

Introduction

Lia Kent, Srinjoy Bose, Joanne Wallis,
Sinclair Dinnen and Miranda Forsyth

Hybridity as a conceptual tool has long been discussed in a range of disciplines including the biological sciences, social sciences and even literature and literary criticism. In its literal sense, and as used in biology, the term ‘hybrid’ refers to the product of a process of mixing or combining two or more distinct elements. The concept originated in the biological and zoological sciences, where it was appropriated into the highly controversial pseudoscientific theories of race that informed debates about European imperialism in the nineteenth century. In the social sciences, hybridity later became prominent in discussions of identity,¹ culture,² economic and power relations, and political systems,³ and has been characterised as the outcome of encounters between hegemonic practices and attempts to decolonise peoples, territories and knowledge. In the field of postcolonial studies, for example, hybridity was first articulated to help understand complex processes of sociopolitical interaction and relationships⁴ between colonial powers and colonised subjects. Critical of the coloniser’s or intervener’s aims to reform the ‘Other’ (that is, attempts to mould the colonised in the image of the coloniser or intervener), Bhabha stressed themes such as resistance to domination and the agential power of the colonised or subaltern subjects.⁵ Similarly, Kapoor argued that hybridity recognises the strategies of those who resist overt and subtle forms of

1 Barry, *Beginning Theory*; Young, *Colonial Desire*.

2 Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back*; Ashcroft et al., *Post-colonial Studies*; Bhabha, ‘Signs Taken for Wonders’; Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*; Spivak, ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’.

3 Boege et al., *On Hybrid Political Orders and Emerging States*.

4 Bhabha, ‘Signs Taken for Wonders’.

5 Ibid.; Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*.

colonisation.⁶ This framework was subsequently developed and applied to international relations and development literatures, specifically studies in conflict resolution, intervention and peacebuilding.⁷

In conflict resolution, hybridity implies a combination of elements from different—seemingly incompatible and inharmonious—world views. A hybrid order comprises a mixed structure of informal and formal institutions of power. Hybridity is ‘a state of affairs in which liberal and illiberal norms, institutions, and actors coexist’.⁸ Viewed in this way, the ‘state’ is only one institutional actor and source of power among others within a ‘hybrid political order’, and ‘state order’ is only one of a number of competing orders claiming to provide security, frameworks for conflict regulation and other forms of welfare provision.⁹ Today, as Millar has noted, conflict resolution (and the associated concepts of peacebuilding, development, transnational justice and so on) lies at the heart of most debates on intervention, with many scholars problematising the roles of external interveners and local agential power.¹⁰ More specifically, the term hybridity has been used in critiques of the spate of ‘liberal’ peace interventions that occurred during the second half of the 1990s and the first decade of the new millennium. Focusing on the externally driven, state-centric, technical and formulaic orientation of these interventions and their neglect of local contexts, some recent critiques have adopted the notion of ‘hybrid peace’ to denote the interactive and contested quality of the processes involved in such encounters.¹¹ This usage seeks to capture the ‘intertwined relationship between the global and the local, the formal and the informal and the liberal and the illiberal’¹² that characterises the actual practice of contemporary peacebuilding, as opposed to the assumptions of its underpinning (liberal peace) theory. It is argued that the outcome of these interactions—the ‘hybrid peace’—is both a more accurate depiction of the complex realities on the ground, and more legitimate than the

6 Kapoor, ‘Acting in a Tight Spot’, 568.

7 See Mac Ginty, *International Peacebuilding and Local Resistance*; Mac Ginty, ‘Hybrid Peace: How Does Hybrid Peace Come About?’; Richmond, ‘De-romanticising the Local, De-mystifying the International’.

8 Belloni, ‘Hybrid Peace Governance’, 22.

9 Boege et al., *On Hybrid Political Orders and Emerging States*; Clements et al., ‘State Building Reconsidered’; Donais, *Peacebuilding and Local Ownership*; Richmond, *A Post-liberal Peace*.

10 Millar, ‘Disaggregating Hybridity’.

11 Mac Ginty, ‘Gilding the Lily?’; Mac Ginty, ‘Hybrid Peace: The Interaction between Top-Down and Bottom-Up Peace’.

12 Björkdahl and Höglund, ‘Precarious Peacebuilding’, 293.

liberal peace because it taps into local agency and knowledge, thereby broadening the peace constituency and more effectively capturing the dynamic and interactive processes involved.¹³

The term hybridity has also gained significance in policy discourse and practice set against the backdrop of growing international interventionism in recent decades.¹⁴ A notable example is the *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development*, in which the World Bank acknowledged that in those parts of the global South in which state institutions are weak and much of the population lives according to local sociopolitical beliefs and practices, it might be necessary for international actors to move away from unilinear processes of institutional transfer from the global North and instead adopt flexible ‘best fit’ approaches that draw upon ‘combinations of state, private sector, faith based, traditional, and community structures for service delivery’.¹⁵ These developments suggest there has been a shift away from seeing local sociopolitical practices and institutions primarily as hurdles or spoilers to achieving a universal model of liberal democracy, towards a greater recognition of their potential strengths in advancing larger goals of peacebuilding and development.

The growing prominence of the hybridity concept in the conflict resolution and peacebuilding literatures, and in policy discourse and practice, helps to explain the current emphasis on interactions between the ‘international’ and the ‘local’. The hybrid approach was introduced to unsettle the statist,¹⁶ Eurocentric and linear logic of liberal peacebuilding, and locates peace both in the agency of the local, and in the hybrid formations of liberal and non-liberal institutions and values resulting from such encounters.¹⁷ Hybridity denotes ‘how local actors attempt

13 Ibid.

14 Chesterman, ‘Ownership in Theory and Practice’, Paris, *At War’s End*.

15 World Bank, *World Development Report 2011*, 106.

16 According to Nadarajah and Rampton, the hybrid approach characterises international peacebuilding as coercive, top-down, technocratic and blind to the conditions of the local environment. Thus, liberal peacebuilding is held to favour the interests of statist (those who favour the interests of local elites and international interveners) rather than the majority who suffer the weight of both conflict and peace engagements. The latter are systematically alienated from statebuilding and peacebuilding processes. This renders the liberal peace illegitimate and drives various resistances that make impossible its advance and sustainability. Nadarajah and Rampton, ‘The Limits of Hybridity’, 54.

17 Ibid., 49–50.

to respond to, resist and ultimately reshape peace initiatives through interactions with international actors and institutions'.¹⁸ Nadarajah and Rampton argue that hybridity allows the 'liberal peace' to be:

transcended and its narrow ethnocentric boundaries, technocratic tendencies and fixation with state and institution-building overcome to produce a more empathetic, responsive, culturally sensitive and ultimately radical peace encompassing the local, indigenous and quotidian experience, especially that of the subaltern categories, within conflict-affected spaces and societies.¹⁹

As noted above, hybrid processes arise from resistance to hegemony. The resistance may manifest itself in outright violence, active reform of introduced practices, co-optation and so on. Some within the policy and academic communities have tended to perceive obstacles to peace as lying primarily in deficiencies in local and state institutions in contemporary contexts of interventions.²⁰ But does this view not smack of older and discredited colonial epistemologies? Richmond reminds us that grassroots-level actors often have a more nuanced understanding of the limitations and potential of both their own frameworks and those promulgated by international authorities.²¹ He argues that blaming local actors for their own ills and conditionality is common among interveners, and that this imbues these interventions with a neocolonial character.²² Others, drawing on Spivak's work,²³ have argued that the colonised/intervened are active agents in creating, maintaining and modifying the colonial and postcolonial sociopolitical orders. They argue that local actors can be equipped to play an active role in statebuilding and peacebuilding processes and discourse. Quoting Duffield²⁴ and Richmond,²⁵ Wallis remarks that 'critiques converge on the emerging consensus that statebuilders should seek to engage in "unscripted conversations"²⁶ with ordinary people, about the design of their state'.²⁷ Writing in a postcolonial studies tradition, Bhabha is somewhat more critical, arguing that material power

18 Richmond and Mitchell, 'Introduction—Towards a Post-liberal Peace', 8.

19 Nadarajah and Rampton, 'The Limits of Hybridity', 53.

20 See, for example, Paris, 'Saving Liberal Peacebuilding'.

21 Richmond, 'The Dilemmas of a Hybrid Peace'.

22 Ibid., 51.

23 See Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?'.

24 Duffield, *Development, Security and Unending War*.

25 Richmond, 'Becoming Liberal, Unbecoming Liberalism'; Richmond, 'A Post-liberal Peace: Eireanism and the Everyday'.

26 Duffield, *Development, Security and Unending War*, 234.

27 Wallis, 'A Liberal—Local Hybrid Peace Project in Action?', 736.

imbalances between the (typically Western) hegemon and (typically non-Western) subaltern ensures that the latter are structurally incapable of modifying existing power dynamics and relations.²⁸

Alongside the growing prominence of hybridity as a concept is an emerging critique of hybridity.²⁹ One aspect of the latter is its focus on the paradoxical ways in which the concept of hybridity can often serve to reinscribe the problematic binaries it seeks to overcome. Discussions of hybridity have often focused on the relationship between the ‘international’ and ‘local’, characterising their interactions in dichotomous terms: ‘liberal’ versus ‘illiberal’, ‘modern’ versus ‘traditional’, ‘Western’ versus ‘non-Western’, ‘state’ versus ‘non-state’, ‘coercion’ versus ‘resistance’, ‘insurgent’ versus ‘government’, and ‘peace’ versus ‘conflict’. Such binaries are unhelpful³⁰—they homogenise categories, oversimplify complex contexts and milieus,³¹ and essentialise local (and international) groupings.³² By contrast, several scholars have highlighted the *multiplicity of outcomes* that can occur when two entities meet and interact. This critique also points to the extent to which, given the historical influences of colonialism and globalisation, both ‘international’ and ‘local’ actors and institutions are themselves the products of earlier processes of hybridisation. Pitting the international against the local therefore distorts the multifarious and continuous processes of interaction that characterise all human and societal exchange. Pieterse, cognisant of the role of globalisation, comments that hybridity indicates profound changes brought about by mobility, migration and multiculturalism.³³ In other words, hybridity reminds us that categories are the site of contestation and negotiation, yet also stresses the fluidity within and between categories. Anthropologists have long argued that local practices are never static; they are constantly evolving,³⁴ particularly when encountering the forces of intervention and globalisation. Petersen argues that it is the shift away from these binaries and absolutes that appears as the primary appeal of hybridity.³⁵ While nuanced analyses seek to do

28 Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 330.

29 Chandler, ‘Peacebuilding and the Politics of Non-linearity’; Millar, ‘Disaggregating Hybridity’; Newman, ‘A Human Security Peace-building Agenda’; Peterson, ‘A Conceptual Unpacking of Hybridity’.

30 de Guevara, ‘Introduction: The Limits of Statebuilding’; Peterson, ‘A Conceptual Unpacking of Hybridity’; Heathershaw, ‘Conclusions: Neither Built Nor Formed’.

31 Moreiras, ‘Hybridity and Double Consciousness’; Millar, ‘Disaggregating Hybridity’.

32 Peterson, ‘“Rule of Law” Initiatives’; Peterson, ‘A Conceptual Unpacking of Hybridity’.

33 Pieterse, ‘Hybridity, So What?’, 221.

34 Brown, ‘Security, Development and the Nation-building Agenda’, 155.

35 Peterson, ‘A Conceptual Unpacking of Hybridity’, 12.

justice to these complexities, contemporary usage of the term ‘hybridity’—accentuated by the limitations of our available vocabulary—often serves inadvertently to reinscribe binaries even as it seeks to unpack them.

A second criticism relates to the frameworks used to discuss hybridity. Millar suggests that the literature on hybridity can be characterised as either ‘prescriptive’ or ‘descriptive’.³⁶ Descriptive accounts explain what hybridity is (and isn’t) and how it comes about. This usage of hybridity offers a mechanism for viewing the outcomes of interchange between external actors and complex local contexts, as well as for understanding the critical role of local agency in mediating external interventions. Prescriptive accounts, on the other hand, examine how hybridity can be purposefully *designed* into statebuilding, peacebuilding and governance projects.³⁷ Many have warned that prescriptive accounts give licence to external intervention, including ambitious and intrusive projects of social engineering.³⁸ More importantly, perhaps, critical scholars have expressed doubt as to whether hybridity can be harnessed to implement stated objectives and goals; some go so far as to suggest interveners should not even attempt to harness hybridity.³⁹ Millar is also critical of prescriptive approaches, arguing that ‘prescriptive hybridity assumes that administering hybrid institutions will foster predictable peace-promoting experiences’.⁴⁰ Others stress the importance of prescriptive hybridity, arguing, for example, that customary norms, values and institutions need to be incorporated into new structures designed to promote peace, stability and development if the goals of creating capable, effective and legitimate states are to be realised.⁴¹ They argue that while it is a necessary starting point, a merely descriptive use of hybridity—describing how things are—fails to address more fundamental questions about the power imbalances and inequality underlying particular hybrid configurations and how these might be overcome.⁴² Politically, a hybrid approach considers hybridity as a space where local and international practices are continuously negotiated in interactions of differential power; hence, when merely observing the pluralistic outcomes of these interactions, the underlying differentials in power that animate these outcomes are often glossed over.

36 Millar, ‘Disaggregating Hybridity’, 501.

37 Ibid.; Peterson, ‘A Conceptual Unpacking of Hybridity’.

38 Mac Ginty and Richmond, ‘The Fallacy of Constructing Hybrid Political Orders’.

39 Visoka, ‘Three Levels of Hybridisation Practices’; see also Hameiri and Jones, this volume.

40 Millar, ‘Disaggregating Hybridity’, 502.

41 Clements et al., ‘State Building Reconsidered’, 48.

42 Pieterse, *Ethnicities and Global Multiculture*.

What these critiques highlight is that the use of hybridity in both descriptive and prescriptive accounts can serve to mask underlying injustices and power differentials between international and local actors, as well as within each of these spheres. A purely institutionalist approach that privileges the processes and outcomes of institutional interaction can thus render them devoid of their inherently political character. For example, a pure focus on the hybrid features of a hybrid court can detract attention from the constrained political circumstances in which these courts are established or from questions about whose interests these models serve in practice. There are also concerns that attempts to instrumentalise ‘hybrid governance’ can be appropriated as part of broader neoliberal agendas and used to hollow out already ‘weak’ states by outsourcing the provision of public goods to international actors, private providers or, indeed, to poor communities themselves.⁴³ Likewise, there are well-founded concerns about ‘romanticising the local’ and downplaying significant power differentials at the local level based on gender, age, ethnic or other significant divisions. All of this suggests that if the hybridity concept is used without sufficient attention to the power dynamics and conflictual elements in the specific context in question, it can ultimately serve to reproduce existing patterns of hierarchy, domination and prevailing relations of power.

History, power and scale

Against the background of the growing prominence of the hybridity concept and the emerging critiques, it seemed to us as a group of scholars engaged in these issues that questions of history, power and scale had not been adequately examined. The seminar series, which along with the workshop provided an important part of the genesis of this edited collection, set out to probe these questions in greater detail. For example, we asked presenters to consider whether hybridity describes a relatively new undertaking, or whether it merely crystallises processes of interaction and syncretism that have deep historical roots. We similarly challenged them to reflect on whether focusing on hybridity as a potential ‘solution’ to enduring problems of conflict and instability obscures important questions of power and agency that are inherent in contested sites of institutional transformation, thereby risking potentially unintended and

43 Meagher, ‘The Strength of Weak States?’.

undesirable outcomes. Finally, we asked presenters to analyse the role of scale in relation to hybridity, including whether and how interactions play out differently at local, national, regional and international levels.

Participants at the workshop were asked to reflect on the extent to which their work resonates with one or more of six central themes that had emerged during the seminar series. The first of these was 'plurality'. Many speakers at the seminar series noted the need to broaden the conventional state-centric focus of disciplines such as political science, international relations, development studies and law in order to recognise a more comprehensive spectrum of state and non-state actors, institutions and practices. We asked speakers to consider whether this plurality poses difficulties in terms of disentangling different scales of intervention spanning 'local', 'national' and 'transnational' levels. How might analyses of hybridity work to decentre the conventional focus on the state? How might they adequately recognise the complex of linkages, relationships, frictions and shifting scales between international and local institutions, actors and discourses in particular contexts? Might these relationships and frictions also contain emancipatory or generative potential?

The second key theme that emerged during the seminar series was that of 'history'. The role of history, including colonialism, was identified repeatedly as playing a fundamental role in the determination of present-day relationships between institutions in postcolonial societies and, indeed, in many cases, their very existence. Much analysis of hybridity in disciplines outside history, however, tends to be 'history blind'. Policy discourse, in particular, is often narrowly focused on current circumstances and priorities with scant attention to historical precedent. The problematic historical uses of hybridity in the discipline of anthropology and its unhelpful connotations of essentialism was also raised. Might a more historically grounded approach problematise and enrich the concept of hybridity?

The third key theme was 'power'. The prevalence, but also the potential invisibility, of power dynamics within and between a wide range of groups emerged as a key theme in the seminar series. Some speakers noted that the concept of hybridity can mask underlying injustices and power differentials between international and local actors, as well as within each of these spheres. In this regard, there was an echoing of the concerns raised in the emergent critique of hybridity including a tendency to romanticise the 'local' and neglect local power differences. Other speakers noted that

international and national actors and institutions disproportionately shape the terms of hybrid arrangements because of structural imbalances in the distribution of power and control of resources. Might it be possible for analyses of hybridity to pay more attention to conflictual elements and power dynamics? While other orders exist, should the particular power and resources of the state be analysed differently?

The fourth theme was that of ‘scale’, drawing, in particular, on the insights of human geographers, and was one that resonated with many speakers from different disciplines. Consistent with the ‘local turn’ in peacebuilding scholarship, much of the hybridity literature has an explicit orientation towards the most local level in contexts of intervention. Given continuing assumptions about the centrality of the nation-state as the normal way of organising social and political life, this growing sensibility to the significance of subnational scales provides a welcome corrective. We nevertheless need to avoid being constrained by artificial categorisations of space and scale that obscure the realities of the flow of ideas, people, resources and politics across all such categories including ‘the local’. While assumptions about the centrality of states remain deeply entrenched in disciplines like international relations, political science, law and development studies, the lived realities of contemporary globalisation are much less static and spatially fragmented owing to the dynamic flows across what many continue to view as bounded spaces. Analysing these fluid and multilayered complexities requires a new spatial imaginary freed from such artificial boundaries.

The fifth theme was that of ‘reinscribing binaries’. Another point raised during the seminar series was the fact that the hybridity concept often reinscribes problematic binaries even as it seeks to unpack them (for instance between the global/local). Given the historical influences of colonialism, globalisation and intervention, it is often argued that actors and institutions are continuously negotiating and renegotiating a range of locally derived and non-localised norms and in this sense are already ‘hybrid’. Does this suggest the need for a different term? Do terms such as pluralism, syncretism, the third space, intersections or friction offer more theoretically adequate alternatives to the hybridity concept?

The sixth and final theme was ‘conceptual tools’. During the seminar series, many speakers identified that ambiguities exist in relation to the ways in which the hybridity concept is ‘operationalised’ through policies in areas including rule of law and statebuilding and peacebuilding. In some

ways, the most superficial of these insights has been exploited by those driving reforms as a way of co-opting more resources and undermining potential opposition. However, the more profound insights about the need to engage more equitably with systems, institutions and individuals operating on the basis of fundamentally different principles, values and world views has been overlooked. We asked speakers to consider what conceptual tools might enable the translation of the hybridity concept into more meaningful and equitable policy development.

The chapters

Reflecting themes raised in the chapters, we have divided this book into four sections. The first, 'Theorising Hybridity', contains six chapters which interrogate the conceptual foundations of hybridity. Anne Brown's chapter sets the theoretical scene for the book, as she traces the 'family trees' of the concept of hybridity, ranging from biology to postcolonial studies. While Brown notes that neither the concept nor phenomenon of hybridity is new, she describes how it emerged in the context of specific debates about statebuilding and peacebuilding to bring fresh attention to the 'dense layering of interactions, relations and institutions that make up political community and constitute the basis of state formation'. She analyses how hybridity has been used in three primary ways in the statebuilding and peacebuilding literature: descriptively, aspirationally and instrumentally. Brown concludes by proposing more dialogical ways of seeking to understand peacebuilding that are grounded in 'processes and habits of open-ended exchange'.

Paul Jackson and Peter Albrecht's chapter interrogates the concept of hybridity by focusing on the 'power of local actors to resist the imposition of liberal statebuilding processes'. They are particularly interested in including 'the political' into analyses of hybridity, in order to recognise how hybridity during statebuilding and peacebuilding can be 'moderated by the political power of local elites'. They are also concerned that much of the hybridity literature 'reifies and idealises "the local"', thereby overlooking the power structures and political processes of inclusion and exclusion that they involve.

Charles Hunt's chapter analyses the concept of hybridity from the perspective of a relational approach that recognises the multilayered nature of sociopolitical orders in conflict-affected societies. Using a case

study of Liberia, Hunt illustrates the complexity of these societies and the importance of analysing the relationships between different providers of order, security and justice. He concludes by arguing for a relational approach to hybridity based on a 'performative-based, liminal and integrative understanding of hybrid sociopolitical order'.

Miranda Forsyth's chapter considers whether the concept of hybridity should be used normatively as well as descriptively. She proposes that hybridity should be developed to 'answer questions about how legal/regulatory systems *ought to be*, as well as describing how they currently work'. Forsyth then makes proposals concerning how this might occur, identifying three starting points: 'focus on the values and objectives at stake, concentrate on the processes of change, and analyse the relationships between and within different legal orders'. She concludes that developing the concept along normative lines can 'facilitate change agents in helping to steer hybrid legal orders in positive and emancipatory directions'.

Joanne Wallis's chapter traces how a sense of humility within Western governments and international institutions regarding liberal peacebuilding has facilitated the emergence of the concept of hybridity in statebuilding and peacebuilding in order to achieve 'good enough' outcomes. She considers how hybridity has operated during peacebuilding in Timor-Leste and identifies a number of challenges it has faced. She concludes by arguing there is evidence that many Timorese desire a role for modern liberal state institutions 'as a response to the inequality, exclusions and injustices that can occur under local practices and institutions', and consequently that while the concept of hybridity should not be abandoned, building liberal state institutions may retain a place in contemporary peacebuilding.

Shahar Hameiri and Lee Jones's chapter takes a more radical stance, arguing that the concept of hybridity is 'unfit for purpose and must be entirely jettisoned' in the study of statebuilding and peacebuilding. They argue that the hybridity literature has been 'unable to escape binaries based on dichotomised categories of the illiberal-local and liberal-international', which they conclude 'distorts empirical analysis'. Instead, they propose an alternative framework based on a Gramscian understanding of the state and other governance institutions as 'condensations of social power relations'. They argue that this approach helps to recognise the 'politics of scale' of 'hierarchised social, political

and economic territorial spaces', including how power and resources are distributed among different scales during statebuilding and peacebuilding interventions.

Section two of the book consists of five chapters that engage with the concept of hybridity in the postconflict settings of Bougainville, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Mozambique respectively, with reference to broader processes of peacebuilding and statebuilding in these different contexts. Drawing on extensive fieldwork in Bougainville, Volker Boege's chapter proposes a relational understanding of hybridisation in peacebuilding as a fluid and dynamic process of interaction between 'local' and 'international' actors. His chapter documents the extent to which Bougainvillean agency was able to mediate and shape the implementation and outcomes of the international peacebuilding agenda. This includes the ways in which 'local' agency was able to appropriate the resources of the latter according to Bougainvillean's priorities, logic and understanding of the islands' unique political economy. Boege also reflects on the impacts of these interactions on the international actors and how these contributed to the 'turn to the local' in regional peacebuilding practice and the emergence of a more reflective discourse around 'relational sensibility'.

Sinclair Dinnen and Matthew Allen use a case study of rural Solomon Islands to reflect critically on the value of 'hybridity' as a concept for understanding and engaging with the complex and ongoing processes of state formation—as distinct from statebuilding—underway in this island nation. While seeing value in engaging with 'local' forms of authority and regulation in localities where state presence is weak, Dinnen and Allen share many of the concerns raised by critics of 'the local turn' in peacebuilding and development. They also point out that attempts to instrumentalise hybridity are by no means confined to international and national-level actors but are also apparent in the strategies of local-level actors. Their chapter emphasises the multiple scales at which processes of hybridisation take place, with an explicit critique of the privileging of 'the local' scale in much of the hybridity literature. The authors also question assumptions that local-level actors naturally prefer local forms of authority and organisation over state and transnational forms. On the contrary, they argue that many rural Solomon Islanders are demanding greater engagement with Weberian-like institutions that are perceived—rightly or wrongly—as being more emancipated from what are viewed as the corrosive and corrupting influence of local social and power relations.

Drawing on her research into transitional justice in Timor-Leste, Lia Kent's starting point is the need to pay more attention to the ways in which individuals and communities deal with the legacies of the violent past outside formal institutional contexts and dispute resolution forums. She argues that these subtler actions and practices are critical to ongoing processes of reconstructing social life in postconflict Timor-Leste and are better understood as part of a process of 'everyday' reconciliation where those with limited power 'make do' with resources, tactics and possibilities. In doing so, she seeks to widen the scope of what has hitherto been encompassed in analyses of hybrid transitional justice by proposing a richer conception that goes beyond a focus on institutions, structures and conflict resolution 'events' and pays more attention to the ongoing process of rebuilding everyday life and renegotiating relationships following conflict. Central to Kent's conception of hybrid transitional justice is a relational understanding of individuals as 'socially constituted' and 'attached to others'. As she argues, this more dynamic understanding is particularly relevant in kinship-based societies such as Timor-Leste, where maintaining good relations is not only important to an individual's social standing, but is absolutely critical to sustaining viable social life, security and economic survival.

Victor Igreja's chapter examines what he terms 'post-hybridity bargaining' and 'embodied accountability' in postwar Mozambique, where he has undertaken periodic fieldwork over the past two decades. Following the country's protracted and bloody civil war (1976–1992), state authorities took no steps to hold the perpetrators of serious acts of violence accountable for their actions. Igreja's focus on 'post-hybridity bargaining' examines the participation of war survivors, community leaders and spiritual agents in struggles for accountability and justice in particular rural localities. Sometimes this involves negotiations with individual representatives of state authority, such as police officers. At other times, this kind of bargaining entails ignoring or manipulating state agents and each other in order to pursue personal and more culturally meaningful forms of accountability and justice. State authorities similarly shift between taking diverse community actors seriously to ignoring and manipulating them, and, on occasion, violently abusing them. For Igreja, the continuously shifting and unpredictable quality of 'post-hybridity bargaining' serves to unsettle notions of hybridity that assume a relatively stable state of co-existence and overlap between different political orders. Any attempt to formalise or render more predictable the outcomes of such fluid and

malleable processes of negotiation is fraught with risk, not least given that these very qualities are key sources of social innovation and change. In his view, policy engagements in this area must themselves be experimental in order to have any chance of success.

The last chapter in this section, by James Scamبارy and Todd Wassel, returns the reader to Timor-Leste and the challenges of national and international peacebuilding efforts, particularly following serious disturbances in Dili in 2006, in such a dynamic social landscape. It draws on the practical fieldwork experiences of both authors in Timor-Leste over the past ten years. Echoing key strands in the emergent critique of hybrid peacebuilding, Scamبارy and Wassel highlight the limited understanding of Timor-Leste's complex, nonlinear and rapidly changing social systems, as well as the highly localised scale and endemic nature of conflict in this country. Using a case study approach to trace the evolution of peacebuilding efforts since 2006, the authors strike an optimistic note in illustrating how recent initiatives have been based on nuanced analyses of local forms of authority and organisation and, indeed, different forms of hybridity. These efforts have met with some success in reinvigorating community networks going beyond preconceived ideas about 'traditional leadership' and are open to engaging with a variety of other actors including clandestine associations, youth groups and church organisations.

The third section consists of two chapters that examine hybridity in relation to broader issues of security and politics. Drawing on the canons of (Western) war studies, as well as contemporary strategic and security studies, Gavin Mount's chapter adopts a 'hybrid sensibility' to explore the blurred boundaries between war and peace. His survey of the canonical texts shows how a reflexive analysis of dominant binary categories of 'war' and 'peace' can be used to elucidate the hybrid dynamics of power, legitimacy and identity in conflict-affected societies. A focus on the interstitial period between states of war and relative peace demonstrates that these conditions exist on a continuum and that both categories are firmly anchored in shared notions of the 'political'. For Mount, the conceptual or heuristic value of hybridity in thinking about war and peace relates to how it allows analysts to reinscribe rigid boundaries while simultaneously revealing significant nuances and overlapping understandings.

Imelda Deinla's chapter draws on research undertaken by herself and colleagues in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, an area of the southern Philippines that is well known for its ethnic and religious

divisions and longstanding pattern of conflict. Hybrid justice mechanisms have developed in this region as ways of coping with insecurity arising from actual and perceived injustices. These mechanisms are drawn from a plurality of customary, Islamic and state justice practices and work through informal networks. They appear to do so in a relatively coordinated way and serve to prevent conflict escalation while providing a level of justice and security provision to local populations. As well as being locally initiated, innovations are now also evident in respect of some national initiatives responding to local demands for more timely, flexible and adequate dispute resolution. These forms of hybrid justice emanating from national or state-level sources offer insights into how professional and culturally attuned justice provision can provide a better alternative to locally initiated mechanisms that remain susceptible to capture by local elites and discriminatory practices against vulnerable groups such as women.

The chapters in the fourth and final section examine hybridity in relation to gender. In different ways, each chapter draws attention to how hybridised environments can offer both opportunities and constraints to women, and highlights the need for analyses of hybridity to pay more attention to gendered power relations. The first chapter, by Damian Grenfell, draws on long-term fieldwork to examine the thorny issue of violence against women in Timor-Leste. Taking as his starting point the idea that ‘customary’ and ‘modern’ forms of spatiality co-exist in Timor-Leste, Grenfell suggests that while modern space tends to be treated as ‘secular, empty, commodifiable, transferrable’, customary space is understood very differently, and is characterised by genealogical and kinship connections between living people and, in turn, their relationship with the ancestors. Critical of the ways in which international development agencies ‘render’ Timor-Leste as patriarchal—a move that labels the population negatively and deems it in need of ‘modernising’—Grenfell argues that modern forms of spatiality may be just as gendered as customary forms of spatiality. To illustrate his argument, Grenfell shows that in Timor-Leste’s capital, Dili, modern modes of production work to ‘contain’ women to the private sphere in ways that often exacerbate their dependence on intimate partners. He concludes by arguing that the interaction and overlap between customary and modern spatialities may at times compound women’s experiences of violence rather than enabling pathways away from it.

The next chapter by Nicole George is a study of Fiji, specifically of the gendered consequences of the hybridised security environment. George focuses on the ways in which the operations of ‘state security agencies in Fiji are shaped by, and intertwined with, powerful institutions of customary and religious authority’. While at first glance the fusing of state and indigenous authority structures might suggest that state policing is more locally resonant, George argues that the interplay between ‘bottom-up’ and ‘top-down’ sites of authority generates its own gendered exclusions and restrictions. George deploys Nils Bubant’s concept of ‘vernacular security’ to explore how threats to security are framed and legitimised. Specifically, she shows how the Methodist faith and custom both ‘sustain a sense of distinctive Fijian unity and identity’ and simultaneously give rise to ‘fears about Fijians’ ultimate survival and need for vigorous state protection of indigenous custom and the centrality of their church’. In this context, women’s identity and behaviour are rigorously policed to ensure that gendered norms, which are viewed as foundational to the achievement and maintenance of social order, predominate. George concludes with a call for more nuanced thinking about the ‘vernacularised ontologies of uncertainty and insecurity that are generated in hybridised environments’ which, in the Fijian context at least, have resulted in forms of policing that are deeply gendered.

The final chapter, by Ceridwen Spark, on Papua New Guinea, offers a more optimistic perspective on the potential of hybrid spaces to open up possibilities for women. Spark explores the French-owned Duffy cafe in Port Moresby, which is frequented by expatriates and well-to-do Papuan New Guineans, as a site of hybridity. Spark argues that it would be erroneous to see the cafe merely as the embodiment of wealth, privilege and consumerism, suggesting that to some extent it has also become a site where ‘new sociospatial practices and identities’ are produced that challenge the dominant constructions of class and gender in Port Moresby. Spark illustrates these dynamics by drawing on photos and commentary shared by a Papuan New Guinean woman, ‘Karuka’, who now lives in Melbourne, Australia. Through the eyes of Karuka and other women interviewed by Spark, we are able to see that Duffy enables some ‘women to construct themselves as friends and customers—rather than daughters, wives or sisters—and in doing so provides momentary liberation from the ordinary constraints of life in Port Moresby’.

Conclusion

As the hybridity concept becomes ever more popular among academics and policymakers working in the interrelated fields of development, security studies and peacebuilding, nuanced reflections on its utility are increasingly necessary. A notable strength of the contributions to this edited collection is that they are grounded in in-depth knowledge of specific local contexts. This enriches the analyses, and allows the messy, awkward and dynamic realities of hybridity—the power dynamic, and diverse actors, ideas, practices and sites that shape it—to be brought into full view. This, in turn, provides rich insights into the possibilities and limitations of hybridity as a conceptual tool.

This text is taken from *Hybridity on the Ground in Peacebuilding and Development: Critical Conversations*, edited by Joanne Wallis, Lia Kent, Miranda Forsyth, Sinclair Dinnen and Srinjoy Bose, published 2018 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.