economic upheaval, but political stability and the establishment of effective administration over the territory'.[26] He considers the danger of falling back into war as so great that he argues for 'a more interventionist and long-term approach to peace-building than that which has been practiced to date. They require international peace-builders to take on the role of nation-builders − to serve as surrogate governing authorities for as long as it takes to implement the liberalizing reforms that the peace-builders themselves prescribe for war-shattered states'.[27] Democratization would here take a back seat to the creation of stability by foreign actors setting up a functioning institutional framework in a quasi-colonial way. Paris even recommends that the 'peace-builders' temporarily impose martial law. While he is obviously right about the danger of political instability, which could produce a return to war, Paris seems to exaggerate the technical side of handling post-war situations and underrates political pressure from the local population, which might not be satisfied with a quasi-colonial set-up.

The Role of the State and the Problem of Nation-Building

The state is the focus of democratization. It is one of the key actors and tools in achieving stability and guaranteeing security or peace, and is also an objective of democratization. It often is the bone of contention between the fighting parties. Therefore, it is not surprising that both democracy-builders (by stressing elections and drafting constitutions) and peace-builders (by focusing on the security functions and institutions like the police and armed forces) concentrate their attention on the state. If a state structure has been hollowed out, weakened, fragmented or has even ceased to exist, it does not provide a promising starting point for democratization. There is precious little to democratize if there is no functioning state, or no state at all. In the words of Larry Diamond: 'Before a country can have a democratic state, it must first have a state.'[28]

While in the case of democratization interest in the state is obviously central, with regard to peace-building the state is a tool for establishing stability and social control. In both cases the state, besides its technical and administrative capacities, is valued because of its role in the social integration of diverse groups. Social integration is a precondition for reducing the potential for violence by transforming conflicts into non-violent and political procedures. From the perspective of peace- and democracy-building, the state often is too weak to fulfil its integrative functions. It even can be so fragmented that it does not function at all, or has turned into a disintegrating

factor. Therefore, one of the key aspects of both peace and democratization policies is state-building. It aims at creating or strengthening a state apparatus that can fulfil its integrative and stabilizing functions. State-building often combines the capacity-building of government agencies, the redesign of macro-structures of governance, and, often, a change of government policies. Another strategy in addition to state-building is nation-building, which often (especially in the Anglo-Saxon debate) is misleadingly used synonymously with state-building. Here I am using the term 'nation-building' in a different sense: it includes (a) state-building, (b) the integration of society (or its several subgroups) into a 'nation', and (c) the development of an integrative ideology for this 'nation', which can be nationalist, religious constitutional-republican or otherwise.[29] Obviously, state-building is also possible outside a context of nation-building, but historically it seems to be more sustainable if accompanied by nation-building, linking nation and state.

Both state- and nation-building might take a very long time – more than is available in many post-conflict cases. And while the more technical aspects of at least state-building, like strengthening administrative capacities, can be dealt with by external support to some degree, the more fundamental questions of political integration, integration of society, and ideological integration are extremely complex, demanding, and difficult to address by foreign actors. This is especially true in cases where societies are ethnically fragmented. In these cases, the processes of societal and political integration are even more demanding.

Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka distinguishes three models for how to deal with the problem of ethnic diversity in the state-building process: (a) classic, basically imperial ways of integrating diverse ethnic communities hierarchically; (b) creating homogeneous societies based on legal and political equality of individual citizens, a strategy which has assimilationist undertones; and (c) pluricultural integration, which includes the recognition of rights to cultural and religious freedom, political representation and the (re)distribution of economic resources and opportunities of access to public institutions for ethnic groups.[30]

The imperial model of hierarchical cooperation of ethnic, linguistic, religious or other culturally defined communities − as in the Ottoman or Russian empires where various religious or ethnic groups were recognized in principle but made subservient to a dominating religious or ethnic group − is not a democratic one, and hardly acceptable in the 21st century. The second model of individual equality before law, independent of language, religion or ethnic origin, is appealing from the perspective of creating democracy. The obvious problem is what to do with groups who consider their respective identity as a cultural community more politically important than legal equality. There are many cases of escalated conflicts and civil wars where ethnic and religious identities have become so dominant that the road to democracy through equality before law has become blocked. The third model might incur the danger of giving a premium to ethnic activism and further strengthening ethnic or religious cleavages. Much would depend on how the second and the third models could be combined, and how exactly 'pluriculturalism' can be organized in a way to avoid disintegration of a newly constructed state or a return to violent conflict just after a civil war has ended.

Pfaff-Czarnecka distinguishes four techniques used for building pluricultural statehood, which can also be used in post-conflict environments: concordance, local representation, federalism, and cultural autonomy. Concordance has the potential advantage of being inclusive of all recognized groups and being oriented towards consensus. But its success will depend on the willingness and ability of all groups to reach a permanent consensus. If one major group objects, the result will be stalemate and political paralysis. This set up is basically a cartel of the elites of all ethnic or religious communities, guaranteeing an equilibrium between them, but not necessarily democratic rule. The case of Lebanon underlines that concordance – or consociational rule – can bring stability for some time, but that its inflexibility during times of societal change can even led to war. After the end of the Lebanese civil war (1977 − 1990/1) the consociational arrangement lead to political paralysis and an increase in violence.[31]

The best way for the reintegration of an ethnically divided society after civil war cannot be decided in the abstract, but only in regard to the specific society in question and the specific legacies of the civil war in the country. The opportunities for ethnic realignment after civil war depend on the specific configuration of actors in the war and on the degree of popular involvement in the fighting and other forms of violence like massacres, ethnic cleansing, and so on. The more ethnic groups in society have been involved in the suffering and in the committing of acts of violence, the less reintegration by individual equality will be feasible because ethnic identities and ethnic hatred have been sharpened. In this case, only inter-ethnic group cooperation seems to be realistic. If this is brought about by the elites of the respective groups, this in turn will weaken possibilities for democratization.

Conclusion

The causes and types of civil wars and the problems of post-war societal reintegration highlight the difficulties faced by any policy of post-conflict democratization. The problems are transformed – and often become even more complex – when external actors become deeply involved. On the one hand, external actors can generally increase available resources; external, neutral actors can provide good offices; they might support local initiatives for democratization and/or peace-building, and they can provide a security framework for political processes. On the other hand, a prominent role for external actors can result in a nationalist backlash and mobilization of the opposition; it can discredit a local government as an instrument of foreign interests, as in Afghanistan since 2001; it can dominate local policies and thereby undercut local self-rule and democratization; and, if military intervention prevails, it might further militarize a conflict instead of solving it politically, as in Somalia after the US military intervention in 1991. It is obvious that a role for external actors is easier to organize and run successfully in some types of conflicts than in others; for instance, in a two-way struggle between a government and an opposition, external support might just tip the balance of forces. In a context of an ethnically fragmented society and escalated ethnic hatred, external actors might became an additional party to the conflict and further complicate it.

Post-war democratization by or with the strong support of external actors in a situation where the state is either weak or fragmented will, according to Diamond, require a 'rebuilding of the capacity of a shattered state' and the repression of 'alternative sources of violence in the hands of non-state actors, such as religious and party militias, warlords, and other private armies'. Only then can a successful democratic restructuring of the local state and the process of 'designing and implementing a plan for transition to a self-sustaining and democratic new political order' begin.[32]

These are ambitious demands, which are as plausible as they are difficult to achieve. They sound quite technical, but at the core they are highly political. To build a new and functioning state where none exists will imply a major redistribution of power in a given society – which generally will provoke resistance by those who are losing power.

Given the experiences with state- and democracy-building in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq, where western influence has dominated after military victories and the end of hostilities, some scepticism seems to be in order. In all four cases international, generally western, military and civilian forces had assumed full control of the respective countries after winning a war or deciding a civil war by force. In all these cases international commitment of finances and personnel has been exceptionally high, even if they differ in many regards. Still, in none of the cases has it been possible to establish functioning democracies beyond setting up a framework of partially democratic institutions of limited effectiveness. In all cases elections have been organized and governments set up. But in all cases these institutions and political processes are still fully dependent on financial, political, and military external support. The experiments of state- and democracy-building have generally not progressed beyond the stage of foreign protectorates. In Bosnia and Kosovo, even the peace-building successes are still fragile, while, in Afghanistan and Iraq, the security situation is disastrous, undercutting prospects for sustainable democracy in the foreseeable future.

The following reasons for the limited success of external democratization in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq seem to be of importance.

First, peace-building and democratization have been in conflict with imperial policy interests, especially in Afghanistan and Iraq. Generally speaking, foreign military intervention is more likely in cases where the intervening powers have a strong self-interest (reacting to the 9/11 attacks in the Afghan case; strategic interest in the Persian Gulf in regard to Iraq; non-intervention in Rwanda). If the intervening powers are driven by self-interest, democratization of a foreign country will only be pursued to the degree it does not contradict the self-interest that led to the intervention. Foreign control of a country does not focus on local ownership of political processes – a precondition of democracy – but by definition on the opposite. This was the case in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Second, the security needs of any occupation force necessarily reinforce this inconsistency, especially in fragmented societies or in a hostile or ambiguous environment. Foreign occupation forces first and foremost have to assure their own safety. If they cannot feel completely safe, this will create physical and political distance between the local population and the foreign forces. It also tends to

shift priorities from democratization and state-building to military and security concerns.

Third, one of the problems in all four countries was that the international actors became involved in highly complex local societies without really understanding their dynamics. Nearly a decade after the war against Serbia, NATO and the UN still have no strategy for solving the question of legal status for Kosovo. But without a final status agreement, the future of the area remains in doubt. Accepting independence for Kosovo has not been the first choice of the international community, but has been forced upon it because of a lack of feasible alternatives, despite its original intentions. In Afghanistan the lack of an international strategy and a coherent policy was partly responsible for a worsening security situation. This lack of conceptual clarity led to off-the-shelf policies for Afghanistan and Iraq. In Afghanistan peace- and democracy-building were designed in a phased process of constitution-writing, elections, and government-building. The constitution-building and the elections, paradoxically, were implemented in a country without a state. A western institutional set-up was exported to Afghanistan – but even this was implemented in a contradictory way, because (especially at the beginning) it was combined with support for local and regional warlords, who were neither interested in democracy nor in an effective Afghan statehood.[33]

Fourth, the creation of stability, peace, and democracy through the establishment or strengthening of statehood was *not* the initial motivation for the interventions in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq, but only developed by default after the war in these territories had been won. The Bush administration, both in Afghanistan and Iraq, initially planned to achieve the goals primarily through military means. Democratic nation-building and state-building do require internal roots and strong local support. It has to be an internal project, being pursued by strong sectors of the population and political groups.[34] But while in both Afghanistan and Iraq there was considerable support to overthrow the Taliban and Saddam Hussein respectively, there was hardly any organized social base in regard to democratic state-building. In Afghanistan, for instance, a strong and self-confident middle class that could support democratic state-building hardly exists, at least outside of Kabul and a few other cities. It remained unclear who in Afghanistan would actively support democratization and who therefore could be the strategic partners of the international community in this process. Therefore, democratic state-building in Afghanistan began and continued without strong and committed organized local support.

Returning to the pessimistic view of Lucian Pye from the early 1960s quoted at the beginning of this article, today there is little more reason for optimism. But it cannot be overlooked that the reasons for today's pessimism are quite different from Pye's. In his time the main problem perhaps was lack of experience and knowledge of democratization. Today, we are facing several different problems: the overconfident beginning of ambitious missions with too little analysis of the political, social, and cultural local situation; too little preparation and too much of a muddle-through approach; the lack of political will of key international actors to concentrate on peace and democracy, while bureaucratic routine, imperial dreams and tactics, and contradictions in policies lead to paralyses. The obvious inference is to be more

humble when we promise to export peace and democracy after civil wars. It should be recognized that both these important goals can generally only be *supported* from the outside, but not artificially imposed on local conditions without the basic preconditions. If these preconditions are not present, then the rule should be: stay out. It would be advisable to *talk less* about democratization and peace-building, and to concentrate our efforts on cases where the internal conditions make it feasible. But in cases where external powers do decide to intervene and help, they must go in with a clear and workable strategy; they must focus on strategic local partners in the respective societies that are seriously committed to democracy and relevant in organizational and power terms, and they must make a clear-cut decision in favour of developing peace and democracy and against the temptation to mix these policies with imperial designs.

NOTES

1. Lucian W. Pye, 'Armies in the Process of Political Modernization', in John J. Johnson (ed.), *The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962), p. 71.
2. Charles Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 44.
3. The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Sept. 2002).
4. See, for instance, David S. Yost, 'Enhancing NATO's cooperation with international organizations', *NATO Review* (Autumn 2007), available at www.nato.int/docu/review/2007/issue3/english/analysis2. html (accessed 20 Dec. 2007), emphases added.
5. Marina Ottaway, 'Iraq: Without Consensus, Democracy Is Not the Answer', *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Policy Brief 36* (March 2005); Qadar Bakhsh Baloch, 'Democratization of the Arab World: Revival Or Reformation?', *The Dialogue*, Vol. 2, No.1 (2006), pp. 1–26; Alex Danchev and John MacMillan (eds), *The Iraq War and Democratic Politics* (London: Routledge, 2005).
6. Tobias Debiel and Ulf Terlinden, in collaboration with Tim Dertwirkel, Armin Nolting, and Martha Gutiérrez, *Promoting Good Governance in Post-Conflict Societies*, (Eschborn: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, 2005); Jeff Huther and Anwar Shah, 'Applying a Simple Measure of Good Governance to the Debate on Fiscal Decentralization', in Anwar Shah (ed.), *Public Service Delivery* (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2005), pp. 1–37.
7. A key contribution to this debate is the report 'International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, the Responsibility to Protect – Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty' (Ottawa: International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, 2001).
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9. *President Bush Discusses Top Priorities for the US*, Press Conference of President George W. Bush, Office of the Press Secretary, Washington, 30 July 2003, available at www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/07/20030730-1.html (accessed 20 Dec. 2007).
10. Jochen Hippler, 'Democratisation of the Third World after the End of the Cold War', in Jochen Hippler (ed.), *The Democratisation of Disempowerment – The Problem of Democracy in the Third World* (London: Pluto Press, 1995), pp. 1–31.
11. For instance: Margareta Sollenberg and Peter Wallensteen, 'Major Armed Conflicts', in Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), *SIPRI Yearbook 1998: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), chapter 1.

12. Other definitions include Hamburger Arbeitsgemeinschaft Kriegsursachenforschung (AKUF), *Aktuelle Kriege und bewaffnete Konflikte 2006* (Hamburg: AKUF, 2006), available at www.sozialwiss.uni-hamburg.de/publish/Ipw/Akuf/kriege_aktuell.htm#Def, last (accessed 20 Dec 2007); Heidelberger Institut für Internationale Konfliktforschung, *Konfliktbarometer 2006: Krisen – Kriege – Putsche, Verhandlungen – Vermittlungen –Friedensschlüsse. 15. Jährliche Konfliktanalyse*, available at www.hiik.de/konfliktbarometer/pdf/Konfliktbarometer_2006.pdf (accessed 20 Dec. 2007).
13. Heidelberger Institut für Internationale Konfliktforschung, *Konfliktbarometer 2006: Krisen – Kriege – Putsche, Verhandlungen – Vermittlungen –Friedensschlüsse. 15. Jährliche Konfliktanalyse*, www.hiik.de/konfliktbarometer/pdf/Konfliktbarometer_2006.pdf (accessed 20 Dec. 2007).
14. These terms are all borrowed from US military discourse, as far as it applies to insurgencies, counter-insurgency, and related forms of non-conventional civil wars. For an overview see Jochen Hippler, *Counterinsurgency and Political Control – US Military Strategies Regarding Regional Conflict, INEF-Report No. 81/2006* (Duisburg-Essen: Institute for Development and Peace [INEF], University of Duisburg-Essen, 2006).
15. Ann Hironaka, *Never-ending Wars − The International Community, Weak States, and the Perpetuation of Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), p. 77.
16. Daniel Biró, 'The (Un)bearable Lightness of . . . Violence − Warlordism as an Alternative Form of Governance in the "Westphalian Periphery"?', in Tobias Debiel and Daniel Lambach (eds), *State Failure Revisited II: Actors of Violence and Alternative Forms of Governance, INEF Report 89/2007* (Duisburg-Essen: Institute for Development and Peace [INEF], University of Duisburg-Essen, 2007), pp. 7–49.
17. It is interesting to note that in several countries these kinds of limited or discriminatory democracies exist or have existed, like in Turkey (restriction of rights for some minorities, such as Christians and Kurds), Israel (Arabs), formerly South Africa (all non-white groups), Iran (exclusion of all secular groups and politicians), and several countries that discriminated or still discriminate against the indigenous population. Historically, many settler colonies (Australia, USA) combined forms of democratic self-rule for settlers with genocidal violence against indigenous populations. In several cases it might be possible to trace the origins of these cases back to various forms of violence. But to generally use the term 'civil war' might overstretch the term. Clear-cut civil wars rarely seem to produce these kinds of set-up. They tend to lead either to authoritarian or to (though often imperfect) democratic rule. There may be exceptions (like the difficult role of Serbs in the democratic set-up of Kosovo), which demonstrate that this possibility – that is, discrimination under democratic rule – exists, but it obviously is neither the norm nor very likely. We should also keep in mind that discrimination can be based in law or can happen despite the law.
18. Charles T. Call and Elizabeth M. Cousens, *Ending Wars and Building Peace, International Peace Academy, Coping with Crisis Working Paper Series* (New York: International Peace Academy, March 2007), p. 3.
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20. In 2001, the US and its allies seemed to succeed over the Taliban, which supposedly ended the civil war between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance.
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22. The World Bank and Carter Center, *From Civil War to Civil Society − The Transition from War to Peace in Guatemala and Liberia* (Washington, DC: The World Bank and Carter Center, 1997), p. 8.
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24. Call and Cousens (note 18), p. 9.
25. See both Wolfgang Merkel and Lars-Erik Cederman *et al.* in this collection.
26. Roland Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 187.
27. Ibid, p. 206.
28. Larry Diamond, 'Promoting Democracy in Post-Conflict and Failed States − Lessons and Challenges', *Taiwan Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (2006), p. 94.
29. Jochen Hippler, 'Violent Conflicts, Conflict Prevention and Nation-Building − Terminology and Political Concepts', in Jochen Hippler (note 21), pp. 7 − 9.
30. Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka, 'Democratisation and Nation-Building in "Divided Societies"', in Jochen Hippler (ed.) (note 21), p. 32.

31. For a somewhat more optimistic view see Arend Lijphart, 'The Wave of Power-Sharing Democracy', in Andrew Reynolds (ed.), *The Architecture of Democracy. Constitutional Design, Conflict Management, and Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 37–54.
32. Diamond (note 28), p. 97.
33. Sarah Chayes, *The Punishment of Virtue – Inside Afghanistan after the Taliban* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006), p. 192 f.
34. See also Jochen Hippler, 'Bedingungen, Kriterien und Grenzen militärischer Interventionen', in Bruno Schoch, Andreas Heinemann-Grüder, Jochen Hippler, Markus Weingardt, and Reinhard Mutz (eds), *Friedensgutachten 2007*, for the Institut für Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik an der Universität Hamburg (IFSH), Hessische Stiftung Friedens und Konfliktforschung (HSFK), Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), Institut für Entwicklung und Frieden (INEF) *et al.* (Münster: LIT Verlag, June 2007), pp. 110–21.

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