

**FROM LIBERAL PEACE TO LOCAL PEACE:  
TRANSDISCIPLINARY THEORETICAL APPROACHES**

**Abdelhamid FAIZ**

Professor of Anthropology, Faculty of humanities and social science, Ibn  
Tofail University, Morocco  
E-mail : abdelhamid.faiz@uit.ac.ma

**Anass BEN-CHEIKH**

Professor of Sociology and Anthropology, Mohammed I University Oujda,  
Morocco  
E-mail : anas.bencheikh@gmail.com

**Soufiane EL HAMDAOUI**

Ph.D. candidate, Faculty of Law, Economic, and Social Sciences. Agdal  
Mohammed V University, Morocco  
E-mail : soufian.elhamdaoui0@gmail.com

**Abstract**

The peace research turn from approaches of liberal peace to those of post-liberal and local requires an understanding of the conceptual and theoretical foundations on which both of these approaches were built. This paper seeks to overcome the conceptual gaps and cognitive misperceptions between these two approaches. This paper began with a preliminary introduction of the uses of the definition of the concept of peace focusing on studying the intertwined conceptual relationships. In its second phase, this paper will attempt to analyze the levels of interaction between local and liberal peace by showcasing the limitations of the perspectives concerning the liberal practices of peacebuilding. In the third stage, the paper suggests a procedural and conceptual key point for crossing between local and global levels.

**Keywords:** *peace research, liberal peace, local peace, hybrid peace, everyday peace.*

### **Introduction:**

From a cognitive synthetic perspective, and despite the methodological, cognitive, and historical idiosyncrasies that characterize the epistemological model of every social science (political Sociology, Anthropology, History...), the field perspective underlying this paper, which is peace and conflict studies, is based on a need to draw inspiration from a transdisciplinary approach to the study of the concepts of peace in conflict-affected countries.

The contemporary concept of peace refers to processes built on concepts and methodologies in peace and conflict studies since its inception over 60 years ago. The discourse among academics, experts, policymakers, peace practitioners, and stakeholders has primarily focused on utilizing peace approaches, concepts, and theories based on two main paradigms.

The first one is liberal peace which is used as a frame of reference for peace interventions based on liberal values (freedom, human rights, democracy, and social justice) to justify the dominant status of internationally mandated interventions. Liberal discourse is used by dominant countries, international governmental and non-governmental organizations, and financial institutions to justify peacekeeping peacemaking interventions.

The second is local peace; this research perspective originated from the increased interest in the critical role that local characteristics occupy in understanding and analyzing conflict-affected countries. From this viewpoint, local transformation in peace studies emphasizes the important role of cultural contexts and culture-specific concepts in conflict, security, and peace. (Bräuchler 2017, p. 1) The conceptual classifications of "post-liberal" transformation were based on the concepts of "everyday peace," "hybrid peace" and "local-local." Subjective approaches of peace-building and conflict transformation (like key mechanisms to protect local communities from conflict and dealing with its root causes) focused on the importance of local responses by intensifying the interest in institutionalizing local initiatives (local peace networks and committees) and maximizing the experiences of local peace-building actors.

In light of this preface, the following study aims to build on these perplexing peace research dichotomies; and clarify the root causes of the crisis concerning the conceptual (local/international; micro/macro) and cognitive-practical (international actors/subjective structures/local actors; world peace/civil and everyday peace); towards establishing a transdisciplinary discourse that showcases the epistemological boundaries of using these approaches bilaterally. These inconsistencies in the research agenda can be summarized in the table below:

<b>Liberal Peace</b>	<b>Local Peace</b>
International actors	Local peacemakers
Macro	Micro
Top-down peace	Bottom-up peace
Emic perspective of peace	Etic perspective of peace
International institutions and world peace organizations	Structures and local institutions
Liberal ideologies	Peace from the viewpoint of local actors
Positive/negative peace	Subjective patterns of peace-building

### **Conceptualization of Peace: Methodological Observations**

The initial definition of peace was based on a brief designation that subjected the concept to a normative determination by describing it as a mere absence of violent conflicts and war. Meaning, that the absence of war is a main condition for the existence of peace (see: Lewis and Right, 1942; 1960). However, nowadays, “peace is something far more than the absence of violence” (UN 2015, p. 24). The scientific and evolutionary tendency in its continuous search for the roots of peace in specific civilizations has led to the reinforcement of ethnocentrism, which automatically responds to the necessity of classifying certain cultures and societies as peaceful and others as violent.

The definition of peace is characterized by a particular flexibility; its procedural definition is devoid of all these essential conflicts between “good” and “evil,” or normal/humane/cultural, meaning the peace rooted (naturally or culturally) in the social condition of humans.

The classic definition, given by Johan Galtung in his opening article in the first issue of the Journal “Peace Research,” remains the most influential definition in the field of peace and conflict studies. Galtung states that the definition of peace is divided into two main parts. The first part is Negative

Peace, which stands for “the absence of violence and war.” The second one is Positive Peace, which means “the complementarity of human society” (Galtung 1964, p. 2). The former definition means the absence of direct physical violence; whereas the latter refers to the absence of structural violence and the presence of social justice (social injustice); meaning peace as an outcome of the sovereignty of democracy, justice, and social welfare. (Galtung, 1969, p. 183)

While this definition is significant, it still does raise some cognitive perplexities, and these observations could be expanded to include the following two levels.

The first level is the strong emphasis on intersectionality between conceptual networks without determining the nuances between them. Contemporary understanding of peace tends to define conceptual and theoretical boundaries between peace and violence. As a result, the coherent definition of violence clashes with the definition of negative peace. The in-depth observations of researchers specializing in the study of violence and its theories confine peace to two parts: its positive and negative definitions, as Galtung referred to them in structural violence and direct violence, thus eliminating all acts of violence that may be socially constructed, as well as referring to its specific symbolic forms. On the other hand, reducing the intensity of violence and violent conflicts in societies (by Galtung’s definition) does not necessarily mean achieving peace.

We share the same profound conclusion as Neil L. Whitehead in the sense that most modern anthropologists agree on one characteristic regarding violence: “agree on one thing that violence is pervasive, ancient, infinitely various, and a central fact of human life, but also that its prevalence is poorly understood in general. Convincing explanations and interpretations of particular instances of violence are certainly possible, but no common factor or overarching principle of action or reflection seems to be present in all such instances. So causes, whether singular or multiple, biological or cultural, can appear only as reductive. (Whitehead 2002, p. 55).

The second level is that peace is not defined in the same manner across cultures and societies. The universal definitions of peace do not take into account ethnographic variations of the use of peace in different societies. Local concepts and meanings tend to give definitions of peace specific to cultural features.

Anderson explains the large meaning of peace in different ethnographic societies:

“The concept of peace takes on additional nuances when drawn from non-Western languages and cultures. For example, the Hebrew and Arabic words for peace, Shalom, and Salaam, respectively, are derived from the root Shalev, meaning

“whole” or “undivided.” This is also the root of the word Islam. Hindi and Sanscrit have several words for peace. Avirodha stems from the word Virodha, which means “war,” and is consistent with Western definitions of peace as the absence of war. However, other Sanscrit words for peace, shanti, and Chaina, reflect, respectively, spiritual or inner peace and mental peace or calmness. In Chinese, peace is written as a combination of two characters, one meaning harmony and the other meaning equality or balance. Taken together, the symbols mean harmony in balance. In Chinese, there is no word for peace as the absence of war. The Japanese term for peace, linguistically derived from Chinese but reflecting a distinct culture, is also a combination of two characters indicating harmony, simplicity, and quietness” (Anderson 2004, p. 102).

To clarify the dynamic use of peace, one can examine various examples. African social cosmologies and language vocabularies provide a rich array of examples concerning peace across African languages and dialects. This perspective is clearly rooted in a deeply ingrained peace philosophy within African oral heritage, reflecting the cultural and spiritual significance of peace throughout the continent. Kipré’s exploration of the word “peace” and its varied meanings across different ethnographic contexts highlights the deep conceptual diversity of the term. He writes:

“From a sociolinguistic standpoint, this conceptual richness is manifested in the derivations of the meaning of peace in local dictionaries. In the Fulani culture, the expression “Njamu” refers to a person or a group’s state of serenity, and mental and physical wellbeing. In the Hausa language, the expressions “Kontian” and “Hankali” stand for “peace of mind”, whereas “Lafiha” refers to peace in a very specific context. As for the Odjukru in Cote d’Ivoire, the idea of peace aligns with the idea of unity (Afokr), unanimity, and the strength of the community based on solid respect for life (egn).” (Kipré 2003, p. 137 author’s translation ).

These comparative visions lead to the production of numerous meanings of peace based on an ontological vision rooted in the way societies view themselves and the rest of the world. In African cosmology, peace stands for meanings of unity, cooperation, and ethical and moral harmony. In Western origins of peace (in Jewish heritage, peace stands for justice, prosperity, and divine approval; the Greek expression “Eirene” means harmony and prosperity, as well as Roman ones “Pax” which means order and absence of violence and unity), (see: Galtung 1981, p. 187) rely on fundamental elements connected to prosperity, order and absence of war. The Eastern vision of peace shares the

African ontological vision, referring to the positive value of peace as embodied in values of harmony and balance.

These designations reveal many issues within the definitions that resist describing peace from specific moral and civil viewpoints. The scope of the definition is based on the obvious need to establish conceptual foundations that accommodate different civilizational experiences in order to reach a comprehensive conceptual definition. In this sense, peace is infiltrated by a special dynamic; because it is always bound by spatial and temporal conditions, and its construction responds to actors and interventionists. At the same time, it exists in many forms (everyday peace, social peace, civil peace, etc.) and many levels (political peace between countries, between components within the state, between social groups, between individuals). Therefore, the conditions for peacebuilding cannot be assumed to be homogeneous and universal. While most dominating definitions tend to be more cosmological when it comes to a concept derived from specific cultural environments that convey ontological and cognitive visions of peace, the perceptions and conditions for peacebuilding differ according to subjective responses of societies, and the economic and political contexts that outline the process of building peace in conflict-affected societies.

For methodological purposes, this paper will follow a different analytical path. The second and third chapters will strive to rediscover the practical concepts of peace and their use, through analyzing research discourse in the field of peace studies. This approach will test the most dominant models (liberal peace, local peace, hybrid peace) in contemporary research literature; and pursue capturing cognitive, methodological, and normative discussion concerning these dominant models in the research agenda. However, the most prominent objective is to expose the structural crisis in this discourse, especially in the context of the dominance of paradigms that define peace in this world order. The upcoming chapter will reveal the cognitive/epistemological, theoretical, and practical limitations (the structural reasons behind the failure of these approaches in this field) of these paradigms; before opening new research discussions regarding the possibility of producing alternative or common research models to think about peace in a different manner.

### **A Research Turn Towards Local Peace.**

The definitions of liberal peace and local peace have become synonyms in the research literature of peace studies and research. However, their use still appears in the scientific discourse of works of literature that specialize in studying the approaches to liberal peace and post-liberal peace. The two expressions were used as opposites, given the epistemological frameworks (as defined in the previous chapter) that govern each of their respective perceptions.

This paper will argue that there is a cognitive potential and methodological obligation to solve these conceptual and practical misconstructions. This paper aims to:

- Generally reformulate these conceptual, theoretical, and intellectual connections for two concepts that initiated a cognitive, ontological, and philosophical debate concerning what peace should be, in its local, regional, and global dimensions.
- Question and criticize the intellectual and philosophical framework on which peace policies are based; and the strategies of building and establishing it.
- Analyze how limited the conceptual use of hybrid approaches is (a complex mix of liberal and local peace) in their capacity as homogenous and (extremely) overlapping conceptual and practical tools of building peace in conflict-affected communities.

### **1- Local turn in Peace Research.**

Putting local contexts at the center of the research has been the result of a decisive shift in the field of peace studies and research. This general shift is linked to a set of factors:

- A- Repositioning anthropological and ethnographic research studies and their main themes within the field of peace studies.
- B- Renewing the paradigms of peace research in the context of post-liberal peace concepts.
- C- The failure of liberal peace interventions in many conflict-affected countries.

#### **A- Repositioning anthropological and ethnographic studies.**

Since their inception, cultural and social anthropology and ethnography focused on two main aspects: The study of local contexts (institutions and social realities) and "understanding humanity through its most diverse manifestations" (Lévi-Strauss 1985, p. 25). However, the difficulty and confusion of integrating these two dimensions in peace research is linked to three main factors:

- a. The ambiguity of the concept of culture for peace researchers who come from different disciplines (international relations, political science). Bräuchler argues that:

"The close link between the local and culture is only hesitantly addressed in the local turn in peace research. Each one of us is participating in various cultures, from global, and national to local ones, all of them highly interconnected; we are constantly (re)negotiating modes of belonging and questions of identity, in times of peace and conflict. Locality is a culturally constructed concept and can imply both physically demarcated space as well as clusters of

interactions and fields of relations that involve the local and the global” (Bräuchler 2018, p. 17).

In order to overcome these instabilities that maximize the difficulty in introducing local concepts in the field of peace research; the cognitive necessity arises in the need for peace scientists to re-plant the seeds of interdisciplinary (on a cognitive level) instead of establishing more methodological and conceptual obstacles to ensure incorporating local concepts and knowledge into peace research. On a cultural level, it should be ensured that the links of the scientific community are strengthened through the use of a transdisciplinary framework. In the same sense, the field of peace research has a specific scope and themes; the limitations of this field and its cognitive range are not precisely or accurately determined.

Thus, establishing a cognitive approach that stems from the “inside” of culture towards its outside (this paper will tackle this issue in the third chapter) is the methodological and conceptual entry to cope with this shift through, (1) finding the root of interactions between the fields of peace research and anthropology,(2) removing the dominance of specificity,(3) rehabilitating micro-analytical elements and deep structures, and (4) a radical shift towards local approaches “as it requires an epistemological and methodological reorientation that moves away from positivist explanations of things towards a more interpretative mode that takes the meanings of culture into account and prevents its romanticization and stereotypification” (Bräuchler 2018, p. 21).

- b. Dominance of holistic approaches and quantitative methodological traditions. The scientific tendency to create “Peace Sciences” in accordance with the approach of natural sciences fueled the dominance of holistic approaches and reinforced the decrease of research interest in subjective meaning and local perceptions. In its methodological quest to build an epistemological circumstantial field in peace research, the research studies that were based on quantification and finding connections between empirical data and the analysis of large units contributed to finding synthetic knowledge through the following:
- This scientific tendency ignored local cultural feedback and dedicated a research discourse that eliminates the effects of local elements on the process of peace. In this respect, it is impossible to focus on the overall dynamics of peace (peace and war relations between countries, ecological effects such as climate and resources, economic motives, Global Peace Index) to focus on the accumulation of quantitative data to understand the variables of peace, and overlook discussing the deep roots of conflicts, understanding experiences of everyday peace, and achieving ethnic and identity coexistence.
  - As a result of the dominance of cognitive situational approaches that are supported by an empirical outline based on hypothesis testing and



imperial verification of theories and facts, research approaches have chosen to focus on peacework policies by developing a set of peace-building models without verifying if peace has been built. The interest in policymakers, practitioners of world peace-building, and criticizing the traditional methods that prevail in this approach became the main concern of the “peace industry,” causing distraction from engaging in understanding the struggle of conflict-affected people (Lottholz, p. 2018).

### **B- Renewing Paradigms: Post-liberal Peace and its Concepts.**

Local peace, its theories, and its concepts have been the cognitive impasse that revealed the cognitive crisis in liberal peace and its approaches. Strong criticism was directed at renewing methodological and conceptual visions regarding the culture of researching peace in general (this paper will come back to this criticism more thoroughly in the third chapter). This criticism first emerged in the 1990s as an antiquated criticism that brought back romantic ideas established by “archaic ethnographies” in its tireless quest for the “good primitive.”

The institutional structure of liberal peace was directed at solving peace issues in the contemporary world order; it analyzed “primitive local naiveté, or traditional naiveté at best, as local producers of conflicts and disputes, as a result of their closed-in identities and opposing social and ethnic components. It was also directed at its rigid construction, which could not grasp the dominance and organization of modernity, and its fight against factors of change, development, basic freedoms, and sovereignty of international laws. These societies are, in the view of liberalism, producers of factors of disparity, conflicts, and crises and examples of social fragility and societal vulnerability.

This criticism stemmed from an ethnocentric vision of different societies. At the political level, liberal criticism remained connected to claims that conflict-affected countries and their international structures lack a sense of liberal politics and its representative institutions (this lack is concrete proof of the chronic fragility of these countries). From the viewpoint of liberal peace, it seems as though there is “no viable alternative to some version of liberal peacebuilding” (Paris 2010, p. 357).

The challenge of the research associated with the local turn was embodied through bypassing these ethnocentric stigmas (ethnic formations: identity expressions and homogeneity, symbolic systems, the social structures that form societies, values, and forms of social solidarity) that form the geo-cultural contemporary global patterns. In a more focused sense, research expertise and epistemological perceptions regarding local peace research focus on local conditions of peace-building and analyzing conflict dynamics on a micro level.

The “local” occupied a significant spot in research literature over the past two decades (Lederach 1994, Mac Ginty 2010; 2015; 2018, Richmond 2012; Richmond 2013). This transformation resulted in an extensive concern about peace-building through local peace initiatives, the status of local actors (local peacemakers, local peace committees), and the “traditional” structures of conflict resolution in the midst of peace-building operations in conflict-affected or divided communities.

In conclusion, the peace research literature focuses on two main dimensions of local change. The first dimension is concerned with the importance of what is “local” in peace-building as a tool for effective peace-building. The literature written on this approach concentrates on subnational governments as pillars in peace-building and nation-building designs; it also focuses on local property and building local abilities. The second dimension is concerned with what is “local” as a tool of liberation, and it is expressed through emphasizing voices from below. “The literature within this approach argues for the inclusion of local agency in peacebuilding and criticizes the way the local has been interpreted in peacebuilding so far” (Leonardsson, & Rudd 2018, p. 826).

Olivier Richmond, one of the theorists of this critical shift, uses the concept of “local-local” to refer to the existence and diversity of communities and individuals who form a political society. This political society is the space where daily life is at its strongest, serving as a more resilient tool. (Richmond, 2012, p. 14). Moreover, while not necessarily interchangeable or synonymous with each other, expressions such as “hybridity,” and “everyday peace,” shed light on the common tenets of local transformation regarding the ontological nature of the social relations that make up the social, political and local reality (Randazzo, 2016, p. 5).

### **C- The Chronic Failures of Liberal Peace Interventions.**

Throughout the 1990s and the beginning of the millennium, the interventions of the United Nations’ An Agenda For Peace (Ghali, 1992) and Responsibility To Protect report (2001) and international missions for peace have avoided the concept of localization in the context of world policies and the international peace-building structure. The founding concepts of peace policies focused on preventative diplomacy, operations, and programs of peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding in both divided and post-conflict communities. These concepts concentrated on offering a briefer version of the reality of conflicts in these communities. “Most proponents of liberal peacebuilding would concede today that the original top-down approaches were problematic and included a rather superficial understanding of local realities” (Debiel, & Rinck, 2016, p. 241-242).

The failure of global peace initiatives, and the lack of success in many of their attempts in countries affected by violent conflicts, has led to a qualitative shift in the peace practices agenda overseen by international organizations. Since the end of the Cold War, peace interventions have been framed by theoretical and conceptual foundations derived from liberal values and 'Western rationality'. These plans promised to provide institutional stability, welfare, democracy, and peace. (see: Leonardsson & Rudd, 2018, p. 826) These large-scale peace operations have been conducted based on these assumptions and formulas, and they were unable to fulfill these promises. In some cases, short-term stability has been achieved, as is the case in Cambodia and Namibia, Mozambique or Central America.

In other cases, failures have been less prominent. Other failures and setbacks can be demonstrated through the international peace interventions in the civil war in Somalia and the genocide in Rwanda and Bosnia. Between April 1992 and March 1993, the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) "responded to the political and civil questions before it had any real idea about the civil, political and economic reality. The price was the entrenchment of warlords and militias, and the marginalization of "peace princes [elders and merchants]." These failures were followed by criticism of the foundational structure of the liberal system, which was designed and implemented by the West in post-conflict contexts. (Leonardsson & Rudd, , p. 826) (Ismail, 1999, p. 113).

Given these field shortcomings, and how the overall tendency that is based on the universality of global peace has subsided; as well as how the academic and expert criticism of the alleged globally-supported peace interventions has risen, the result was that a gradual decline in the UN discourse regarding peace interventions has been noted. This transformation became more apparent in two main sections: when the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in his 2004 report on the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict societies, shed light on how the international community is overlooking local experts and contexts; and called for placing more significant attention on local traditions:

"Unfortunately, the international community has not always provided rule of law assistance that is appropriate to the country context. Too often, the emphasis has been on foreign experts, foreign models[,] and foreign-conceived solutions to the detriment of durable improvements and sustainable capacity. Both national and international experts have a vital role to play, to be sure. [However,] [w]e have learned that effective and sustainable approaches begin with a thorough analysis of national needs and capacities, mobilizing to the extent possible expertise resident in the country.... Local consultation enables a better understanding of the dynamics of

past conflict, patterns of discrimination[,] and types of victims...due regard must be given to indigenous and informal traditions for administering justice or settling disputes, to help them continue their often vital role and to do so in conformity with both international standards and local tradition” (UNSC 2004/616, p. 6-7-36).

Obviously, there is a shift in the UN discourse towards more hybrid and cohesive approaches to mitigate the constraints of liberal peace dominance.

### **Between Liberal Peace and Local Peace: towards an Intersectional Paradigm.**

#### **1- liberal peace**

In this chapter, the paper aims to establish a procedural conceptual discourse inspired by research synopses regarding the local turn in peace studies and research. This chapter does not use the angle of criticism of the liberal peace approaches as a systematic objective; but offers a cross-examination between dominating conceptual and theoretical speeches (the bottom-up peace approaches, from micro to macro, from within to outside culture, and from subjective patterns for peace-building . . .), in order to find an intersectional paradigm suitable for attempting to find a more conceptually procedural and innovative discourse.

The concept of liberal peace is used as one of the most prevalent paradigms in the field of peace studies and research. The liberal peace model represents a conceptual tool (sometimes referred to as democratic peace or Western peace) based on a specific philosophy of state structure, economy, social and cultural life, and value systems. More clearly, liberal peace represents the dominant model for internationally supported peace interventions and is based on the following intellectual assumptions:

Firstly, directing economic activities towards free markets; economic interdependence is believed to enhance peace by diversifying trade channels between countries. The liberal discourse employs various arguments to demonstrate the connections between trade and political relations, and to promote peace or prevent conflict. The virtues of trade include explaining how economic linkages are established and incentivizing cooperation, alleviating misconceptions, and strengthening both formal and informal mechanisms that resolve conflicts of interest that may arise between nations (Barbieri, 2002, p. 2-4).

Secondly, consolidating rights, the rule of law, basic civil liberties, social justice, and equality.

Thirdly: The ideological basis of liberalism is seen through its intellectual frameworks that are entrenched in peaceful relations between

hegemonic democracies. This assertion goes hand in hand with the fact that most democratic nations do not confront each other using war (Weede, 1984; Doyle, 2005). “Liberal states are inherently opposed to war. Therefore, the very existence of liberal countries leans towards liberal peace” (MacMillan, 1998). On the other hand, soft institutional coercion is relied upon through institutional de-legitimization of countries and restricting their menacing power instead of resorting to stacking weapons and official alliances. This soft balance, as is referred to in the literature of international relations, is used as a liberal tool to change into peace instead of using military force (Wivel, & Paul, 2020, p. 473).

## **2- In Criticism of Liberal Peace.**

It is difficult to address all of the criticism of liberal peace by scientists and scholars. However, this paper will only shed light on the most prominent criticisms in research literature (see: Mac Ginty, 2011, Darby and Mac Ginty, 2008), and they are as follows:

Ethnocentrism: This vision is embodied in two main discourses. Where “cultures supporting peace” are distinguished by strengthening and promoting peace through “culture.” Meaning, Liberalism and its derivative (Neo-liberalism) became an ideology of what a state, society, and values should be. It is rather, from the viewpoint of its supporters, a final and decisive answer to the form of the state and the ultimate expression of what human societies have come to. The second discourse is concerned with peace from the perspective of the societal and political needs of northern countries, through attempts to reproduce forms of peace and governance that meet the expectations of the world’s northern countries (Mac Ginty, 2011, p/ 41).

Superficiality: The paradigms of analyzing macro-dynamics (as is the case for international peace interventions) appear to be removed from any in-depth knowledge concerning local dynamics, realities, and experiences lived in conflict-affected communities.

Stagnation: The liberal vision of peace is based on interventionist models designed according to centralized programs and agendas, with peace interventions being directed towards excessive centralization rather than responding to local conditions.

Elitism: Peace interventions often appear as practices reserved for elites and political and economic actors.

Technocracy: The institutionalization of speeches, mediums, and negotiations according to the theory of the international political system led to the consolidation of conflict management visions in accordance with synthetic approaches that aim to reduce peace interventions to mere technical procedures. Furthermore, technocratic peace-building practices enabled some actors who

operate as “new peacemakers” to build peace while others have been marginalized (Aggestam 2015, p.327).

Exclusionary: Liberal peace interventions often ignore local knowledge, expertise, and traditions, giving these interventions an "external" character that imparts an air of superiority to peace practices. Local peacebuilders are frequently entrusted with peacebuilding responsibilities only to the extent that the local population legitimizes liberal peace interventions or reduces the costs and responsibilities of the interveners (Mac Ginty 2016, p.198) (Bräuchler, 2018).

Unsustainability: By focusing on strengthening its peace institutions, liberal peace often addresses only the symptoms and manifestations of conflict in countries where interventions take place, without seeking the deep-rooted causes necessary for sustainable peace.

### **3- Towards an Intersectional Paradigm.**

The approach proposed in this paper draws inspiration from the literature associated with the local turn in the field of peace research. The focus of research can be more operationally redirected towards the local level through specific conceptual tools. Building on extensive discussions in the field of anthropology, this paper invokes the conclusions of the "emic" and "etic" approach (see: ; Harris, 1976; Cerutti, 2004; De Sardan, 1998) to construct solid knowledge on peace at both the operational and conceptual levels.

Research literature revealed a cognitive gap between peace interventions, their practices, and local knowledge about peace-building. This paper suggests that exploring this gap will help build a more explanatory discourse to overcome these dichotomies. To achieve that, this paper suggests starting from the following elements:

Firstly, prioritizing localism in peace-building by taking into consideration local knowledge and the experiences accumulated by conflict-affected communities, as they are essential for peace-building.

Secondly, deepening the focus on local structures and traditions for conflict management and peacebuilding is crucial. An approach from within the culture helps reposition these traditions at the core of peace research literature, not merely by considering local people and their knowledge as primary units of analysis (moving beyond the objectification trend in social sciences, which views the research community as just a source for acquiring knowledge rather than producing it), but by recognizing them as the true agents of ensuring sustainable peace in their communities. As Lederach states, "the greatest source of long-term peace sustainability is always rooted in the people and their culture" (Lederach, 1997, p. 94). Additionally, starting with local conceptual

units is vital, as an "approach from within the culture emphasizes facilitating the understanding of indigenous theories about conflicts, and their unique methods or processes for resolving them" (see: Abu-Nimer, 2003, p. 5; Avruch, 1998, p. 63).

Thirdly the bottom-up peace approach seeks to understand the dynamics of conflicts and explore more solid alternatives for peacebuilding in conflict-affected communities. This perspective highlights the importance of indigenous approaches in transitioning from grassroots peace to internationally sponsored peace. This hybrid approach is an interactive dynamic, as termed by Mac Ginty. It focuses on creating innovative and modeled frameworks that integrate both local and global perspectives in addressing conflict and peace issues. However, the conditions for implementing a more effective, operational, and sustainable hybrid approach require distinguishing between two types of hybrid peace, as outlined in the following table:

<b>Effective hybrid peace</b>	<b>Ineffective hybrid peace</b>
Dynamic interaction between local approaches and international peace interventions	Dominance of the liberal peace perspective
Priority is given to indigenous approaches in understanding conflict contexts.	Pre-designed models and discourses
Aligned with the needs of conflict-affected communities	Aligned with the interests and needs of Northern countries
Full and institutionalized involvement of local actors.	Local actors are tools for implementing peace policies

Fourth, developing a Mechanism for Evaluating Peace Interventions. In recent decades, two types of evaluations have emerged in peace and conflict studies and reports. These evaluations address the extended impacts of peacebuilding interventions, while others focus on developing indicators to measure peace and compare violence and conflicts across countries. The prevailing approaches have been holistic and quantitative methodological traditions (see Section 2). However, the evaluation of peace interventions and the development of indicators proposed by this paper (for future development) should be based on the following procedural inputs:

1. Tracking Daily Peace Effects: Through lived community experiences
2. Dynamic Data Analysis: Integrating qualitative and quantitative methods
3. Building Incremental Indicators: Moving from the local to the global, rather than the reverse
4. Measuring Public Engagement and Peacebuilder Responses: Evaluating how people are involved and their responses to peace processes

**Summary:**

This paper aims to provide an initial contribution towards developing an innovative research discourse on peace. This perspective does not seek to exacerbate the contrasts between liberal peace concepts and local peace; rather, it offers researchers, experts, and practitioners in the field of peace a framework for thinking about peace from a refreshed research horizon.

The paper begins with a focused methodological presentation of the content of peace in research discourses, moves on to explore the dominance of liberal peace approaches in the context of international interventions, and then presents the epistemological and theoretical foundations for transitioning to the local turn. In the second phase, the paper analyzes the limitations of liberal peace practices before proposing a procedural approach for bridging conceptual domains (from bottom-up, from within the culture, priority to the local, etc.)



**Reference list**

- Abu-Nimer, M. (2003). *Nonviolence and peace building in Islam: Theory and practice*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.
- Aggestam, K. (2015). Desecuritisation of water and the technocratic turn in peacebuilding. *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics*, 15(3), pp. 327–340.
- Ahmed, I. I. (1999). The heritage of war and state collapse in Somalia and Somaliland: local-level effects, external interventions and reconstruction. *Third World Quarterly*, 20(1), pp. 113–127.
- Anderson, R. (2004). A definition of peace. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 10(2), pp.101-116.
- Avruch, K. (1998). *Culture & conflict resolution*. US Institute of Peace Press.
- Barbieri, K. (2002). *The liberal illusion: Does trade promote peace?* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Boutros-Ghali, B. (1992). An agenda for peace: Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping. *International Relations*, 11(3), pp. 201–218.
- Bräuchler, B. (2017). The cultural turn in peace research: Prospects and challenges. *Peacebuilding*, 6(1), pp.17–33.
- Bräuchler, B. (2018). Contextualizing ethnographic peace research. In *Ethnographic Peace Research*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 21–42.
- Cerutti, S. (2004). Microhistory: Social Relations versus Cultural Models? In Castrén, A.-M., Lonkila, M., & Peltonen, M. (Eds.), *Between Sociology and History: Essays on Microhistory, Collective Action, and Nation-Building*. Helsinki: SKS / Finnish Literature Society.
- Coomaraswamy, R. (2015). *A global study on the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325*. UN Women.
- Cronk, L. (2007). The influence of cultural framing on play in the trust game: A Maasai example. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 28(5), pp. 352–358.

- Darby, J., & Mac Ginty, R. (Eds.). (2008). *Contemporary peacemaking: conflict, peace processes and post-war reconstruction*. Springer.
- Debiel, T., Rinck, P. (2016). Rethinking the local in peacebuilding: Moving away from the liberal/post-liberal divide. In T. Debiel, T. Held, & U. Schneckener (Eds.), *Peacebuilding in crisis: Rethinking paradigms and practices of transnational cooperation*. London: Routledge, pp. 240–241.
- Galtung, J. (1964). Editorial. *Journal of Peace Research*, 1(1), pp. 1–4.
- Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, peace, and peace research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), pp. 167–191.
- Galtung, J. (1981). Social cosmology and the concept of peace. *Journal of Peace Research*, 18(2), pp. 183–199.
- International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. (2001). *The responsibility to protect: Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty*. IDRC.
- Kipré, P. (2003). *De la guerre et de la paix en Afrique* [Of war and peace in Africa]. *Afrique contemporaine*, 3(207), pp.15–28.
- Lederach, J. P. (1997). *Building peace: Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies*. US Institute of Peace Press.
- Leonardsson, H., Rudd, G. (2018). The ‘local turn’ in peacebuilding: A literature review of effective and emancipatory local peacebuilding. In *The 'Local Turn' in Peacebuilding*, pp. 9–23.
- Lévi-Strauss, C. (1985). *The raw and the cooked* (J. Neugroschel & P. Hoss, Trans.). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lottholz, P. (2018). Critiquing anthropological imagination in peace and conflict studies: From empiricist positivism to a dialogical approach in ethnographic peace research. *International Peacekeeping*, 25(5), pp. 695–720.
- Mac Ginty, R. (2010). Hybrid peace: The interaction between top-down and bottom-up peace. *Security Dialogue*, 41(4), pp. 391–412.
- Mac Ginty, R. (2011). *International peacebuilding and local resistance: Hybrid forms of peace*. Springer.

- Mac Ginty, R. (2015). *Alternative and bottom-up peace indicators*. London: Routledge.
- Mac Ginty, R. (2018). Where is the local? Critical localism and peacebuilding. In *The 'Local Turn' in Peacebuilding*. London: Routledge, pp. 24–40.
- MacMillan, J. (1998). *On liberal peace: Democracy, war, and the international order*. London: Tauris Academic Studies.
- Olivier de Sardan, J.-P. (1998). Émique [Emic]. *L'Homme*, 38(147), pp. 151–166.
- Owen, J. M. (1994). How liberalism produces democratic peace. *International Security*, 19(2), pp. 87–125.
- Paris, R. (2010). Saving liberal peacebuilding. *Review of International Studies*, 36(2), pp. 337–365.
- Randazzo, E. (2016). The paradoxes of the 'everyday': Scrutinising the local turn in peace building. *Third World Quarterly*, 37(8), pp. 1351–1370.
- Richmond, O. (2012). *A post-liberal peace*. London: Routledge.
- Richmond, O. P. (2013). Peace formation and local infrastructures for peace. *Alternatives*, 38(4), 271–287.
- Security Council of the United Nations. (2004). *The rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict societies*. <http://archive.ipu.org/splz-e/unga07/law.pdf> (accessed 16 December 2024).
- United Nations. Secretary-General. (2004). *The rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict societies: Report of the Secretary-General*. United Nations Security Council.
- UN Women. (2015). Preventing Conflict: Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace. Retrieved from: <https://www.refworld.org/reference/themreport/unwomen/2015/en/109678> (accessed in 16 December 2024).
- Weede, E. (1984). Democracy and war involvement. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 28(4), pp. 649–664.

Whitehead, N. L. (2004). On the poetics of violence. In N. L. Whitehead (Ed.), *Violence*. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

Wivel, A., Paul, T. V. (2020). Soft balancing, institutions, and peaceful change. *Ethics & International Affairs*, 34(4), pp. 473–485.

Wright, Q. (1942). *A study of war*, 2 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.