

Civil wars, Interventions and Conflict Resolution:

Emerging Trends and Implications for the 'Norwegian Model' of Peacemaking

A Draft Paper

By

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This paper assesses the literature on civil war termination, intervention and mediation, drawing some general implications for Norway's peacebuilding role and some tentative conclusions about the relevance and efficacy of the 'Norwegian model' of peacebuilding. This literature has grown rapidly since the 1990s, primarily in response to an expansion in the frequency and scope of international intervention in conflict-affected regions and the growing tendency for civil wars to be concluded through negotiated settlement. Contemporary approaches to conflict resolution have been characterised by a multi-dimensional approach (sometimes referred to as a 'third generation' approach (Richmond 2008)) where a neutral third party mediates between conflict actors and is supported by other local, regional and international players. The main characteristics of this model include the bolstering of official 'track one' level interventions with unofficial peacemaking efforts at the national and local levels; the use of incentives and disincentives (diplomatic, military and economic) to influence conflict actors' decision-making processes; and a focus on generating peace agreements based on power sharing arrangements.

The efficacy of this model has been widely questioned. First, the track record of negotiated settlements is relatively poor in the post-Cold war period, with quantitative studies demonstrating that military victories are more likely to produce stable outcomes (Licklider 1995, Stedman 1997). Second, several authors have questioned the legitimacy and efficacy of the overarching vision of peace pursued in contemporary peacebuilding efforts. According to some, these interventions have succeeded in producing a 'low quality' (MacGinty & Richmond 2007) or 'virtual' peace (Richmond & Franks 2007). Others have gone further, arguing that growing interventionism represents a form of 'neo-colonialism' (Chandler 2004, Duffield 2007). Third, a more detailed set of questions have emerged around how mediation processes should be conducted. Key questions include whether 'neutral' or biased interventions are more desirable (Regan 2002, Svensson 2007, Savun 2008, Gent and Shannon 2010), whether mediators work best alone or in coalition with other external actors (Svensson 2007a, Beber 2009, Boehmelt 2010), how to identify 'ripe moments' or 'readiness' for negotiated peace (Zartman 2001, Crocker 2007), and which processes, styles and approaches to mediation are most effective (Bose 2003, Martin 2006, Whitfield 2010).

The research on these topics has emerged from different theoretical, methodological and normative perspectives. Three main streams of research activity can be identified. First, a large body of cross-country quantitative studies on civil war termination and intervention has emerged, which has been supplemented in recent years by a number of studies examining the determinants of successful third-party mediation. This research typically relies on multiple regression analysis – a statistical technique used to ascertain the relationship between various factors and the likelihood of peace. This literature generates clear (though often contradictory) lessons about which kinds of mediators and mediation approaches are most likely to be most effective and under which circumstances. It is hampered by questions about the datasets and proxies used and by the general suitability of cross-country quantitative comparison as a tool for examining complex processes heavily determined by the specificities of a particular conflict setting. This literature's capacity to generate useful policy lessons for the field of mediation and peacemaking is also questionable. Quantitative studies on conflict have highlighted a bewildering array of correlations but have largely failed to combine these insights with clear theoretical frameworks for understanding conflict and peace. They have also failed to provide any analysis of which of the many factors associated with success or failure in the field of peacemaking are the most important and why (Kleiboer 1996). Broadly speaking, most of the

quantitative literature on mediation draws on a rationalist 'mediation as manipulation' or 'mediation as power' approach, which stems from the realist school of international relations.

Second, a parallel stream of research has focused on practical lessons generated from case studies of third-party intervention and conflict resolution that emerged in the 1990s and 2000s. While the quantitative literature focuses on problematising intervention, with little careful consideration of the policy implications; practitioner literature is arguably too pre-occupied with policy solutions, and lacks critical reflection on more fundamental assumptions associated with mediation and other peacebuilding interventions. Much of this research has been produced by individuals or organisations directly or indirectly involved in conflict resolution. It is closely associated with a 'facilitative' model of mediation that stresses concepts of neutrality, consensus and impartiality and as a result may underplay the relations of power that structure mediation processes. This literature is better suited to capturing the complexity that characterises contemporary peace processes but is predominantly oriented towards identifying best practice, and can at times have a self-justificatory quality. Reflecting the broader shift in practice towards multi-dimensional approaches to peacemaking, research from this school has placed a growing emphasis on the tensions associated with facilitative approaches and drawn on insights from the realist 'mediation as power' school.

A third stream of research focuses on the broader trends and consequences of third party peacebuilding interventions. Much of the debate within this literature has centred on the concept of 'liberal peacebuilding', which has been presented as the orthodox or mainstream model of external intervention pursued by (predominantly western) countries in conflict-affected regions since the 1990s. This discussion has produced a range of critical perspectives on the legitimacy, suitability and efficacy of contemporary approaches to peacebuilding. This literature contains a range of theoretical and disciplinary voices.

As a result of the varied approaches and orientation of these streams, the literature as a whole is quite disjointed, making it difficult for policymakers to extract clear lessons. All three strands of literature have been blighted by a tendency to identify a generally applicable 'ideal type' of intervention or mediation, which is not necessarily useful in practice. This focus is arguably misplaced because success of interventions is dependent on a complex interplay of factors, where the mediation approach pursued is not necessarily the key determinant of success or failure. Despite these problems, a degree of consensus has emerged around a number of common themes and there has arguably been a degree of convergence in the theoretical and causal frameworks used in these bodies of literature.¹ These themes relate directly to the challenges generated by the emerging model of peacebuilding that has emerged since the Cold War and include the growing political complexity of contemporary peace processes, the role of legitimacy and perceptions in determining outcomes, and the interplay of external and internal interests. They raise a series of questions relating to the coordination, commitment and capacity of third party actors.

The paper has six sections. Section one will begin with a brief discussion of post-Cold war trends in conflict and third-party peacebuilding and clarify some of the key terms used in the

¹ As mentioned above this may be partly a reflection of the multi-dimensional character of international peacemaking. Multi-dimensional approaches require greater inter-disciplinarity.

literature. Section two will provide a brief overview of the 'Norwegian model' of peacebuilding, and reflect more broadly on the role of 'middle powers' in international peacebuilding efforts. Section three examines the literature on third-party intervention in conflict, exploring broad questions about the effectiveness of these interventions and emerging themes such as the unintended consequences of these interventions and the relationship between the outcome of interventions and the characteristics of conflict. Section four assesses the literature on mediators and approaches to mediation, exploring the evidence on questions such as which types of mediators are most likely to be associated with success and which models or approaches of mediation have been most effective. Section five adopts a slightly broader focus, examining the literature on 'liberal peacebuilding' and the debates surrounding the efficacy of mainstream approaches. Section six concludes, identifying a number of key issues that arise from these bodies of literature, and assessing their implications for Norway's peacebuilding role.

1. Key terms and general trends

Key terms

The field of peacebuilding has been dogged by a lack of clarity surrounding key terms and concepts. As Barnett et al (2007) have shown, this lack of clarity serves a strategic function and is unlikely to go away. These problems have become more acute in third generation approaches, which see the various different components of peacebuilding (conflict prevention, management, resolution and transformation) as mutually reinforcing. There has been a tendency for different bodies of research to analyse slightly different things – for example, with one study focusing on the termination of civil war, another on the initiation of a mediation process, and a third on the signing of a peace agreement. The lack of shared definitions and shared objects of research has contributed to the failure of research on conflict and intervention to generate robust conclusions (Kleiboer 1996).

Before going any further it is worth briefly tying down some of the key terms used in the literature, clarifying not only their meaning but the varied assumptions that they are based on. 'Conflict management' focuses on avoiding *violent* conflict by limiting the scope for conflict parties to resort to violence or using 'early warning' mechanisms to predict the outbreak of violence. 'Conflict resolution' is concerned with the processes via which conflict parties can reach a negotiated resolution to conflict. 'Conflict transformation' emerged as a reaction to conflict management and conflict resolution approaches. This approach is based on the assumption that 'conflicts are generally not solved' (Galtung 1995, p.53 cited in Mitchell 2002) and that in order to tackle conflict in a sustainable way, interventions must the structural drivers or 'root causes' of violence. 'Conflict prevention' is concerned with activities designed to prevent the outbreak of conflict, which may address either the structural or proximate causes of violence. 'Peacebuilding' is used here as an umbrella term to refer to activities applied across the peace-war-peace continuum. These include conflict prevention activities, peacemaking initiatives, peacekeeping, post-conflict reconstruction and state-building.

There are several theoretical approaches to mediation, which are underpinned by different assumptions about conflict and power (for a brief summary see figure 1). These assumptions remain implicit in much of the research, which constitutes a major problem in the field, since

these differences in assumptions account for much of the disagreement amongst scholars (Kleiboer 1996). Lanz et al (2008) distinguish between an ‘interest-based, facilitative approach’, employed by weak powers; a ‘power-based, deal brokering’ model, employed by more powerful mediators that apply carrots and sticks; and a ‘transformative, long-term mediation’ approach that involves intervention on a number of levels and seeks to transform the agendas of conflict actors (Lanz et al 2008). Lloyd Jones (2000) distinguishes between manipulation (based on bargaining and power relations) and facilitative approaches to mediation (based on concepts of neutrality, consensus and impartiality). He notes that the facilitative approach uses the idea of ‘context rationality’ whereby actors take decisions that may compromise their own self-interest because they are informed by moral, religious or social norms. This approach has been criticised on the grounds that it tends to see conflict as the outcome of a ‘tragic misunderstanding’ rather than from fundamental political disagreements coupled with radical imbalances of power (ibid., 655). As mediation efforts have become more collaborative and multi-dimensional in recent years, the neat distinctions proposed in these taxonomies have broken down.

Approach to Mediation	Key Assumptions and Theory of Change	Key Characteristics
Power-based	Conflict actors are rational and self-interested, although they may be constrained by the rules of the strategic game (in game theory models). Successful mediation relies principally upon the application of external power.	‘Strong’ mediator applies carrots and sticks to force an agreement.
Facilitative	Conflict is the outcome of poor communication or misunderstandings between conflict parties. Successful mediation requires expert facilitation.	‘Weak’ mediator focused on process who does not direct the substance of discussion.
Transformative	Conflict is the outcome of conflict parties’ fundamental misconceptions about themselves and their rivals. Successful mediation will be gradual and focused on transforming perceptions.	Long-term process, involving a wide range of actors from all conflict actors and civil society.

Figure 1: Main approaches to mediation, their key assumptions and characteristics

General Trends

A growing number of conflicts are terminated by negotiated settlement. While only 5% of all conflicts ended in a peace agreement in the 1980s, this figure had grown to 24% in the 2000s (the proportion of military victories had declined from 35% to 12% over the same period (Human Security Centre 2010). Fearon and Laitin (2008) find that negotiated settlements are more common in secessionist conflicts. Since the end of the Cold War, rebel groups have grown more successful in taking power, or gaining concessions in a power-sharing agreement. In the 1960s, compromise outcomes resulted in about 20% of cases. In the 2000s, that figure had doubled to 40%. They find that only 13% of centre-seeking conflicts (conflicts where rebels are trying to capture power at the centre) end in negotiated settlement.

Although there are no reliable data for the number of peacemaking missions, evidence shows a remarkable tenfold increase in the number of 'Friends of the Secretary-General', contact groups, and other political arrangements that support peacemaking and post-conflict peacebuilding initiatives, from 1991 to 2007 (Human Security Centre 2010, 70). This increase has been matched across all areas of peacebuilding – the number of peacekeeping forces has increased three-fold between 1998 and 2008, an increase in UNSC Chapter VII resolutions from 0 to 40 between 1989 and 2008, an increase in conflict prevention missions by the OSCE in Europe from zero in 1991 to 19 in 2008 and a nine-fold increase in the number of ongoing DDR programmes from 1989 to 2008 (ibid.).

The Human Security Reports of 2005 and 2010 have documented a 40% decline in all conflicts between 1991 and 2003 (high intensity conflicts or those resulting in more than 1,000 battle deaths per year declined by 78% between 1988 and 2008 (Human Security Centre 2010, 2). In the 2005 Human Security Report, this decline was attributed to an unprecedented rise in international activism, an argument that attracted much criticism and has been developed further in the 2010 Report. This more recent report concedes that '[d]etermining the impact that individual initiatives have on security outcomes is extremely difficult precisely because so many different causal factors are at work...assessments of success depend very much on what criteria are used to determine success—and these can differ substantially' (Human Security Centre 2010, 71).

The overall rise in third party intervention in conflict masks considerable regional and contextual variation. Regan (2002) and Findley and Teo (2006) find that ethnic rivalries have a higher probability of external intervention and that third parties are more likely to intervene where the magnitude of casualties and the number of refugees are greatest. Third parties are more likely to intervene in contexts where their allies have intervened before (Findley & Teo 2006). Oberg et al's (2009) analysis of conflict prevention interventions in ethnic conflicts between 1990 and 1998 indicates that most preventive action is focused on a small number of high profile cases which include Northern Ireland, the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq, and is undertaken mostly by major powers (with the exception of China), neighbouring states, the UN and regional organisations. Regions such as Southeast Asia receive relatively little attention from third party peacebuilders (Moller et al 2007). Although the role for 'weak mediators', regional organisations and 'groups of friends' has grown, these data suggest that their growing prominence should not be overstated.

2. The 'Norwegian Model'²

Norway's role as a 'peacebuilding nation' was established in the 1990s and 2000s, when it supported peace processes in the Middle East, Guatemala, Cyprus, Haiti, Mali, Sudan, Sri Lanka and Colombia (Skanland 2010). This active approach was underpinned by an historical commitment to development cooperation and humanitarian aid, which in turn was rooted in an enduring political consensus around the usefulness and importance of this role (Keleher and Taubee 2006, Tvedt 2007). As Skanland (2010) has argued, this peacemaking role has become naturalised since the 1990s and closely linked to Norway's self-image and national identity. Despite growing challenges to this approach since 2003, when development aid was increasingly depicted as a means to an end and security concerns were used to justify peacemaking, it continues to form a central part of Norway's international image. Its internal and external legitimacy as an international peacemaker has been accumulated over time: Norway has now established itself as a respected and experienced peacemaker, and possesses considerable institutional and human capacity to support peace processes in the future.

In the official discourse of the Norwegian government, the 'Norwegian' model of peacemaking refers to a mediation approach based on close collaboration with NGOs. In the academic and policy literature, however, the term has been associated with a wider collection of characteristics. First, Norway's role is underpinned by its status as a small wealthy country, far from major conflict arenas, with few major strategic interests, regional affiliations or colonial past. These facets enhance Norway's legitimacy in the eyes of conflict parties, who are less likely to perceive them as motivated by self-interest³, as well as in the eyes of other regional players, who do not see them as a threat. Second, Norway's approach to peace negotiations emphasises conflict actors' ownership of any peace process; they are 'peacehelpers' rather than 'peacemakers' (DIIS 2005). Norway's role is characterised as being more concerned with facilitation rather than mediation: it is not directive and focuses on process. Third, this ownership model has been underpinned by a reputation for secrecy and confidentiality. Fourth, Norway has a reputation as being a flexible team player (its interventions have typically involved working closely alongside other actors such as the US in the Middle East, IGAD in Sudan or the UN in Guatemala) and patient (political support for this role and oil wealth mean that it is committed to these relatively high-risk ventures for the long haul and will not be put off by short-term failure) (Keleher & Taubee 2006). Norway has proved that it is willing to invest in long-term efforts to promote peace both on its own behalf and in support of other bodies including the UN, regional and non-governmental organisations (Whitfield 2010a). Fifth, the Norwegian government possesses close links with Norwegian NGOs, and its peacemaking interventions have usually drawn on the field experience and local connections of NGOs such as Fafo in the Middle East, the Lutheran World Federation in Guatemala and Norwegian People's Aid in Sudan (Keleher & Taubee 2006, Bersagel 2008). In some cases (such as Sudan and the Middle East) NGOs were directly involved in negotiations, in others (such as Guatemala) they were only involved in supporting Norway's entry into the process (Bersagel 2008).

² This section is reliant on the English language literature on Norway. It ignores a considerable number of relevant studies in Norwegian.

³ Survey data in Sri Lanka conducted by the Centre for Policy Alternatives suggests that a significant proportion of the Sri Lankan population did in fact see Norway as motivated by self-interest (REF.). This suspicion may not necessarily be detrimental to Norway's role: McCartney's (2006) study of Colombia and the Philippines argues that people were more suspicious of 'altruistic' mediators.

The Norwegian model conforms most closely to a facilitative model of mediation but, since it typically works alongside other third-party actors, its approach is bound up with both the transformative agenda pursued by other western donors and NGOs, and the power-based approach associated with major powers. It is important to stress the 'Norwegian model' is not a rigid one and has been applied differently according to context. Norway is currently involved in a range of peacemaking initiatives in around twenty different countries (including countries where Norway supports UN-led missions - see Appendix 1). As Bersagel (2008, 90) has argued, the Norwegian model is perhaps best understood as 'a pattern of cooperation' whereby all cases 'include a combination of various traits', although in 'a range of combinations'.

A number of tensions and issues are associated with this model of peacemaking, many of which have been highlighted in the Sri Lankan case and which will be examined in greater depth below. The first concerns the 'ownership' approach, which places primary responsibility for the success of the process in the hands of the conflict parties and provides limited scope for the facilitating party to drive the agenda forward when negotiations broke down (Hoglund and Svensson 2009). Second, related to this, peace processes based on this model are more likely to suffer from commitment problems and in some cases may be instrumentalised by conflict parties who are interested in pursuing 'devious objectives' (see Richmond 1998, Selby 2008). Third, a model of negotiations that is heavily reliant upon secret, back-channel communication is susceptible to being characterised as biased, as occurred in Sri Lanka. Fourth, mediation processes that involve a number of actors are more difficult to coordinate and it is often hard for various third party actors to maintain a coherent agenda (Barnes et al 2008, Whitfield 2010). These tensions will be examined more comprehensively in section four.

Middle powers⁴

In the aftermath of the Cold War, the scope grew for less-powerful countries to exert a degree of influence over international relations through the use of 'soft power', or power exerted through co-optation and attraction rather coercion (Nye 1990). Countries such as Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, Ireland, Canada and Australia have challenged a realist view of global politics and security by establishing international order through coalition-building, by serving as mediators, or by engaging in conflict management or conflict resolution activities (Behringer 2005). This trend was partly driven by 'supply side' factors – countries such as Norway, Canada and Ireland saw greater involvement in international peacebuilding as a useful way of developing a more prominent role in international affairs. The growing role may have also been a consequence of the 'demand side' factors: weak mediators can be used as proxies for strong actors that want to get involved but are unable to engage or choose not to (Beardsley 2009). Furthermore, hedging behaviour on behalf of conflict parties may have contributed to the growing role of 'weak mediators': conflict parties may actively encourage their involvement in

⁴ There is little consensus in the literature around the meaning of this term. Some use it to refer to states that are not great powers, but nevertheless wield some influence over the international system. In practice, this definition is often narrowed to include only western states that fall within this category and are heavily involved in multilateral institutions and a range of other global initiatives including norm entrepreneurship. This narrower definition typically excludes 'non-western' middle powers such as Indonesia and Brazil. Arguably this distinction between an 'active' set of western middle powers and 'passive' non-western middle powers is breaking down.

the belief that this will provide more opportunities for them to successfully pursue their own agendas (Beardsley 2009).

Despite their lack of coercive power, middle power states played a central role in transforming the landscape of international intervention in the 1990s and 2000s by actively supporting conflict resolution and management activities such as facilitating peace processes or providing financial support to peacekeeping operations. They also helped to reconfigure existing patterns of intervention by making a significant contribution to the creation of new normative frameworks such as human security and the 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P), which challenged state-centric norms of intervention and placed greater emphasis on the welfare and security of human populations. The influence and achievements of these frameworks constitutes a major site of contestation in the literature (see Paris 2001, Petrova 2007), which leads many to question whether the rise of 'middle powers' represents a genuine transformation in contemporary global policymaking, or if in fact these powers have simply been manipulated or co-opted by major powers.

This realist view has been supported by research into how middle powers operate within the world system. Behringer (2005) highlights some of the limits of middle power advocacy - they are likely to be less successful in establish institutions or norms in areas that threaten the constitutional rights of the US such as the International Criminal Court, for example. He also argues, however, that middle powers are most likely to succeed when they engage in fast-track diplomacy rather than consensus-based diplomacy. There are some signs that the scope for middle powers to play such a central role in international affairs may be waning. Many of these normative frameworks and institutions are in decline (see Evans 2008, Bellamy 2009, Chandler 2008, Bookmiller & Bookmiller 2010). This partly relates to a growing assertiveness of new global powers such as China, India, Brazil and Russia, who are less comfortable with soft power diplomacy and the new frameworks of international interaction espoused by middle powers (Hurrell 2006).

Asian countries have become more actively involved in the field of mediation in recent years. Asian approaches to peacemaking mediation have been characterised by greater respect for national sovereignty and informal codes of diplomatic conduct. These characteristics have been most closely associated with the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), which utilises 'an informal and incremental approach to co-operation through the habit of consultation and dialogue, while limiting to a minimum the level of institutionalization' (Katsumata 2003a: 106, cited in Weissmann 2009). In East Asia, these characteristics have been underpinned by growing regional integration underpinned by growing economic interdependence and elite interaction (Weissmann 2009). The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has not been able to match ASEAN's success at developing an active conflict management and peacemaking role (Sridharan 2008). Relations between SAARC members have continued to be characterised by mistrust and antagonism (ibid.).

3. Intervening in conflict

Giving War a Chance

The quantitative literature on civil war termination provides a sobering counterpoint to the congratulatory tone of much of the literature on civil wars since the end of the Cold War, which was epitomised by the Human Security Reports of 2005. Licklider's (1995) survey of peace settlements conducted between 1945 and 1993 found that negotiated settlements tended to break down more easily than military 'resolutions': over 50% of negotiated settlements broke down five years after conflict.⁵ These findings are broadly supported by Stedman (1997), who looked at data between 1900 and 1980. Muckerjee (2006) finds that a power-sharing agreement is more likely to result in the resumption of civil war after a stalemate than following a military victory. The findings of this literature are contested: the most recent study on the relative effectiveness of decisive or compromise outcomes, for example, finds that outcome type (whether the war ends in a military victory or a negotiated settlement) has no significant effect on post-dispute peace duration (although it does find that imposed settlements tend to be more stable than negotiated ones) (Quackenbush and Veinteichter 2008).

The idea that third-party intervention can prolong conflict has been supported a number of policy studies, which include Luttwak's (1999) call to 'give war a chance'. These arguments have been developed in recent years. Weinstein (2005) challenges the assumption that international intervention constitutes the best strategy for resolving conflict. He argues that international actors to develop a better understanding of processes of 'autonomous recovery', which have occurred in countries and regions such as Uganda, Eritrea and Somaliland, where states achieve a lasting peace in the absence of international intervention.⁶

Much of this literature can be criticised on the grounds that it fails to fully consider the costs associated with non-intervention (Crocker 2000). A number of historical case studies (such as Germany in the aftermath of First World War) (Seligman & Hughes 2002) and contemporary cases such as Angola and Sri Lanka highlight some of the potentially detrimental effects of military victories either in leading to a resumption of war, or to entrenching a victor's peace that benefits elites and continues to exclude marginal groups. Nevertheless the argument that seeking a negotiated settlement to conflict always constitutes the optimal path is also open to question. As Cramer (2006) has argued, it is a widely held misconception that the consequences of war and violence are always negative. Current research in the field of conflict studies calls for a more nuanced approach to conflict that acknowledges the long-run historical processes in which it takes place and allows for a greater appreciation for what Gutierrez-Sanin (2009) has called 'anti-intuitive positive externalities', or transformations brought about by conflict that have long-term positive effects.

⁵ Licklider also found that while military victories are more likely to 'stick', they are more likely to end in genocide.

⁶ Weinstein also notes that the conditions under which 'autonomous recovery' is likely to occur are rare and difficult to create. Another body of research has drawn the opposite policy conclusions from this pessimistic assessment of current mainstream models of intervention. Authors such as Fearon and Laitin (2006) and Herbst (2003), for example, advocate a form of international trusteeship or a temporary removal of sovereignty.

There are a number of important methodological problems with this quantitative literature. First, it is questionable whether cross-country quantitative analysis provides the best means of understanding complex political processes, which are determined by a broad array of factors and heavily dependent upon contextually-specific sets of interests. As the emerging political economy literature on peace processes stresses, the outcomes of these processes are determined by a complex interplay of internal and external interests, structural factors and inter-personal relationships. Moran and Pitcher's (2004, 501) comparative analysis of why peace has held in Mozambique but not in Liberia, argues that the most convincing explanations 'must combine insights from elite, structuralist and agency-based approaches'.

Second, there are a number of problems with the data. As Hegre and Sambanis (2006) have found, the quantitative conflict literature is replete with conflicting claims and findings (inequality increases the risk of war and it does not, grievances increase the risk of war and they do not etc.). Some of the most serious problems are concerned with the thresholds of battle-deaths and conflict episodes used. A recent study finds that 'the determinants for civil war recurrence identified in previous research are sensitive to alternate formulations of conflict termination data' and that most conflict episodes in fact do not end through either military victory or peace settlement but 'more often under unclear circumstances where fighting simply ceases' (Kreutz 2010). Factoring in these situations into the analysis skews existing results significantly. Many of the most influential studies, such as Licklider's (1995), refer largely to conflicts before the end of the Cold War, which raises questions about relevance of these patterns, given the important shifts in the scope of international intervention in the last thirty years.

Third, and perhaps most fundamentally, while stopping killing is clearly by itself a good thing, it is not clear what constitutes a desirable outcome to a conflict. Fearon and Laitin (2008) stress that there is no clear or consistent way of distinguishing between 'military victory' and 'negotiated settlement' in the literature. As Licklider (2009, 12) notes, '[d]isagreement on this question is, after all, the reason for the civil war'.⁷

A more recent body of literature (emerging from both quantitative research and detailed case studies) has highlighted the extent to which the emerging norms and policies associated with CP can create a range of moral hazards, increasing the incentives for rebels to start or continue fighting. Tull and Mehler (2005), Kuperman (2008) and De Waal (2009) have analysed these dynamics with respect to the trend towards third-party mediation, the emerging norm of R2P and the growing emphasis on international peacekeeping forces. Tull and Mehler (2005) make the case that as power-sharing arrangements and negotiated settlements have become more popular, they have increased the incentives for rebels to fight longer and harder to achieve a more beneficial settlement. Kuperman (2008) argues that the emergence of the R2P norm

⁷ The poor track record for intervention may not necessarily be an argument against intervention per se. Three broad factors emerged in the early literature to explain the low success of peacebuilding interventions (Woodward 2007). These three factors were first, the mismatch between committed resources and the complexity of a specific conflict was highlighted by authors such as Doyle and Sambanis (2000); second, a lack of donor coordination on strategy and programmes once resources were committed; and third, too much focus on relief and reconstruction at the expense of statebuilding. From this perspective, problems of intervention are technical ones that can (and to a certain extent have been) addressed since the early years of the new millennium.

creates similar incentives for sub-state groups to rebel. De Waal (2009) describes how when international actors intervene in conflict-affected countries they become enmeshed in a patrimonial system ('the political marketplace'), distorting the market and therefore necessitating continued long-term involvement to maintain any peace agreement. These arguments suggest that the relatively recent trend for negotiated settlements may in fact be driving up the overall number and duration of conflicts.

To summarise, much of the quantitative literature raises significant questions about the broad track record of international intervention. Notwithstanding the significant methodological problems associated with this literature, one clear benefit is that it highlights the problems associated with weak settlements, stresses the broader impact that patterns of intervention may have on the incentives of armed groups and helps to raise issues that are typically ignored by practitioners, including the potential benefits of non-intervention.

Which kinds of interventions are most effective?

There is a large body of quantitative literature that examines the determinants of successful negotiated settlements. As with the more general literature on intervention, this research fails to generate many clear findings, although it does raise some conceptual tools that may be of use to policymakers. Much of this literature focuses specifically on processes of mediation, a set of issues that will be covered in the next section.

Research has highlighted the relationship between peace and a number of different types of third-party interventions. Walter (2002) argues that civil wars rarely end in a negotiated settlement without strong third-party security guarantees. Doyle and Sambanis (2006) claim that post-war peace breaks down more quickly without multi-faceted international peacekeeping operations, which can provide security guarantees in transitional periods. Fortna (2004) has found that the most convincing explanation for rise in negotiated settlements since the 1990s is a rise in peace support operations. Elbadawi and Sambanis (2000) argue that external interventions that address poverty encourage civil war termination by making rebel mobilization more difficult.

The impact of various conflict characteristics on the likelihood that an intervention will be successful constitutes another important theme in the literature. Stedman (2001) has generated a 'difficulty score', highlighting eight factors that determine the suitability of a conflict for peace settlement. These include factors such as the number of warring parties, the likelihood of spoilers, and the presence of a hostile neighbouring states or networks. Others focus on the state of a conflict. Zartman (2000) introduced the notions of 'hurting stalemates' and 'ripe moments' for peace, arguing that peace is more likely when the main conflict parties' interests are not being served by a continuation of conflict. A related issue is the availability of information: Muckergee (2006) argues that a negotiated settlement is much more likely when there is a higher degree of certainty about military outcomes. Crocker (2007) focuses on a country's peace 'readiness', arguing that it is important to consider internal capacities for transforming conflict (both at the elite and popular level). While these concepts provide useful insights to intervening forces, they do not provide a clear guide for international actors to identify 'ripe moments' or peace 'readiness'. The Asian tsunami, for example, was seen to constitute a ripe moment for peace in Sri Lanka but, as has become clear in hindsight, this

constituted a misreading of the situation. A number of explanations for the relative 'stickiness' of negotiated settlements have emerged from the political economy literature. Case studies from South Africa and El Salvador, for example, suggest that a durable settlement may be more likely when contending groups are economically dependent upon each other (Adam 1993, Wood 2003).

There has been a considerable amount of literature on the characteristics of successful interveners. Regan (2002) finds that neutral interventions (of all kinds) are less effective than biased ones at reducing conflict duration. Similarly, Balch-Lindsey et al (2008) argue that third party interventions can successfully reduce conflict duration if they back one side (although this kind of intervention makes a negotiated settlement less likely). Cunningham (2010) makes a similar argument: he finds that external interventions that are unbiased or independent make conflicts substantially longer. Although there is some consensus that biased interventions reduce the duration of conflict, these studies do not assess the long-term costs of these interventions. Biased interventions are clearly not desirable in all contexts as cases such as Indian intervention in Sri Lanka and NATO in Kosovo demonstrate (Carment and Rowlands 2003).

As mentioned above, there are few clear policy messages that stem directly from this literature. Arguably, this body of research helps to explode some of the commonplace 'myths' about peace and intervention and encourages policymakers to critically reflect on questions such as whether and how to intervene. It stresses that the benefits of negotiating peace may not always outweigh the costs and that 'impartial' intervention have a number of associated pitfalls.

4. Mediation

This section will start by looking at the significant changes that have affected the mediation field since the end of the Cold War. It will then assess the evidence from the quantitative literature for the effectiveness of mediation as an approach to tackling conflict. It will conclude by examining the practitioner literature. These two bodies of literature generate different kinds of findings. While the quantitative literature makes claims about the association between various characteristics of mediation and conflict outcome, the practitioner literature tends to generate a series of lessons and issues, drawing on practical experiences or detailed case studies of contemporary peacemaking efforts.

General trends

There have been a number of significant changes in the global climate for peacemaking over the last decade. While peace settlements have become more frequent, they have also become more fragile and the likelihood of breakdown seems to have increased (Whitfield & Griffiths 2010). Other key trends include an increased tendency for rebel groups to be labelled terrorists (as a consequence of the global war on terror) and the increased salience of political Islam (ibid.). There has been a diffusion of international decision-making, which has encouraged a growing number of peacemaking actors to enter the fray. These include the UN (which continues to experience significant internal divisions surrounding its role in various contexts), regional organisations (particularly in Latin America, Africa and South East Asia, but less so in the Middle

East, Central, South or East Asia (Crocker 20087)), groups of friends (ad-hoc coalitions of states) and a growing role for non-governmental organisations (often linked to former political leaders) (Whitfield & Griffiths 2010). Mediators with less strategic or coercive power have played a much more prominent role. According to Beardsley (2009), '63% of the mediation events are currently carried out by regional organizations, weak states, individuals or NGOs, all of which are limited in their potential for leverage'. These trends have resulted in a 'dynamic and confusing terrain into which mediation is now deployed' (ibid., 7).

The broadening range of external actors involved in peacebuilding since the 1990s has been matched by an expansion in the objectives of these actors. In the 2000s, there has been a growing recognition that external intervention should not end with the signing of a peace agreement, and that external actors should provide greater support in the post-war period, through close monitoring of progress in the implementation peace agreements, the provision of peacekeeping forces (with broadening mandates), support for security sector reform and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes, support for post-war elections and governance reform, and funding for post-conflict reconstruction programmes. Many authors have argued that peacemakers need to consider peace implementation and post-conflict issues when they are helping to mediate peace processes both on the grounds that it will lead to more sustainable outcomes, and on the basis that it will demonstrate their long-term commitment to conflict parties, thereby boosting the legitimacy of their interventions (Crocker 2007, Whitfield & Griffiths 2010). At the same time, a growing emphasis has been placed on preventing the outbreak of violent conflict through the application of a more comprehensive conflict prevention agenda (Lund 2006). One significant indication of this more comprehensive agenda is the establishment of the UN Peacebuilding Commission in 2005, which sought to enable the UN to act more coherently and effectiveness across the peace-war-peace continuum. As a result of these broad trends, third-party efforts to facilitate or mediate in conflict have become more closely bound up with related fields such as post-conflict stabilisation and reconstruction, statebuilding and peace implementation (Crocker 2007).

The literature highlights a number of issues with this new model of mediation. First, the presence of large numbers of third-party mediators can make it more difficult to develop a coherent agenda and effectively apply conditionalities. These dynamics have led to the emergence of relatively new phenomenon of 'forum shopping', where conflict parties support mediating parties or bodies that support their own agenda at the expense of those that do not (Crocker 2007, Whitfield & Griffiths 2010).⁸

Second, the tendency for peace processes to be complex, protracted and bolstered by the provision of aid complicates conflict parties' incentives to participate. As Selby (2008, 3-4) has argued, contemporary peace processes frequently 'furnish plenty of opportunities for participants to both "have their cake and eat it too" – that is, for parties to peace processes to on the hand claim and display their commitment to peace and accrue various benefits as a result, whilst on the other hand, avoiding, often for many years, having to make substantive political

⁸ In some instances, the problem of forum shopping has been compounded by the issue of 'shopping forums' or competitive peacemaking, where a number of third-party mediators compete to establish themselves as the principal mediator (Crocker 2007, Whitfield 2010a).

compromises'.⁹ As Beardsley (2009) notes, weak mediators may be particularly appealing to conflict parties that want to use a peace process not to resolve conflict, but rather to consolidate their position or accrue legitimacy or economic resources, because they allow them to maintain more control over the process.

Third, as well as creating perverse incentives, the use of carrots and sticks alongside mediation processes can distract from the core political issues. This is clearly seen in the Sri Lankan case, where the 'development cart' was put before 'the conflict resolution horse' (Srikandarajah 2003). It is also reflected in the Occupied Palestinian Territories where rather than functioning as a catalyst for political progress through the peace process, the use of aid acted as a substitute for politics and helped to depoliticise the Palestinian cause (Le More 2008).

Fourth, the tendency for a greater number and range of external actors to be involved in the peacemaking process creates coordination challenges, requiring lead mediators not only to work towards aligning the conflict parties' interests, but also those of other international and regional players. One important emerging issue is whether or not mediators should use formal structures to manage an array of external actors (Whitfield 2010). A number of studies have stressed that it is important that rather than attempting to align the objectives of various external actors, efforts should be made to ensure 'strategic complementarity', building on areas where various external actors' objectives converge (Goodhand and Klem 2005, Barnes et al 2008). Fifth, these complex processes require patient mediators (Whitfield 2010). As mentioned in section one, Norway is well equipped both to provide long-term commitment to any given peace process, and to negotiate relationships with other regional and international players.

Measuring successful mediation

There is a lack of consensus in the literature around what constitutes a successful process of mediation. As mentioned above in the general discussion on intervention, this relates partly to the tendency for conflict parties to possess divergent expectations and desires about the outcome of any negotiation process. It is also related to third parties' divergent goals and a lack of clarity (or secrecy) about these: success could relate to the process itself, to successful negotiation (resolution) or to both negotiation and implementation (settlement) (Bercovitch 2006). The value of mediation may go beyond simply producing a peace agreement – other benefits may include improving the humanitarian situation on the ground, providing hope to affected populations or building trust between key parties (which may successfully contribute to successful negotiations at a later date) (Lanz et al 2008). More fundamentally, success is often linked to intangible factors such as justice, fairness and personal satisfaction, which are difficult to evaluate objectively (ibid.). There are also specific problems with the quantitative literature on mediation. Beber (2009, 1) notes that causal claims about the success of mediation efforts are difficult to assess because 'mediator assignment is strategically complex and not random'. Mediation could be affected by selection bias, endogeneity bias (the likelihood of an agreement could affect intervention strategies) and omitted variable bias ('confidential diplomatic relations could conceal predictors of mediation initiation and war settlement'). These problems

⁹ These dynamics existed before the end of the Cold War period. Richmond (1998) identifies similar patterns of behaviour in a case study of UN mediation in Cyprus, which dates back to the 1960s.

are more acutely felt today as a greater number of mediation efforts do not result in a lasting peace. Bercovitch and Simpson (2010) note that existing models used to explain the failure of peace processes have tended to focus on the implementation phase. They propose a 'contingency model', which they claim provides a more holistic assessment of the peace process (assessing both factors leading up to an agreement and its implementation).

One significant shortcoming in the existing literature on mediation has been a failure to provide an adequate analysis of the costs of failed mediation. Although these kinds of assessments are difficult (they are hampered by the same issues of that make assessing the successful mediation so difficult), neglecting them entirely seems to have encouraged policymakers to over-estimate the potential usefulness of third-party mediation as a tool for resolving conflict. To provide an example from the recent failed peace process in Sri Lanka, the potential costs of third party mediation arguably included the nationalist resurgence, the emergence of more authoritarian and militarised forms of governance, and the long-term (or perhaps permanent) erosion of a broad consensus in Sri Lanka about the need for some kind of devolved political settlement. Clearly the links between these outcomes and the model of international engagement pursued by Norway and other international actors in Sri Lanka are complex and raise questions about what kind of peace is necessary and desirable. These difficulties do not imply, however, that the potential costs of mediation should be ignored entirely.

The effectiveness of mediation and different approaches to mediation

The evidence on the effectiveness of third-party mediation from the quantitative literature is mixed. Beardsley et al (2006) find that mediation has been used in around 50% of international crises since the end of the Cold War. They claim that it leads to a five times greater probability of reaching an agreement compared to a non-mediated one, and a 2.4 times greater probability of longer-term reduction in tension. The 2010 Human Security Report shows that the percentage of peace agreements followed by a resumption of conflict within five years has declined since 2000. The same report claims that peace agreements are 'now the most stable form of conflict termination, despite continuing risks of reversal and challenges to implementation' (Human Security Centre 2010). Greminger (2007) argues that this success can be explained by the fact that mediation efforts were more substantive, more inclusive and better at anticipating problems that would arise in the implementation phase. He argues that it the improvements were linked to greater international support for peace agreements.

Other studies find that mediation tends to be successful in the short term, but is less effective in the long term. Beardsley (2008, 723) looks at international crises between 1918 and 2001, to demonstrate that third parties can 'create artificial incentives which shape short-term arrangements that are not viable in the absence of constant third-party influence'. Savun (2008) finds, perhaps unsurprisingly, that mediators tend to be more successful when they have more information (measured by assessing the mediator's intelligence strength, diplomatic presence and the degree to which its relationship with the disputant has been institutionalised) about the conflict parties.

Some quantitative research has sought to evaluate the relative effectiveness of different models of mediation. Most find that, broadly speaking, multi-dimensional approaches that involve a range of actors and styles are most effective. Svensson (2007a) argues that a combination of powerful and biased mediators with pure mediators is the most effective mediation strategy.

This view is supported by Fisher (2007) who provides evidence to support the view that a combination of official and unofficial interventions tends to be the most effective approach to addressing intractable ethno-political conflict. A recent study by Beardsley et al (2010, 58) find that slightly different outcomes are associated with three broad models of mediation: facilitation, formulation and manipulation.¹⁰ They argue that ‘manipulation has the strongest effect on the likelihood of both reaching a formal agreement and contributing to crisis abatement’ and that ‘facilitation has the greatest influence on increasing the prospects for lasting tension reduction’, concluding that ‘mediators should use a balance of styles if they are to maximize their overall effectiveness’. A few studies challenge this dominant view. Boehmelt (2010) finds that the ‘size of an intervening coalition and mediation effectiveness are characterized by an inverted U-shaped relationship’ (i.e. they are most effective when they are not too narrow and not too broad), and that a coalition of interveners is likely to be more effective when the mediating actors have a history of co-operation and when they are largely democratic (because this is likely to improve information flows). Beber (2009) finds that multi-party mediation does not appear to be more effective than single-party mediation.

Other studies have argued that greater emphasis should be placed on the terms of a peace agreement and its implementation for determining its success. Hodie and Hartzel (2003) argue that peace agreements that have included provisions for the sharing or dividing of military power among former combatants and where these provisions are fully implemented ‘have significantly better prospects for maintaining peace’.

As with the more general literature on intervention, the mediation literature has been heavily pre-occupied with the question of whether ‘biased’ or ‘neutral’ (or ‘powerful’ or ‘weak’) mediators are most effective. There is some consensus within the practitioner literature that ‘mediators should not be partisan’, and that if they can remain neutral they will be more effective (see, for example, Nathan 2005, Whitfield & Griffiths 2010). This view is not universal, however: Zartman and Touval (1985, 40) argue that ‘[l]everage is the ticket to mediation—third parties are only accepted as mediators if they are likely to produce an agreement or help the parties out of a predicament, and for this they usually need leverage’.

The quantitative literature generally supports the latter view. Savun (2008) finds that biased mediations are more successful than unbiased ones. There is some evidence that biased mediation processes are more likely than neutral mediation processes to lead to ‘elaborated institutional arrangements that are generally considered conducive to democracy and durable peace, such as power sharing, third-party security guarantees, and justice provisions’ (Svensson 2009, 1). Svensson (2007) finds that government-biased interventions are more effective than interventions that are biased towards rebels (which have no significant effect on conflict duration). Gent and Shannon (2010) argue that mediator bias is not as significant a factor as the conflict management technique used. They find that binding third-party mechanisms (arbitration and adjudication) more effectively end territorial claims than other conflict

¹⁰ They define facilitation as ‘serving as a channel of communication among disputing parties, focusing on ensuring continued discussion and dialogue’, formulation as an approach which ‘involves a substantive contribution to negotiations by the mediator. When mediators act as formulators, they conceive and propose new solutions to the disputants’ and manipulation as ‘involves attempting to shift the reservation points of each actor, thereby increasing the probability that the actors will be able to identify some alternative within the expanding zone of agreement’.

management techniques because they provide legality, increased reputation costs, and domestic political cover. The findings of this literature are perhaps less relevant given the tendency for most contemporary mediation efforts to involve a range of actors. The conclusion that powerful actors are more successful may be partly a reflection of the quantitative literature's tendency to adopt a 'mediation as power-brokerage' perspective, where success is equated with short-term stability rather than long-term reconciliation. It is also important to stress that the mediators' various characteristics (biased/ neutral, external/ internal, formal/informal) exist on a spectrum and are not absolute categories (McCartney 2006).

Another important issue in the quantitative literature concerns the potential threat to mediation processes posed by 'spoilers' and whether or not mediation processes will be more or less successful if 'spoilers' are included. Stedman (1997) has argued that successful peace processes depend upon a correct diagnosis of spoilers and an appropriate strategy for managing them. He argued that those spoilers that can be convinced should be engaged, 'total spoilers' should be excluded. Greenhill and Major (2007, 7) challenge this approach, arguing that the real key to defeating potential spoilers 'lies in the possession and exercise of the material power to coerce or co-opt them, rather than in the capacity to discern their true character or personality type'. Similarly, Zahar (2010, 266) questions the utility of a spoiler typology, arguing that there are no fixed spoiler types and that 'actors' propensity to use violence depends on conditions that affect their capability and opportunity structures'. She argues that mediators should focus on shaping the opportunity structure within which conflict actors make their decisions.

Quantitative studies in this area have highlighted a broad range of prerequisites for success, but have been less successful in determining which factors are most important. Kleiboer (1996, 376) argues that a key challenge for this literature is to try to 'reduce the scope of inquiry (and policy recommendations) to a more limited number of powerful variables'. Mediation research 'has produced a wealth of correlations and facts, but has not produced any convincing explanations' (ibid., 377). Despite the general failure to identify clear lessons, there are a few points of consensus - around the claim that mediation is an effective (and cost-effective) form of intervention and is becoming more effective, the claim that multi-party and multi-dimensional mediations are more effective, and the finding that conflicts where mediation occurs are more likely to generate a peace agreement. This literature is also useful in emphasizing that the role of third-party mediators is likely to be quite small, particularly in the case of 'weak mediators'.

Lessons from the practitioner and case study literature

The practitioner literature focuses on a more nuanced set of lessons about which strategies and characteristics are most effective. This literature benefits from drawing on a range of in-depth case studies, and tends to capture inter-personal and political economy dynamics that are often missed by the quantitative literature. One of the problems with this literature is that there is sometimes a lack of critical reflection on many of the key assumptions that underpin the 'best-practice' model of mediation. Another issue is its tendency to write with the aim of justifying the role of a particular mediator or set of mediators: playing up successes and glossing over failure. There is a tendency for these two bodies of literature to ask different questions and their respective implications are rarely assessed together.

There is a broad consensus in the practitioner literature around the need to foster peace processes that are inclusive, participatory, well-coordinated and 'owned' by the conflict parties (Nathan 2005). A number of studies highlight the need to include a broad range of actors in the process to ensure that the needs of minority groups and populations under-represented by the negotiating parties are reflected in any peace agreement (Conciliation Resources 2002, Ropers 2008, Barnes 2009, Conciliation Resources 2009). These studies acknowledge that this kind of approach may be more difficult to achieve and require patience, but argue that it is more likely to produce an enduring settlement. Nathan (2006) has been critical of the 'deadline diplomacy', which he argues led to the failure of the Abuja negotiations. These arguments appear to hold some validity, particularly in peace processes that have become 'creatures of the international community', which have been accused of reflecting 'the desired outcome of key states in the international community rather than the wishes of local communities' (Darby & MacGinty 2003, 4). This view is to some extent challenged by a comparative study by Sumanthra Bose (2003). He contrasts the 'incremental' approach pursued in Kashmir and Sri Lanka with the comprehensive approach exemplified by Dayton and the Good Friday Agreement, arguing that window of opportunity in the early stages of a peace process should be seized and all efforts should be made to force a comprehensive agreement as a means of guiding future negotiations. The absence of a 'locking in' mechanism, he argues, often leads to a breakdown in confidence and the unravelling of peace processes. Bersagel's (2008) study assesses the effectiveness of the 'Norwegian model'. Based on case studies of the peace processes in the Middle East, Guatemala and Sudan, she argues that the Norwegian approach appears to be most effective in bringing conflict parties to the table or negotiating a peace agreement, but is insufficient in the implementation phase, when more powerful actors will be needed to ensure the parties' ongoing commitment to peace. This highlights the need for third party actors such as Norway to adapt its responses to different phases of the peace process.

The case study and practitioner literature highlights four key emerging themes. First, there has been a growing emphasis on the importance of understanding the legitimacy and perceptions in peace processes. Several studies have focused on the way in which international actors are perceived: as Biswas (2009) argues in a comparative study of peacemaking in Aceh and Sri Lanka, this can be a critical factor in determining success. Whitfield recommends that donors should '[b]e alert to the risk of partiality or the appearance of it' (Whitfield 2010). Conflict parties' own strategies of legitimation are also important to understanding the dynamics at play in contemporary peace negotiations: peace processes provide opportunities for a range of participating and critical actors to generate legitimacy (Selby 2008, Goodhand & Walton 2009). The literature stresses the need to understand the interface between domestic and international politics. Beardsley & Lo (2008), for example, argue that third party mediation helps combatants to 'save face' from their domestic audiences when making concessions and advocate more focus on this dynamic in future research.

A second and related set of issues emerging from this literature is the importance of understanding the interests of conflict actors. A number of studies have focused attention on the motivations of conflict actors (Barnes et al 2008, Wils & Giesmann 2009, Bercovitch & Simpson 2010). The recognition costs associated with engaging in a peace process constitute a key interest for conflict parties, particularly non-state entities such as the LTTE (Melin & Svensson 2009). In interventions with multiple third parties, mediators will also need to

develop a thorough understanding of the various interests of other intervening actors (Bercovitch 2009).

The third emerging theme is the importance of context. A range of studies examine how different models of mediation may be more or less appropriate depending on context (Martin 2006, Bercovitch 2009). In Aceh, for example, where the Indonesian state was nervous about external intervention, a low-key mediation role that emphasised neutrality and incorporated regional actors was most appropriate (Barron & Burke 2006). Bercovitch (2009) develops a more generalisable model, arguing that more active forms of mediation may be needed in high-intensity conflicts to prevent escalation, while negotiation may be more appropriate in low intensity conflicts. Conflicts where parties have similar political and social systems may be more open to active mediation strategies, whereas where parties have few similarities, a more gradual strategy, which focuses on building trust, teaching negotiation skills and clarifying key issues may be more appropriate (ibid.). Kleiboer (1996) provides a useful overview of this literature and identifies a number of characteristics of the conflict that may affect the likelihood of mediation success. These include the intensity of conflict (success is more like in conflicts with fewer casualties) and the nature of the issues (ideology based conflicts or conflicts where there are incompatible claims to territory are least likely to be resolved, although the evidence is patchy). They also include various characteristics of the conflict parties including their identification, cohesiveness (the greater the number of parties, the more difficult it is to mediate), the type of regime (mediation is more likely to be successful in multi-party states), their previous and ongoing relationships (where there has been previous contact, successful mediation is more likely) and the distribution of power between them (generally a situation of parity is seen as more conducive to mediation).

A fourth and final area concerns the varied styles and relationships of individual mediators that play a central role in determining success. As Martin's (2006) descriptions of leading international mediators highlight, mediators draw on a range of different personal characteristics and these may be crucial determinants of success. While it is difficult to draw direct lessons from this area of research, the findings highlight the importance of personal relationships in determining the success of peace processes. This perhaps supports the case for greater focus on building long-standing inter-personal networks by establishing embassies and providing space for diplomats to maintain personal relationships in countries affected by long-running wars.

5. 'Liberal Peacebuilding' debates

This section adopts a broader focus, examining the literature on 'liberal peacebuilding' and the debates surrounding the efficacy of mainstream approaches. A number of geopolitical and conceptual shifts after the end of the Cold War fostered a new consensus amongst inter-governmental actors, multilateral and bilateral donors concerning the most appropriate methods for building peace (Duffield 2001, Richmond 2006).¹¹ The 'liberal peacebuilding'

¹¹ These shifts included a growing pre-eminence of internal violence (civil wars accounting for 95% of all wars in 2004); changes in the way global security threats were perceived (especially a growing association between underdevelopment and global insecurity); a gradual departure from the more

model that surfaced during the 1990s involved a more aggressive pursuit of long-standing international policy goals of economic and political liberalisation, with aid increasingly made conditional upon governments' implementation of these reform agendas (Paris 1997). The belief that the goals of building democratic and accountable political systems and reforming the economy could be pursued simultaneously represented a distinct departure from international policy norms that characterised the Cold War period (Bastian 2007). In addition to promoting economic and governance reforms, the model asserted that violent conflict could be alleviated and overcome by reaching an internationally backed peace settlement and by managing local level conflicts through a range of measures designed to improve the security of local populations.

A key feature of this new approach was the belief that these different strands would be mutually-supporting or that 'all good things come together' (Goodhand & Walton 2009). With this emerging consensus amongst Western and multilateral donors about the key tenets of liberal intervention, donors increasingly sought to align their interventions, stressing the importance of integrated missions and harmonisation and leaving less room for alternative visions for achieving peace. In the context of a broad political consensus amongst international actors, the only choices remaining were technical ones related to sequencing and prioritisation (Goodhand and Walton 2009). This framework involved the blurring of domestic and international policy goals, leading departments for foreign affairs, immigration, trade and development to work together more closely (Goodhand and Walton 2009). It is important to stress that although liberal peacebuilding is sometimes treated in the literature as a homogenous set of approaches, there has been considerable variation in the extent to which the model has been applied – ranging from more comprehensive approaches in contexts such as East Timor and Kosovo where interventions have been coordinated by the UN and where the emphasis has been on statebuilding, towards more hands-off approaches in contexts such as Sri Lanka where there has been no coordinating presence and where the state has retained its capacity despite conflict.

Critiques of liberal peacebuilding fall into two broad categories – 'problem solving' and critical. The 'problem solving' approach drew on the problems associated with liberal peacebuilding interventions in countries such as Angola, Cambodia, El Salvador, Bosnia and Liberia. A clear lesson emerged from these studies about the dangers of rapid economic and political liberalisation and a recognition about the trade-offs between security and liberty in post-conflict societies: early elections in a number of these cases led to political instability and exacerbated violence while rapid economic liberalisation fuelled corruption and entrenched the position of powerful elites.

These findings led to Paris's (2004) call for 'institutionalisation before liberalisation': the need to prioritise the bolstering of state institutions and social order before holding elections. Another important lesson was of the potential for donors' interests to work at crossed purposes. The Sri Lankan case highlights the potential for contradictions to emerge between liberal peacebuilding's economic and political agendas (Goodhand and Klem 2005)

absolute Cold War conception of sovereignty towards a notion of state sovereignty that was deemed to be conditional upon upholding certain standards of behaviour.

Critical approaches have questioned the fundamental assumptions behind these interventions, challenging their legitimacy and effectiveness. Authors such as Chandler (2004) and Duffield (2001, 2007) have argued that liberal peacebuilding interventions are essentially hegemonic enterprises that seek to colonise non-Western state institutions, or subject local people to 'alien rule'. These critiques respond to the growing emphasis on statebuilding within peacebuilding interventions since the 9/11 attacks on the US in 2001.

Richmond (2000) identifies a number of strands captured within the liberal peacebuilding framework spanning from a hyper-conservative version (a war for peace of the kind pursued initially in Iraq) to an emancipatory model (which focuses on social aspects of peacebuilding) via conservative (force and diplomacy leading to ceasefire/ negotiation and constitutional settlement) and orthodox approaches (constitutional and institutional peace with more long-term measures for political and economic development). He argues that more powerful actors (driven by orthodox or conservative models) can legitimise their interventions by working alongside weak actors such as middle power states or NGOs committed to emancipatory models (Richmond 2005).

Critical authors make a number of other criticisms based on the empirical record of liberal peacebuilding interventions: they argue that these interventions often fall well short of their expectations, fail to improve standards of living and meet the security concerns of target populations, create a 'virtual peace' or may inadvertently entrench the political dominance of existing elites or undermining the emergence of a legitimate state (Richmond and Franks 2007, MacGinty & Richmond 2007, Chandler 2008). Authors such as Pugh (2010) and Salih (2010) identify the failure of to improve welfare and well-being as a crucial missing element in contemporary liberal peacebuilding interventions.

Political economy studies have highlighted the need for greater scrutiny of the local context upon which interventions are imposed (Goodhand & Walton 2009, Taylor 2010). These studies stress that international peacebuilding interventions are characterised by processes of negotiation between domestic and international actors have led to outcomes that often depart significantly from liberal peacebuilders' initial aims and expectations. Barnett & Zuercher (2009) argue that liberal peacebuilding interventions are often hijacked by state elites who wish to protect existing power relations and rural elites who thwart any attempts to bolster the state at their expense. Rather than resulting in peacebuilding interventions that are unconditionally accepted by peripheral and state elites, liberal peacebuilding interventions are more commonly *co-opted* to satisfy international peacebuilders' hopes for stability and legitimacy and domestic actors' existing interests, *captured* so that distribution of resources is entirely redirected to meet the interests of domestic actors, or result in *conflictive peacebuilding* where either international or domestic actors resort to violent means to achieve their objectives. In order to build peace effectively, it is first necessary to understand the nature of conflict and power relations through an historical analysis of conflict, and the way in which conflict involves the complex interaction of global and domestic politics and power relations (Goodhand & Walton 2009). In common with the literature on mediation, this literature has argued that international actors can reduce the scope for local actors to co-opt or instrumentalise these interventions by developing a more sophisticated understanding of domestic processes of legitimation (ibid.).

A growing literature has sought to envisage alternative models to the mainstream liberal peacebuilding approach. A central theme emerging from this literature has been the need to enhance the role of local voice and accountability in these interventions, with a greater emphasis on building 'effective states accountable to local populations', engaging with 'progressive' elements in civil society (Richmond 2008) or developing deliberative systems more capable of achieving both representation and stability (Cooper 2007, 613; Barnett 2006).

There has been a growing interest in the 'interface between internationally supported peace operations' and in understanding 'local approaches to peace that may draw on traditional, indigenous and customary practice' (MacGinty 2010). Several authors have traced a variety of ways in which local agency has 'led to resistance and hybrid forms of peace despite the overwhelming weight of the liberal peace project (Richmond 2010, 665). MacGinty (2008, 2010), for example, describes how liberal peace agents have permitted and even encouraged traditional or indigenous dispute resolution in contexts such as Timor Leste. Roberts (2010) advocates a shift from a liberal to a popular peace: towards a model that is democratically determined, from the bottom up. By addressing everyday needs, it is argued that such an approach would be more legitimate and durable than existing models.

Paris (2010) has recently challenged these critiques, arguing that many have gone too far, in some cases constituting a 'ritualistic' rather than a substantive rejection of liberal peacebuilding. He asserts that many of the proposed 'alternatives' to the liberal model do not really offer an alternative and are better understood as modifications of existing approaches. He is particularly critical of claims that peacebuilding missions have done more harm than good or that they are exploitative or imperialist. He details five 'mistakes' underpinning these kinds of critiques: conflating post-conquest and post-settlement peacebuilding, equating peacebuilding with imperialism or colonisation, defining the 'liberal peace' too broadly, mischaracterizing the peacebuilding record, and oversimplifying moral complexity. He stresses the tendency for critiques, such as Chandler's (2004) on peacebuilding in Bosnia, to underplay the positive impacts of international intervention and to ignore the costs of non-intervention: most countries that have experience liberal peacebuilding interventions are more prosperous, and less violent, and that the lives of their inhabitants are usually improved. Paris's (2010) analysis is useful because it highlights several key areas of consensus in what has remained quite a polarised debate. These include the following criticisms (Paris 2010, 347):

- 1) Lack of political will and attention on the part of peacebuilding sponsors to complete the tasks they undertake, and insufficient commitment of resources
- 2) Limited knowledge of distinctive local conditions and variations across the societies hosting these missions
- 3) Insufficient 'local ownership' over the strategic direction and daily activities of such operations; and continued conceptual challenges in defining the conditions for 'success' and strategies for bringing operations to an effective close.
- 4) Poor strategic coordination among the various international actors involved in these missions
- 5) Inadequate attention has been paid to domestic institutional conditions for successful democratisation and marketisation
- 6) Insufficient appreciation of the tensions and contradictions between the various goals of peacebuilding

- 7) Unresolved tensions in relations between the military and non-military participants in these operations

The first three problems (the need for commitment of resources and political will, 'ownership', and greater understanding of local conditions) appear to represent an endorsement of some of the key characteristics of the 'Norwegian model' of peacebuilding. The fourth (poor strategic coordination) is an issue that Norway has been leading on, by funding UN peace missions and the MSU. Norway is unlikely to be able to take the lead in tackling the remaining three issues because they concern international actors as a group, and relate most acutely to the field of post-conflict intervention where Norway is not a major actor. Arguably, Norway's support for coordination bodies demonstrates some commitment and capacity to tackle these issues.

One final point worth noting is that although debates about 'liberal peacebuilding' sometimes appear insular and self-referential (the term is hardly ever used outside academic circles), the 'crisis of liberal peacebuilding' reflects and is linked to trends in practice, and changes in the way in which these interventions have been perceived by local actors on the receiving end of intervention. There has been a reaction against western intervention from several African and Asian states. In many conflict-affected countries, such as Sudan and Sri Lanka, domestic actors have voiced and to some extent instrumentalised concerns about western intervention, or the 'responsibility to protect' agenda, to mobilize domestic opposition against external intervention (Bellamy 2005, p. 33). As the Sri Lanka case demonstrates, this reaction against western interventionism was linked to global political shifts and, in particular, to the rise of China and India.

6. Key Issues and implications for Norway's peacebuilding role

This final section seeks to extract some of the key themes and lessons from the literature review and assesses some of their implications for Norway's peacebuilding role. As the last section suggests, to the extent that there is an emerging consensus in the literature about how peacebuilding interventions can be improved, Norway's approach seems to be largely aligned with the received wisdom.

Much of the quantitative literature has sought to generate broad lessons about the types of negotiation (incremental vs. big bang approach, elite compacts vs. more inclusive talks) are most conducive to sustainable peace. While this literature has been useful insofar as it has encouraged donors to reflect critically on decisions about whether or how to intervene, it has failed to generate any robust lessons to guide future mediation practice. There is no robust evidence to support the argument, for example, that an 'ownership' model is, generally speaking, more effective than biased mediation; that incremental approaches are better than a 'big bang' strategy; or that conflicts where there have been mediation are more likely to remain at peace than countries that have experienced military victories. These uncertainties reflect the fact that the suitability of different approaches is very much dependent upon context and that mediators are rarely able to exercise total control over the kind of process that emerges: the approach that emerges will be a compromise between a mediator's own approach and the interests and agendas of other regional and local actors. While mediators can control decisions about where to focus their resources and energies, they will often have little control in selecting

the cases where they become actively involved. These caveats are particularly important for mediators such as Norway that consciously pursue an 'ownership model'.

There have been considerable changes in conflict and interventions strategies over the last twenty years. As noted above, there has been a dramatic decline in overall levels of conflict, but a persistence of intractable conflicts within states and a number of enduring regional conflict systems. Based on statistical trends, the recurrence of conflict in countries where peace agreements have been signed is likely, as is the emergence of new conflicts resulting from 'weak' states (Whitfield 2010a). Notwithstanding the methodological problems outlined above, the data suggests that mediation remains an effective means of reaching a peace agreement, although the durability of these settlements and the broader impact of mediation on levels of conflict are more open to question. Whitfield and Griffiths (2010, 5), citing evidence from the recent Human Security Report, state that contemporary peace settlements are commonly fragile and vulnerable to reversal, although they also claim that they are becoming more durable as a result of better implementation.

One key finding, which is highlighted both by the quantitative and the emerging political economy literature on mediation and peace processes, is that there are considerable costs associated with third-party mediation. Third party mediation can have a range of unintended consequences affecting long-term political stability and the space for political transformation in individual countries (as has perhaps occurred in Sri Lanka). As authors such as Tull and Mehler (2005) and De Waal (2009) have argued, the global trend towards increased third party mediation may also create moral hazards and perverse incentives at the regional or global level, encouraging conflict parties to fight longer and harder to achieve a settlement. As mentioned above, these costs have often been neglected or ignored by the problem solving literature, and there is an urgent need to build an analysis of these factors in order to generate a more balanced assessment of the efficacy of third party mediation. The political economy literature in particular highlights the need for third party actors to approach any mediation task with great caution, and to base any intervention on in-depth knowledge and understanding of domestic processes of legitimation. This kind of assessment can help to generate a more comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of third-party mediation.

A number of key challenges face the mediation field. These include a range of problems concerning the UN, including the fact that it continues to be seen by some as western and US-driven and the growing problem of generating consensus amongst the P5. Although the UN has established the Peacebuilding Commission and the Mediation Support Unit (which Norway has assisted), these institutions are in their infancy and their roles are not fully established. The mediation role of regional organisations has grown considerably in recent years but these organisations lack capacity and coherence (ibid.). Another key challenge which has been highlighted in the case of Sri Lanka is the difficulty of engaging with non-stated armed actors in the context of the global war on terror and its aftermath. As Whitfield (2010a) has argued, Norway is well placed to respond to these challenges. It has a reputation as an 'honest broker', willing to commit resources to multilateral institutions such as the UN, regional or non-governmental organisations. In Sri Lanka, the fact that it was not a member of the EU and had not proscribed the LTTE was a key comparative advantage.

A broader set of questions relate to Norway and middle powers' roles in the face of broader geopolitical power shifts (in particular the growing geopolitical influence of China). Arguably the scope for countries such as Norway to lead efforts to re-align normative frameworks of international intervention or play a lead role in mediations is diminishing. There has been a backlash against western forms of intervention, regionally-led mediations are becoming more frequent, and new actors such as Turkey, Qatar, Indonesia and Brazil are emerging on the field of international mediation (Whitfield 2010). There is some consensus within and across the various streams of literature that the involvement of a broader range of external actors in peace processes is generally a positive development, although these trends also imply that contemporary international mediation efforts will need to be better coordinated. They also suggest that there may be less scope for western 'middle powers' such as Norway to play a prominent role on the international stage, or at least that these actors may need to invest greater diplomatic energy in engaging a range of regional and international actors (and in persuading conflict parties to accept their involvement). This is not a new challenge - Norway's past successes have relied heavily on this same capacity to engage others, particularly during the implementation phase (Bersagel 2008) - but it has become more urgent.

Legitimacy, perceptions and interests: understanding context

The importance of context for understanding the likelihood that an intervention (or a particular model of intervention) will be successful has been highlighted across a range of studies. Calls for more contextualised knowledge and understanding from donors are not new. What is new is the emphasis placed on specific forms of contextual understanding, which seek to reflect the growing complexity and multiple sources of legitimacy that function in contemporary peace processes. Several authors have argued that mediators should focus on developing an understanding of the 'complex interplay between conflict parties and regional and other external actors' (Beardsley & Lo 2009, Goodhand & Walton 2009, MacGinty 2010, Whitfield 2010, Bercovitch & Simpson 2010). This kind of analysis can help third parties actors to generate a cost-benefit analysis of mediation in any given context.

Another important theme in the literature is the role of legitimacy and perceptions in peace processes. There is a growing awareness that the way in which external actors are perceived plays a critical role in determining their effectiveness. This kind of message is particularly relevant to 'weak mediators' such as Norway that employ a 'hands-off' approach to mediation. By devolving much of the responsibility to local actors, it is more likely that these actors will be able to shape popular perceptions of the peace process. In Sri Lanka, other features of Norway's approach, such as the bi-polar approach to negotiations and the secrecy of its approach, allowed critical actors to generate political capital out of opposing Norway. For reasons outlined in the last section it is difficult to come to the conclusion that peace processes must always be more inclusive and less secretive (mediators, particularly weaker ones, often have very little say about the terms of their engagement). These findings nevertheless suggest that mediators should understand local actors' strategies of legitimation and be aware of the potential pitfalls of excluding domestic groups from the peace process. This is by no means an easy task. As McCartney (2006, 9) has demonstrated, 'co-option is a very insidious process and neither the third party nor the other parties may be aware that it is happening'.

Developing a better understanding of domestic parties' interests and motivations for engaging in peace processes appears to be a useful approach to tackling the growing problem of 'virtual peace processes', outlined in the last section. If conflict actors are engaging largely for strategic reasons, it may be important to recognise this from the start and perhaps choose not to engage or adapt the terms of engagement to greater buy-in. These recommendations have also been highlighted when external actors are using incentives and sanctions to support peacemaking processes. Barnes et al (2008) argue that incentives and conditionality are most likely to be successful when 'they are responsive to the parties own motivational structures'.

Although in many ways Norway has successfully established itself as a legitimate peacemaker at the international level (it is widely seen as an 'honest broker' without strategic interests that is willing to allow local, regional or multilateral actors to take 'ownership' of the processes it supports), as Whitfield (2010a) has argued (and the Sri Lankan case highlights quite acutely) 'many of the positive aspects of Norway's identity render it vulnerable to criticism that it is a remote, Northern, do-gooder, with little understanding of the dynamics of the conflicts of others'. Conflict actors are often more suspicious of third parties that intervene for apparently altruistic reasons – they find it easier to understand the involvement of external actors motivated by self-interest (McCartney 2006).

The literature then has highlighted some of the important pitfalls of an 'ownership' approach to mediation and some useful suggestions of how to mitigate these issues. In particular, it suggests that mediators pursuing this approach should ensure that interventions are based on detailed political analysis and a firm understanding of the interests of both internal and external actors. It should be remembered that the extent to which third party actors can generate this kind of comprehensive political analysis may be deliberately constrained by the main conflict parties by limiting a mediator's capacity to reach out to a wider range of domestic voices.

Capacity and Coordination

While there is a growing focus on building capacity in political analysis, most of the literature focuses on different kinds of capacity building. Authors such as Whitfield (2010, 2010a) emphasise the need to enhance the mediation role of multi-lateral and regional institutions. Countries such as Norway can assist by providing financial support and sharing their experiences with a new group of emerging specialists such as the Panel of the Wise (a unit within the African Union's Peace and Security Council) or the UN Mediation Support Unit (Nathan 2005, Whitfield 2010a). This shift towards a more co-ordinated, Southern-driven approach to mediation has been interpreted as an appropriate response to globalisation and a diffusion of global power and a new international political arena which leaves less room for small states. As Jan Egeland has argued, 'the time for the "lonely wolf" is coming to an end': mediation may have to be 'multilateralized again' (Bersagel 2008, 88). There is some evidence that the need for a multi-lateral approach is particularly relevant to the peace implementation phase, while the solo role may continue to have more relevance in getting parties to the table and forging an agreement (ibid.).

While bolstering the work of these kinds of institutions appears sensible given the changes in global politics since the end of the Cold War, there are a number of potential dangers with the approach to mediation advocated here. First, large multi-lateral institutions lack the flexibility

and adaptability that underpinned Norway's successful peacemaking efforts (Greminger 2007). Flexible funding mechanisms, which included channelling money through NGOs, for example, enabled Norway to initiate secret talks in Guatemala, the Middle East and Sudan (Bersagel 2008). The construction of large bureaucracies potentially undermines mediators' capacity to adapt institutional arrangements according to context, an approach that has proved useful for the Norwegians (*ibid.*). Bureaucratization also appears to downgrade the influence of individuals and inter-personal relationships in contributing to successful outcomes (particularly in Norway's case).

Second, calls for the devolution of responsibility away from individual states towards multilateral or regional bodies have been accompanied by a call for the field of peacemaking to be professionalised (Nathan 2005, Whitfield 2010a). While providing greater resources and training for specialist peacemaking institutions and their staff may be desirable, much depends on the content of that training. Third, there is potentially a tension between an approach that emphasises the development of context-specific political knowledge outlined above and training that encourages generic peacemaking skills and a more formalised and technical approach to these issues. The Mediation Support Unit, for example, aims to draw together experiences from different mediation contexts, and to develop operational mediation tools that can be disseminated to members. The assumption that effective peacemaking is based on technical skills is challenged by Norway's own experience, which tailored its engagement to context (Bersagel 2008) and where success was often underpinned by close personal relationships and an informal approach.¹² The quest for a 'textbook mediator' may be misplaced since success can emerge from a range of styles and tactics, and is often underpinned by personal characteristics rather than technical skills (Potter 2006). Although in any given peace process there is usually some division of labour between specialist mediators and thematic or country experts, there is nevertheless a question about how resources in these two areas should be balanced.

Third, the creation of specialist peacemaking institutions creates incentives for these institutions to demonstrate success, which may accentuate the tendency for mediators to focus on success stories, both operationally and analytically. This has implications both about the kinds of lessons that are learnt about peacemaking and about the degree to which peacemakers will be willing to take risks.

Efforts to improve the coordination of peace efforts are probably less contentious than calls for professionalisation of the mediation field. The problem of competitive peacemaking has been highlighted by a number of authors as an emerging problem (Crocker 2007, Whitfield 2010a) and as Barnes et al have argued peacemaking strategies will tend to be most effective when external actors prioritise peacebuilding over other interests and when there is some strategic coherence among external actors, perhaps imposed by some kind of coordination mechanism (Barnes et al 2008). Which types of coordination mechanisms are most appropriate is more difficult to ascertain. As Whitfield has shown there has been a dramatic rise in more ad-hoc, informal 'groups of friends' mechanisms: Norway has played a prominent role in several of these including the Ad-Hoc Liaison Committee for the Palestinian Territories and the International Contact Group in Somalia. Norway has also been the largest per-capita

¹² Bersagel (2008) also notes that the mediation efforts of several NGO leaders involved in Norwegian peace negotiations were not negatively affected by a lack of diplomatic skills

contributor to various UN peacebuilding missions and the UN Peacebuilding Commission. There is some debate about whether formal or informal mechanisms of coordination are most effective and different arrangements have had mixed records of success (Whitfield 2007). One danger of the former approach is a tendency to cast these coordination dilemmas as technical issues, when in fact they are related to emerging tensions between new and established powers in the international political system. Arguably, the informal, ad hoc approach is more likely to navigate these tensions effectively.

One key issue facing Norway therefore is the extent to which it shifts the balance in its current peacemaking efforts away from a direct mediation role towards support for specialist mediation institutions or multi-lateral bodies with better capacity to coordinate multi-dimensional peacemaking efforts. A sub-question concerns the balance between pursuing improved coordination through a more formal approach (MSU or UN peacebuilding missions) or informal mechanisms (such as groups of friends).

Commitment and focus

Both the quantitative and the practitioner research has reached a consensus view that greater commitment from external actors, both in terms of the level and the duration of support, has a positive influence on likelihood and sustainability of peace (Beardsley 2009, Paris 2004, Greminger 2007, Conciliation Resources 2009, Whitfield 2010). Norway's capacity to commit large funds to peacemaking and to commit to long-term engagement in contexts where there are few signs of success, has been widely viewed as one of its most important comparative advantages as a mediator – long-term commitment can in itself build legitimacy, trust and knowledge, and whilst these capacities take considerable time and resources to establish, they can be lost relatively easily. Nevertheless, there are tensions and trade-offs associated with decisions about where resources are allocated. As Whitfield (2010a) has argued, there may be more strategic sense in focusing on countries whose resolution may help to 'unlock' wider regional conflict formations (Ethiopia and Eritrea), or to prioritise early engagement in countries in process of transition (such as Cuba). One final important issue facing Norway is how to balance existing commitments to countries where it has had a long-standing involvement, and transferring resources and manpower to new or emerging conflicts.

Another key issue emerging from the literature is the need for more participatory peacemaking. Many practitioners stress that the involvement of civil society actors in the peacebuilding process is the only way to ensure sustainable peace – these actors can help by setting priorities and conferring legitimacy on the process (Conciliation Resources 2009, HD Centre 2010).¹³ Clearly the facilitative approach to mediation pursued by Norway implies that it will often lack the space to promote this kind of transformative agenda, but there remain questions about whether it should try when the circumstances allow and how forcefully it should push this agenda.

Conclusions

¹³ Some practitioners also oppose this expanded peacemaking agenda (see HD Centre 2010).

This final section has raised a number of broad challenges and implications arising from this study. It has highlighted the growing complexity in international peacemaking, the emerging challenge of 'competitive peacemaking', and changes in the scope for middle powers to perform mediation roles. All of these issues have generated particular issues for mediators who pursued a facilitative approach to mediation. Some key recommendations and conclusions were identified:

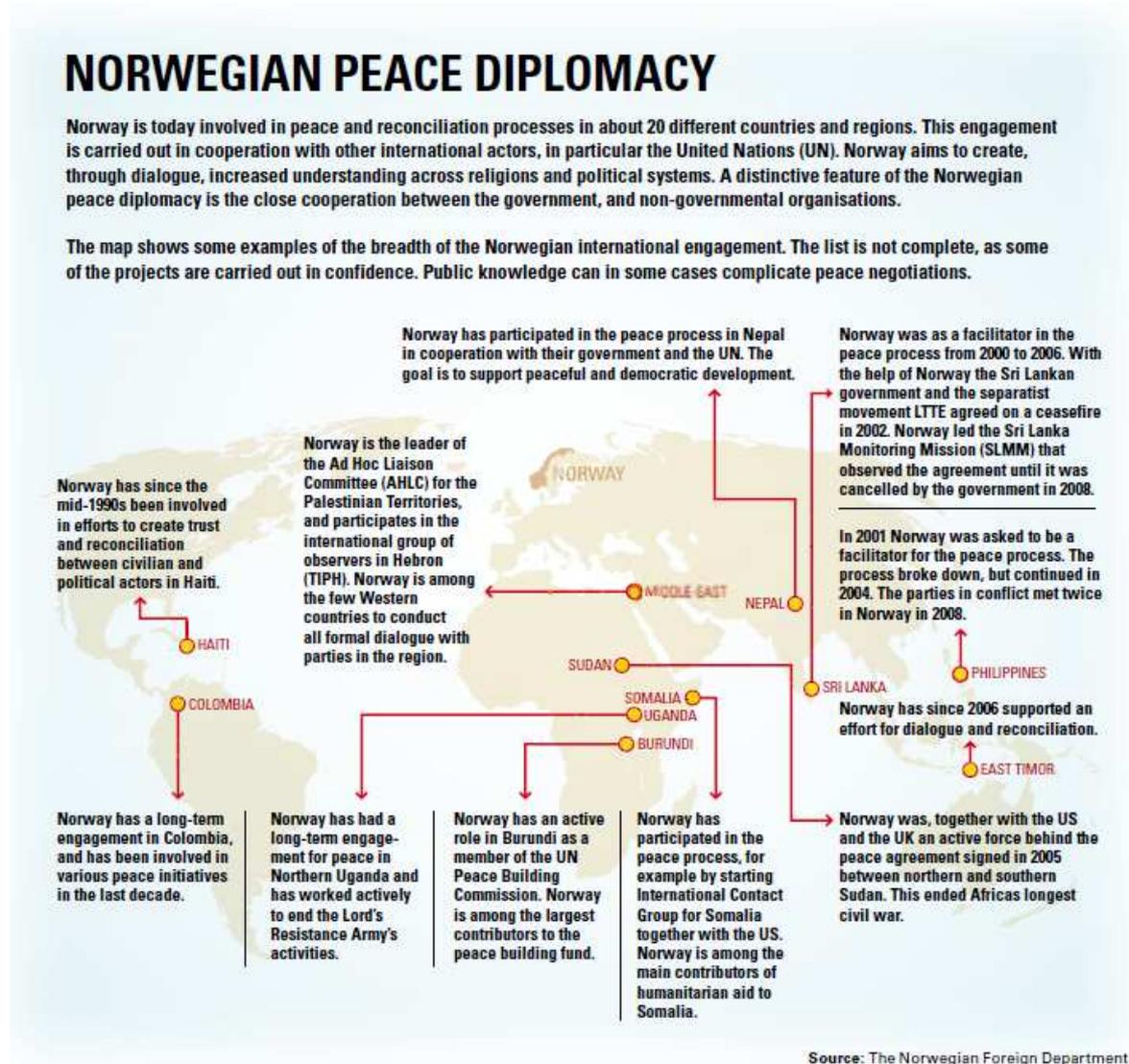
- Mediation is a relatively effective tool for generating peace agreements. Broadly speaking, its effectiveness seems to be improving as more resources are committed, more actors involved and interventions are becoming more multi-dimensional.
- Long-term commitment of third-parties to a conflict appears to be broadly beneficial.
- Like all forms of intervention, third party mediation carries potential costs as well as benefits.
- Interventions should be based on detailed political analysis and a firm understanding of the interests of both internal and external actors. Third parties should undertake rigorous cost-benefit analysis before embarking on any mediation effort.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on understanding how perceptions can influence the outcomes of peace processes and assessing conflict parties' commitment to peacemaking.
- There is a greater need for investment and capacity-building of institutions and mechanisms to co-ordinate third party mediation (both at the UN and amongst regional organisations).

This section also raised a number of issues and questions concerning Norway's future peacemaking role:

- What kind of capacity-building? Arguably capacity based on deep, contextually-specific knowledge and understanding is more useful than generic technical support.
- Rethinking the 'lone wolf' approach? Shifting geopolitical circumstances and the diffusion of international decision making necessitate a rethink of Norway's peacemaking role. What balance should be struck between maintaining capacity as a lead mediator and supporting multi-lateral and regional bodies?
- Formal or informal co-ordination? While there is a clear need for improved co-ordination, there is some debate about what kind of co-ordination is needed. A more informal approach to co-ordination may provide a better means of navigating emerging tensions between established and new powers. More formal, institutional solutions may sacrifice key characteristics such as informality, flexibility and adaptability.
- Where to commit and which approach? There are potential trade-offs between long-term engagement and a more flexible approach that is more responsive to new and emerging conflicts. Should Norway seek to promote a more transformative approach to peacemaking when conditions allow?
- Whether to intervene? The case for third party mediation is not clear cut and there is a chance that intervention may do more harm than good. In some cases there may be a strong likelihood that a third party can have a beneficial impact. In other cases it is likely that mediation will do more harm than good.

Appendix 1:

Map of Norwegian Peacebuilding Efforts:



Source: Mandag Morgen, 2009, 'Norway leads on soft power diplomacy' (Available from <http://www.mandagmorgen.no/norway-leads-soft-power-diplomacy>).

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