

Introduction

Peacebuilding through the lens of friction

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Introduction

Building sustainable peace after violent conflict is an inherently difficult process. This is true for many reasons, not least because the institutions and practices of peacebuilding require a transformation of power relations, thus provoking social, cultural, and political contestation. In such a dynamic field of power, external and internal norms, formal and informal practices, and state- and non-state actors all struggle for influence within broader dynamics that are often characterised as competitions between the global and the local. This book aims to unpack this complex interplay between global norms, practices and actors and their local counterparts. Our ambition is to problematise the global/local dichotomy, unmask articulations of universalistic and particularistic, homogenous and heterogeneous, liberal and illiberal, and to unravel the question of agency by unsettling the boundaries between the global and the local and examining the interaction between global and local actors, discourses and practices. This is accomplished by providing an exploration of peacebuilding endeavours and their impact on post-conflict societies through the analytical lens of friction.²

In an earlier time and for a substantially different purpose, von Clausewitz (1874) defined friction as what emerges between what is thought/planned and the realities on the ground. Although theorised within a wholly different field and context, Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's far more recent contribution echoes this basic idea. Tsing (2005: xi) proposes that friction should be seen as 'the unexpected and unstable aspects of global interaction', or the generative process that allows creative re-imaginings as an organic response to 'awkward engagements'. In the first sense, friction might be regarded as a force that hinders movement; slowing down or limiting change. In the second, however, movement and change are only possible when friction occurs; when two elements interact. Tsing (2005: 5) suggests, for example, that '[r]ubbing two sticks together produces heat and light; one stick alone is just a stick'. In this volume, friction is used to illuminate how new political, social, and cultural dynamics are produced in peacebuilding sites. But it is also put forward as a way to understand how global ideas pertaining to peace are charged and changed by their encounters with local post-conflict realities.

The purpose of this book, therefore, is to engage in various ways with the challenge of understanding the processes of and the outcomes that arise from frictional encounters in peacebuilding. So, how do we understand the concept of friction in this book? First, at the most basic level, we understand friction as a process triggered by global–local interactions rather than as an outcome of such peacebuilding encounters. Second, through the friction lens it is recognised that the eventual – often hybrid – outcomes of this process are not necessarily negative for the society concerned, as the process of friction can also facilitate change for the better. Third, these processes of friction are understood to add a measure of complexity, indeterminacy, unpredictability and non-linearity to peacebuilding encounters. And finally, we see friction as an analytical tool that provides both a more accurate interpretation of the outcomes of interactions within complex post-conflict societies, and which resists the co-optation by international actors experienced by the concepts of hybridity and ownership before it. In other words, while international actors have rhetorically and discursively committed to the value of ownership and hybridity, both have simply become new elements of intervention to be planned and administered. The contingent nature of friction works against any such co-optation by global actors.

The focus on friction as an analytical tool, as proposed in this volume, advances the peacebuilding research agenda in a number of significant ways. First, as mentioned, the peacebuilding literature often constructs a dichotomy between the empowered international actors doing the peacebuilding intervention and the disempowered local beneficiaries for whom the intervention is done. As such, it often fails to fully appreciate that both the global and the local are in constant confrontation and interaction with each other and both are, through such interactions, always undergoing transformation. Conversely, the concept of friction implies that actors at all scales (global, regional, national, and local) are potential agents and may be actively engaged with processes of peacebuilding. Second, the focus on friction as a process provides a more nuanced understanding of how the varying outcomes of peacebuilding are reached and of the impact on all actors involved. This focus demands that we recognise that global–local encounters ‘can be both a site for empowerment and for domination’ (Mannergren Selimovic, 2010: 24).

Further, the idea of friction demands a multi-sectional perspective on the process of post-conflict security, stability, peace, and development because it is in the interaction between the actors involved in post-conflict intervention that friction occurs. If the concept of peacebuilding itself is constrained simply to the political realm (governing institutions, democratisation, decentralisation, electoral reforms, constitutional revisions, etc.), to the economic realm (priming markets, opening trade, generating tax revenue, providing entrepreneurial capital, etc.), or to the legal realm (rebuilding courts, training lawyers and judges, punishing perpetrators, establishing human rights commissions, etc.), then friction within peacebuilding and between these different elements of the peacebuilding endeavour will be overlooked. In demanding that we look not simply at the actors, ideas, and practices of peacebuilding, but at the

interactions, relationships and articulations of the various actors, ideas and practices, the concept of friction also requires an inclusive conception of what constitutes a peacebuilding process and an interdisciplinary approach to peacebuilding theory.

Consistent with this, we adopt a broad definition of peacebuilding as the range of efforts – engaging with a variety of actors – aimed at political, institutional, social and economic transformations in post-war societies for the purpose of a sustainable and positive peace. In this view, the overall aim of peacebuilding is to reduce the risk of overt violent conflict while paving the way for durable peace and development. We therefore acknowledge that building peace is fundamentally about power within society and that all the issues addressed in such a broad definition need to be analysed. The various contributors to this volume come from different disciplines and focus on different elements of the peacebuilding endeavour. As such, the contributions tap into research in the various subfields of peacebuilding scholarship such as transitional justice and reconciliation, democratisation and good governance, civil society, and security sector reform.

This introductory chapter first introduces a tentative conceptual framework that can guide the analysis of frictions in societies emerging from violent conflict and the peacebuilding efforts undertaken to promote sustainable peace. We then discuss the manner in which friction can contribute to two major debates that have marked the field of peacebuilding in recent years; namely, the hybridity debate and the local agency debate. We point to the limitations of each of these debates and the contribution that is made by employing the concept of friction. Elements of our framework are employed and further developed within various theoretical and empirical analyses in the volume.

A brief note on methodology helps clarify the overall adaptive method that guides the research presented here. In a dialogue between the empirical analyses and theory, new insights regarding the complex interaction between the various actors involved in peacebuilding contexts are gained throughout the volume and studied through the analytical lens provided by the concept of friction. As such, the volume problematises different perspectives and understandings of these interactions and develops the concept of friction both theoretically and empirically. Thus, the analyses presented in the volume depict different levels of ambition, from developing the notion of friction to simply employing the concept of friction to deepen the empirical analysis of peacebuilding. Some analyses, therefore, are empirically rich and base their analysis on ethnographic fieldwork, while others are less empirical but provide substantive theoretical insights. However, they all demonstrate the interplay between conceptualisations of friction and the analysis of empirical data and add new insights to the theorisation of friction.

Understanding frictional encounters

Discussions of the interaction between the global and local in peacebuilding are complicated. We are well aware of the potential problems of using the terms ‘global’ and ‘local’. The reference to global is often seen to encompass universal moral frameworks, cosmopolitan awareness, and the ability to move across borders. In contrast, local tends to stand for particularities, authenticity, contextuality and a lack of mobility (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013: 772). In this context, it is important to understand that global discourses, policies and practices are, in fact, not universal, but claim universality. Indeed, our analyses demonstrate, in congruence with other studies, that the ideas and discourses we call global are often circulating locals (Merry, 2006). It is helpful, therefore, to perceive of these dynamics between the global and local not as between two reified or bounded levels of social, economic, and political reality, but between socially constructed, continuously negotiated, and actively interacting scales. Thus, the scalar levels of global and local are at the heart of our analysis and their frictional encounters described in this volume draw attention to the social construction of space and agency over time in a manner that unsettles the boundaries between the two.

It is important in this approach to consider scale as the result of exchanges and engagements (Brenner, 2001). Thrift (2004: 59) argues that the scale-dependent notion of space as a nested hierarchy of scales from global to local should be ‘replaced by an emphasis on connectivity’. The production and politics of scale (MacKinnon, 2010) suggest that peacebuilding operates on numerous levels, such as the body, community, urban, regional, national, supranational, and global. Like Bunnell and Coe (2001), we view scales and relations between various scales as not fixed but as fluid, contested, and perpetually being transgressed (cf. Beauregard, 1995; Cox, 1998; Kelly, 1997; Swyngedouw, 1997), and this has implications for how we conceptualise global–local encounters in peacebuilding. Scales are here defined, therefore, as operational and methodological, in the sense that analytical complexities such as peace patterns, peacebuilding processes, and agents can be located according to their scale of operation. Further, scale is constantly (re)produced through social and political processes of peacebuilding, and, in turn, scale affects the operation of these processes.

Therefore, in this volume, we argue that a relational perspective on space, which emphasises the mutual constitution of the global and local, is helpful in critically investigating the processes of frictional encounters and understanding how agency is produced through such encounters. Peacebuilding processes operating at multiple scales – from the contested spaces of the divided city of Mostar to the elite spaces of the UN Security Council – intersect with other processes on other scales, and, as a result, we need to pay attention to their operational distinctiveness at particular scales and the mechanisms that define their *modus operandi*. This conception of friction as a process embedded in the relationships between scales has substantial theoretical and analytical implications in that it allows us to recognise, analyse and critique the often assumed and regularly under-theorised power dynamics which characterise the interplay between global

peacebuilding discourses and practices and the norms and practices of post-conflict societies, without reifying either the global or the local as clearly delimited or bounded entities.

This focus on friction as process also allows us to explore a key feature of the peacebuilding interaction, which is that it has no predetermined outcome; it is unpredictable, as many of the chapters in this volume show. The process of friction should not be regarded simply as a contestation between various peacebuilding ideas and actors, or as a confrontation between the global and the local practices with a predetermined outcome, but rather as an unexpected and uncertain process in which global and local actors, and universalistic and particularistic discourses, interact to mediate and negotiate difference and affinity. As Millar notes, the concept of friction employed here recognises that the outcome of peacebuilding interventions is emergent and cannot be predicted because peacebuilding occurs in sensitive and complex post-conflict societies and will, therefore, give rise to inherently complex emergent outcomes. Friction thus tends to change facts on the ground as it creates new and messy dynamics, agencies, and structures as well as unexpected coalitions built on ‘awkwardly linked incompatibles’ based on either universal or particular ideas (Tsing, 2005: 16). In short, while friction always occurs between the actors, ideas, and practices engaging in or circulating within the peacebuilding endeavour, the nature of those frictions, and the outcomes that will emerge as a product of the process of friction, will be unpredictable.

Finally, we propose that the process of friction need not always be driven by conscious choice, but it can also result from unrecognised and unconsidered incompatibilities between the various actors involved. The institutions, practices, and rituals representative of international peacebuilding endeavours are elements of ‘travelling packages’ through which global agents export universalising ideas from one place to another (Tsing, 2005: 237). However, these elements of international peacebuilding processes are themselves built upon and so are representations of taken for granted concepts and norms dominant within the contexts of their creation and incorrectly assumed to be universal (Millar, 2014). As most post-conflict states today are socially and culturally divergent from the societies in which peacebuilding is theorised, planned, and funded, any such interventions will have wholly unpredictable effects, and this may not be because of any conscious decision to resist, to reject, or to compromise the elements of that intervention. Thus, friction is often the result of inconsistency between central norms, ideas, and concepts, but needs not always be purposeful or conscious.

Analysing friction

In order to perceive and make visible the complex connections between the universal schemes of international actors and the local realities into which these schemes are transported, Tsing (2005: 16) suggests that universals themselves be understood as ethnographic objects. She urges us not to see engaged universals as impure or incomplete versions of a global norm – spoilt or polluted by the

local setting – but to pay attention to the new and sometimes astonishing ways in which contingent articulations unfold. ‘Ethnographic fragments ask us to pay attention to details’ (Tsing, 2005: 271), and the details of global–local interaction require that we examine the actors, instances, and drivers of friction. In order to allow this, we provide a conceptual framework as outlined in [Table I.1](#).

Based on the understanding of friction we have outlined above, as a process across scales and within and between complex settings, this tentative conceptual framework proposes that friction may be analysed along four axes. These four axes provide a framework for the conceptualisation and evaluation of frictions between actors, ideas, and practices in peacebuilding endeavours. By looking at the interactions and articulations of universalistic and particularistic, homogenous and heterogeneous, liberal and illiberal, and global and local through the perspective of friction, the contributions to this volume provide not only analysis of the actors, ideas, and practices emerging from different discourses and cultural milieus, but an analysis of the process of interaction generated when they come into contact in complex and unpredictable ways. This analysis, in turn, provides a greater understanding not simply of local processes, or of the hybrid or mixed agencies, ideas and processes that are generated, but of the complex nature of the interactions between all of these elements that unfold in the context of peacebuilding intervention.

Friction, in our analysis, is a process characterised by various sub-processes – of compliance, adoption, adaption, co-option, resistance, and rejection – and as such, the process of friction can be analysed with an eye to understanding which (or which combination) of these sub-processes are occurring. Second, the primary agents of these sub-processes are neither predominantly global nor local. Sometimes the local actor will comply, adopt, adapt, co-opt, resist, or reject the applications or administrations of the global actors. Equally, sometimes the global actor will be the one complying, adopting, adapting, co-opting, resisting, or rejecting.

Third, it prompts the reader to recognise that the sub-processes initiated and carried through by different actors are not always the result of conscious decisions and that friction is, therefore, not always conscious. Indeed, frictions can

Table I.1 Friction in peacebuilding

<i>Sub-processes</i>	<i>Primary actors</i>	<i>Drivers</i>	<i>Combinations</i>
What kind of process is observed?	Who are the primarily actors involved?	What are the primary drivers of this friction?	Are multiple sub-processes occurring?
Compliance	Single global	Conscious decisions	Compliance and
Adaption	Single local	Unconscious	adaption?
Adoption	Various global	decisions	Co-option and
Co-option	Various local	Misunderstanding	resistance?
Resistance	Combination of	Dissociation	Adoption and
Rejection	local and global		rejection?

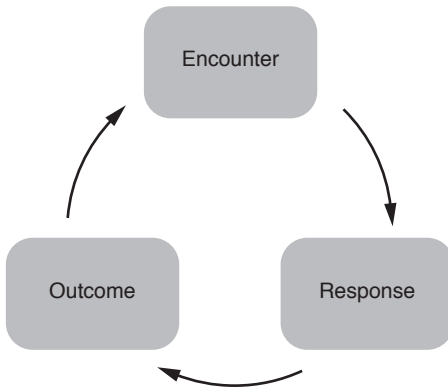


Figure I.1 Friction and feedback loops.

be driven by various factors – whether psychological, cultural, linguistic, or otherwise – which may be unknown even to the actors involved. Fourth, in most cases of friction multiple sub-processes occur at once, with one actor complying while another resists, a global actor co-opting while different local actors are variously adopting, resisting and rejecting, etc. It is this multiplicity that gives friction its unpredictable and contingent nature.

The new realities that emerge from these encounters will in turn create feedback loops that may create further new encounters (see [Figure I.1](#)). For instance, the partial adoption of external norms at the local level may spur resistance and violence from spoiler groups, which change the realities on the ground and give rise to new exchanges. Further, the interaction and feedback gives rise to complexity and unpredictability that cannot be easily analysed or overcome by intervening actors; even those who can mobilise massive resources and manpower.

This complexity – emerging from the articulation of sub-processes, actors and drivers – makes friction highly unpredictable. However, while this makes the analysis of frictions a difficult prospect and might initially appear to abrogate the concept's pertinence for policy and practice, it is actually one of its primary strengths as an analytical perspective and tool for peacebuilding scholarship. Indeed, as will be discussed below, we argue that this complexity and unpredictability protects the concept of friction from the form of co-optation and appropriation that has been experienced by its immediate conceptual forerunner: hybridity.

The hybridity debate

This book closely engages with, and in many ways emerged in response to, the ongoing hybridity debate. This debate in the literature arises from the mixed track record of peacebuilding endeavours and the discussion concerning these

mixed outcomes. While there is substantial evidence suggesting that international peacebuilding interventions have a positive impact on the duration of peace (Doyle and Sambanis, 2000; Fortna, 2008), defined in this context as the absence of large-scale warfare, their track record on developing a more positive peace is less successful (van der Lijn, 2006). Scholars have described a great diversity of experiences among post-war countries and the influence of international efforts in shaping these societies (Höglund and Söderberg Kovacs, 2010; Paris, 2010; van der Lijn, 2009). Reflecting this, various terms such as no peace, no war, frozen conflict, and unending peace processes have been used to describe the various states of negative peace or stalemate that external peacebuilding efforts seem to generate (Aggestam and Björkdahl, 2011; Mac Ginty, 2006; Richards, 2005).

These less than exemplary outcomes of peacebuilding processes have often been analysed through the concept of hybridity. Hybridity denotes situations in which the meeting between international and local norms, actors and practices create new arrangements that display hybrid features where, for instance, liberal and illiberal norms co-exist. Hybrid political orders (Boege *et al.*, 2008; Mac Ginty, 2010; Richmond and Mitchell, 2012) hybrid peace governance (Jarstad and Belloni 2012), hybrid courts (Dougherty, 2004; Katzenstein, 2003), as well as hybrid subjects (Laffey and Nadarajah, 2012) are ways in which hybridity has been conceptualised in relation to peacebuilding. The notion of hybridity is therefore generally used to capture the mixing and melding of international and local structures and practices, including the intertwined relationship between the global and local, the formal and informal, the liberal and illiberal. To many scholars, the outcome of such interplay is a hybrid peace.

However, while the hybrid peace was initially considered as an unintended consequence of stalled or failed interventions, today it is increasingly considered a desirable outcome; a more authentic alternative to liberal peace as it is thought to tap into local knowledge, broaden the peace constituency, and generate legitimacy (Mac Ginty, 2010). While hybridity, as associated with anthropology, sociology, and postcolonial studies, was a concept for analysis and understanding (description), but not for policy and planning (prescription), hybridity has, within the peacebuilding literature, become one more element of peacebuilding interventions to be designed and managed by powerful international actors for the betterment of the disempowered local (Millar, 2014). Yet few studies have assessed the quality of the hybrid peace and whether or not it is an outcome welcomed by the people on the ground.

The concept of hybridity has enhanced our understanding of the complex interactions between the international peacebuilding industry and the local post-conflict realities. But much of the peacebuilding literature on hybridity reifies the global–local dichotomy and as such it is unable to capture interactions that transcend scales. Furthermore, there is a tendency in this literature to focus more on outcomes than process. In addition, as a theoretical tool it has also been appropriated by policy actors as one more thing to be designed. It has, in short, proven itself too open to co-optation. The recent use of heterotopias as a term to describe

situations in which a plurality of peace(s) co-exists simultaneously (van Leeuwen *et al.*, 2012) attempts to overcome this co-optation to some extent, in that this concept highlights the fluidity of the various local discourses and practices, and their continuously changing nature in interaction with other ideas and practices. But heterotopias are, by definition, outcomes, and it is the process – the complex interaction among various global and local actors and discourses during peacebuilding interventions – that the concept of friction aims to grasp.

Thus, we contribute to this strand of research by introducing and developing the concept of friction, which defies a simplistic understanding of peacebuilding processes and instead recognises the inherently complex elements of such endeavours. Friction brings to the fore the give-and-take relationship that transforms both the local landscape and its global counterpart. By conceptualising friction in this manner we are better able to grasp the abrasive and unpredictable ways in which the universalistic peacebuilding discourse interplays with particularistic locals and post-conflict realities. While the encounters we focus on entail an articulation between actors, ideas or practices, the outcomes of frictional engagements are by no means determined to have negative consequences for the long-term prospects of peace, development, and democratisation. Instead, these frictions may serve as a catalyst for change, which challenges the status quo of societies trapped in a negative spiral of violence and instability (Jarstad and Belloni, 2012; Mac Ginty, 2011; Richmond and Mitchell, 2012). Understanding the nature of these frictions can shed light on the reasons why different kinds of outcomes emerge.

The local agency debate

A second issue the book addresses through the perspective of friction is the ongoing debate regarding local agency, localness, and the supposed romanticisation of the local. Where the peacebuilding industry has entered into post-conflict societies with the promise of delivering peace, liberal democracy, good governance, rule of law, and free market economics, it has often been argued that there has generally been limited space for local actors to construct a peace of their own making (Donais, 2012: 6; Richmond, 2012: 372). International peacebuilding initiatives are said to have overestimated the attractiveness of the normative package inherent in the liberal peace while under-estimating the power of local agents to resist (Björkdahl and Gusic, 2015; Mac Ginty, 2012; Richmond, 2012).

However, post-conflict settings are not empty spaces. Quite the contrary, local actors are often unwilling objects of the peacebuilding agenda; regularly resisting its agents, ideas, and practices. Indeed, even when they are not overtly unwilling or actively resisting intervention, local societies emerging from conflict retain many structures, institutions, and modes of survival that are important and useful to local elites and ordinary people alike. Patronage networks, tribal connections, traditional authorities, and unofficial or grey economies are persistent social forms that exist prior to, during, and after conflict, and, as such, they

have tended to impact on or interfere with international peacebuilding operations. Initially, this led to a perspective in which ‘the local’ was seen primarily as an obstacle to peacebuilding, and indeed this remains the perspective taken by some (RAND Corporation, 2013). Increasingly, however, the peacebuilding literature treats the local as a resource, or even a starting point for any intervention. This movement has been labelled the ‘local turn’ (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013).

Yet when international peacebuilding has made tentative attempts to connect with people and place, it has been criticised for romanticising the local or for failing to engage constructively with local agencies, processes, and coping mechanisms (Mac Ginty, 2010). The calls for local ownership have put hybridised peace processes in focus as outcomes of the interplay between global and local. It thus appears that the global peacebuilding discourse within which most peacebuilding interventions are designed holds certain assumptions about the role of both international and local agency within post-conflict spaces. To critics it regards the local as lacking agency and mobility, and understands post-conflict spaces to be empty spaces in need of new norms, practices, and governing institutions. This in turn has implications for how international peacebuilding actors approach peace, reconciliation, democracy, and governance, as well as security in recipient post-conflict societies. This interpretation, however, is partly a result of the language used in these debates, which regularly attempts to separate itself from such simple dichotomies, but is forced nonetheless to reify them due to the limited language of the local ownership discourse.

This limited language results in a narrative that treats the local and the global as two distinct categories and, thus, fails to adequately capture the reality in post-conflict settings. A more nuanced and accurate analytical framework sees the international and the local as intertwined. Due to factors such as globalisation, migration and the enormous involvement of international actors in governance and civil society in fragile states we cannot see the international and the local as distinct entities. Local and global actors continuously interact, particularly during peacebuilding interventions, and they influence each other in the process in subtle ways. One such process is localisation, defined by Acharya (2004: 245) as ‘the active construction (through discourse, framing, grafting, and cultural selection) of foreign ideas by local actors, [which] may result in the former developing significant congruence with local beliefs and practices’. A crucial aspect of localisation is that local actors choose and import the global idea. Hence, global ideas are not always just imposed by external actors but local actors may actually initiate the change. By doing so, the local actors choose global ideas and practices that fit with local realities, or reformulate and adjust global ideas and practices so they make sense. Localisation is thus understood as a frictional process where so-called universal ideas and practices become local, but without fulfilling their ‘promise of universality’ (Björkdahl 2012: 229).

Another process by which this occurs is vernacularisation. Levitt and Merry argue that it is only when global ideas assume concrete forms as local institutions and processes that they move from one part of the world to another. They

describe how global ‘ideas connect with locality [and] take on some of the ideological and social attributes of the place, but also retain some of their original formulation’ (Levitt and Merry, 2007: 446). This idea directly echoes Tsing’s idea of travelling packages (2005: 237) being translated (2005: 224) into new institutions, practices and ideas in local contexts. In this way the concept of friction connects firmly with and helps to shed light on both localisation and vernacularisation. Thus, while we too use the terms, friction is able to disrupt the simplistic dichotomy of local and global agency and contribute to an understanding of how each can be empowered or disempowered through interaction and articulation. We do not agree with the simple critiques of the local turn literature as purposefully romanticising the local or inherently reifying the global–local dichotomy. However, we do recognise that the limited language of those debates has allowed those interpretations. As will be exhibited by the chapters in the volume, while we retain the use of the local and global labels, the more nuanced analytical framework we introduce for the friction lens overcomes some of these limitations of language and interpretation.

Outline of the volume and contributions of the chapters

Through in-depth empirical and theoretical investigations, the various contributions to this volume debate how to understand, develop, and employ friction in analyses of peacebuilding and, in so doing, advance the concept of friction. None of the chapters can be clearly distinguished as either purely empirical or wholly theoretical, as each contributes both empirical and theoretical insights. Some chapters are more theoretical in their approach (such as the chapters by Buckley-Zistel and Millar) while others are more empirical, focusing on issues such as transitional justice, public security, or democratisation (such as the chapters by Höglund and Orjuela, Freire and Lopez, and Öjendal and Ou), and some provide for a balance between abstract theorisation and rich empirical material derived from ethnographic fieldwork (such as the chapters by Björkdahl and Gusic, Verkoren and van Leeuwen, and Mannergren Selimovic). Each chapter, however, demonstrates the interplay between conceptualisations of friction and empirical data that adds new insights to the theorisation of friction.

In [Chapter 1](#) Susanne Buckley-Zistel advances the notion of friction by viewing it through the lens of spatial theory, and situates friction in the theory of relational space. In so doing this chapter focuses on the scalar levels of global and local at the core of the concept of friction and explores how their encounters – their friction – can be further conceptualised. The chapter provides an empirical analysis of the frictional relationship between the global norm of transitional justice and its local applicability, and argues that the local and the global are intrinsically connected and mutually constitutive.

The following chapter, by Gearoid Millar, builds on the notion of friction as a lens for understanding interactions between the global and the local by introducing the concept of compound friction as a tool for understanding the manner in which peacebuilding processes implemented in parallel within post-conflict

settings interact in the imaginations of local audiences to create unpredictable and unexpected expectations and experiences. Building on empirical evidence from Sierra Leone, the chapter then nests the concept of friction within complexity theory in order to illustrate the limitations placed on global powers in their attempt to co-opt this new analytical tool.

In **Chapter 3** Johanna Mannergren Selimovic highlights the friction that arises between the multitude of agents and narratives engaged in memorialisation and practices of remembrance in post-conflict societies. She thus advances our conceptual understand of friction by analysing competing narratives, ideas, and norms about post-war remembrance. More specifically, post-conflict commemoration is read as a site for frictional encounters between local agents and global memory entrepreneurs who struggle for control over social remembering. The chapter reveals the constitutive relationships that affect and transform agents moving in or across global, local, and other spaces and advances a conceptualisation of local agency recognised as multidimensional, operating on different scales, and as inherently conflictual and transformative. The argument is illustrated by case studies of the Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre in Rwanda.

Chapter 4, by Lise Philipsen, has a different take on friction as a concept and looks at attempts by peacebuilders to avoid friction. Her analysis shows that peacebuilding in Sierra Leone is located in a contact zone where friction between the liberal and bureaucratic demands of the UN and local practices play out. Such friction unsettles the liberal mandate of the mission and creates problems for the people tasked with implementing it. Focusing on the spaces in which peacebuilding is negotiated, this chapter examines how friction arises in relation to the subject's peacebuilding targets and how this friction is simultaneously sought and avoided by the peacebuilders. In the contact zone between liberal ideals and an unruly post-conflict setting, the political value of peacebuilding is worked out in practices that vacillate between engaging the Sierra Leoneans and attempts to escape the friction that arises from such encounters. The chapter finds that peacebuilding in Sierra Leone has become not so much a story of compliance, co-option, or resistance, but one of avoiding confrontation between the political values of liberal peacebuilding and local authority structures by creating imagined non-frictional spaces, where struggles are determined not by politics, but by practicality.

In **Chapter 5** Annika Björkdahl and Ivan Gusic develop and apply the concept of friction to the divided city of Mostar. As the global interventions interplay with local post-conflict realities three sites of friction are identified and examined in Mostar: democratic encounters with ethnocracy; civic identity encounters ethnonationalist identity; and local ownership encounters local agency. By linking empirical analysis to theoretical advancement, the chapter reveals the concept of friction's analytical usefulness for capturing sites of friction as manifestations of interaction and agency that elude to friction's co-constitutive and relational dynamics. In so doing, the chapter challenges the conventional idea of the powerful global and the powerless local, disentangles the local elite from the

non-elite in the post-conflict context, and casts new light on the applicability of so-called universal values.

Chapter 6, by Willemijn Verkoren and Mathijs van Leeuwen, addresses both the causes and outcomes of friction. They argue that frictions are caused by the fact that policies for civil society support are rooted in a Western discourse of the role of civic actors in politics and society that do not match local practices of civil society in non-Western, conflict-affected countries. The frictions between the Western discourse and local practices are illustrated with case studies of southern Sudan, Ituri in the DRC and Guatemala, which illuminate the complexity of these interactions and show that there is often some space for action and negotiation on both sides. In two cases, southern Sudan and Ituri (DRC), this led to unexpected outcomes that were not necessarily negative from the perspective of peacebuilding. In the third case, Guatemala, it led to an imposition of norms on the part of intervening international NGOs.

Kristine Höglund and Camilla Orjuela (**Chapter 7**) engage with friction between international and local actors in an era of globalised transitional justice processes with cases from post-war Sri Lanka. By adopting an actor-oriented perspective they suggest that friction as an analytical concept is sharpened, since it transgresses the broad categories of conflicts between the local and the global. They find that in the context of a victor's peace, the prevailing actor can mobilise ordinary people against international transitional justice initiatives and can stage localised processes that do not involve the grassroots to any real extent. This analysis highlights four significant actors in post-war justice – the internationalised state, domestic constituencies, the international community and diasporas – whose encounters, roles, and internal complexities determine the outcomes of transitional justice processes.

In **Chapter 8** Joakim Öjendal and Sivhuoch Ou develop our understanding of friction by taking a long-term perspective to assess the outcome of peacebuilding efforts in Cambodia two decades after the UN operation was concluded. Friction is employed to illuminate the hybridity that has been the key outcome of both the peace and democratisation efforts of interveners and of those subjected to the intervention and several key development processes are traced in order to demonstrate the particular kinds of friction that were initiated with the approach to peacebuilding taken in Cambodia. The chapter concludes that the peacebuilding intervention caused friction, which, through awkward engagement, created a hybrid system with its own inbuilt contradictions, in turn initiated renewed processes of sub-friction pressing for further change. Thus, ideas and systems hybridise and so do the actors' interests and positions in an ongoing and dynamic process where friction re-emerges in new shapes, the outcome of which defines (and redefines) the quality of the political system.

In **Chapter 9** Jaïr van der Lijn explores the conception and causation of frictions when international actors, such as the UN and NATO, intervene in complex environments. This chapter develops the hypothesis on the basis of social psychology theories that in complex peacebuilding environments decision makers structure and simplify disorder, which leads to suboptimal interventions, to

which local actors respond in a process of friction. To overcome complexity in Afghanistan and to deal with the local, van der Lijn shows how global interveners subconsciously developed constructs, such as the insurgents and the government, to simplify the picture, and so illustrates how these constructs became the driving influence in state-building and counterinsurgency (COIN) theory, policy and practice. In this way, van der Lijn exhibits the frictions that emerge on the ground as a result of the human inability to fully understand complexity.

Chapter 10, by Maria Raquel Freire and Paula Duarte Lopes, adopts a process-oriented approach to friction and highlights how friction is a part of both sustainable and unsustainable aspects of peace processes. The chapter focuses on the importance of interaction between peace missions and local dynamics centring on the UN peace intervention in Timor-Leste. It discusses different examples of frictions that have the potential to undermine or empower the peacebuilding efforts underway, and the analysis stresses the unpredictable effects of applying the UN liberal peace model. It is argued that processes of friction, often consisting of an incremental build-up of intermediate results, shape and form the (un)sustainability of any peacebuilding process initiated by an international intervention and, consequently, should be identified and analysed in order to enhance their positive or minimise their negative contribution towards building peace.

Sara Hellmüller's **Chapter 11** advances our conceptual understanding of friction by analysing the priorities of international and local actors as a space in which friction arises. The chapter addresses how perceptions of the conflict in the DRC influenced the different local and international peacebuilding strategies and the outcomes of their interaction. The liberal state that the international community foresaw was hybridised with local authority structures in the course of the interaction of international visions with local perceptions and experiences. International strategies eschewed or only belatedly included local priorities, such as reconciliation between antagonistic communities and land conflicts. The chapter argues that the interplay of priorities – the space where friction occurs – remains dominated by international actors. As a consequence, Hellmüller suggests exploring more carefully and pragmatically the potential intermediary role that local peacebuilding actors can play in rendering international strategies more relevant at the local level.

Finally, the concluding chapter brings together the findings from the different contributions and discusses how developing and applying the concept of friction has advanced the peacebuilding field. It suggests ways to begin to make sense of the complexity of friction processes and further disaggregates the categories local and global, emphasising the multifaceted but also often underestimated nature of local agency. In addition, the chapter reflects on the need to reconsider our understanding of time and space in the context of peacebuilding interventions. Lastly, the conclusion offers a number of recommendations for peacebuilding policy and practice, as well as several avenues for further research.

Notes

- 1 Research funding from the Swedish Development Agency and the Swedish Research Council is gratefully acknowledged by Annika Björkdahl and Kristine Höglund.
- 2 The term ‘post-conflict’ is not only applied to define the period after conflict following military defeat or a negotiated settlement, but also denotes the continuation of violence in various forms and of conflict by other means in the transitional society.

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