

## Chapter 14

### Situated Critiques of Intervention:

### Mozambique and the Diverse Politics of Response

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*"I belong irreducibly to my time."*

- Fanon

#### Introduction

For those investigating the state of international relations today, there can be few more valuable sites of study than the practice of statebuilding interventions around the world. It is at these points where, away from the formal niceties of the diplomatic circus, the political, economic, social and sometimes military forces of the so-called Great Powers rub up against both each other and those of the global South, under conditions of seemingly relative permissiveness and invisibility from the eyes of the Northern media. To see and understand the lived nature of the global state of affairs, then, one might be better advised to visit Kigali or Phnom Penh than Washington or Brussels. The contemporary debate about statebuilding interventions and the liberal peace should therefore not be considered as a niche interest within the discipline of IR or peace studies; rather it is constitutive of the major problematics that have concerned theorists of all hues for decades: hegemony, globalisation, empire, sovereignty, human rights and so on.

A number of critical theorists within the discipline have rightly latched onto this thought, and have developed analyses that mobilise different theoretical perspectives to frame the problematic. A global critique has developed around the notions of statebuilding interventions as an international 'neo-imperial' 'liberal peace' or 'neoliberal governance' that

is characterised principally by its intentions to spread Western ideologies and capitalism in the non-West. Many of these critiques are majorly influenced by Foucault's work on discourse as the association of knowledge and power, his notion of biopolitics, by the Gramscian concept of hegemony, or indeed both plus others. The application of these streams of thought to the question of statebuilding has been extremely valuable in opening up different theoretical, political and ethical questions around the practice, and indeed has reinvigorated critical theory itself within the discipline.

Yet, as Hobson notes, it is not impossible for critical theory to reinforce a Eurocentrism in thought that through a monological account of 'winners' and 'losers' in the international system (2007). I argue that this has also happened, with qualifications, in the realm of critical theories of the liberal peace, and is compounded by a fairly consistent, if apologetic, division of the world into 'liberal / neoliberal' and 'local / non-liberal / traditional' halves that are characterised by adherence to particular ideologies and knowledge structures, plus a general pessimism about the preponderance of the former. As a potentially emancipatory project, this tendency is disturbing on a number of levels, not least including the frequent omission, downgrading or ignoring of the substance of politics at the sites of supposed domination that might themselves be the basis of an alternative politics of interaction. Furthermore, it seems to accept at face value the account of the extent of the liberal transformation of post-conflict societies.

This chapter proposes an alternative way of exploring a case of intervention that is inspired by anticolonial critiques of empire, which builds on and challenges a number of the insights of critical analysis thus far. It does this through a situated exploration of the politics of intervention in Mozambique, based in fieldwork techniques that attempt to capture observations and responses to intervention as seen by various actors both involved and not

involved in the process. It argues these situated, embedded aspects can help the study of international politics by going beyond the problematic of alterity employed in current framings and into distinct concrete political questions in the relationship.

### **I. Critiques of the (neo)liberal peace**

Critical theorists working on the question of how international agencies intervene in post-conflict spaces have largely been concerned to develop a more or less global picture of a system driven by a particular logic or logics to exert a particular universalising transformative effect at different sites of intervention. The existing critical literature does this through three related analytic moves. The first is the expansion of the notion of liberalism through attaching the label 'liberal' to a broad set of contemporary intervention activities, which implies a structural relationship between these activities in that they have roots in liberalism. A second aspect of this has been the association of this 'liberal' ideology with agencies, organisations and actors coming from 'the West'. The third face of this is the understanding of this relationship between through the lens or metaphor of 'imperialism'.

Together these three angles – the ideas of liberalism, the agency of the West and the structure of imperialism as the analogy for the relationship – form the foundation of a powerful, insightful and productive critique of 'the liberal peace'.<sup>i</sup> The literature on this is extremely rich in terms of commentary, detail and observation. However, as I will argue, the mode of theorising and research is also limiting in terms of being *critical* theory, that engages and articulates alternative ways of thinking and envisions dimensions of change; in short, the "formulaic, top-down and ethnocentric" (Mac Ginty 2007: 457) nature of the liberal peace finds some parallels in the analytical framing of its critiques. The next section looks at these features of the existing critique.

#### **a. The preponderance of the 'liberal' as global formula and narrative**

As articulated by Mac Ginty and Richmond, the liberal peace “represents an increasingly formulaic synthesis of Western-style democratisation, “good governance”, human rights, the rule of law, and developed, open markets” that become the hallmarks of post-conflict intervention (Mac Ginty and Richmond 2007: 491). A key claim of much of this critique is that the liberal peace is “the *new ideology*, upon which life, culture, society, prosperity and politics are assumed to rest” (2007: 493, emphasis added). The ‘liberal peace’ for Richmond is an expansive, and perhaps all-encompassing, characterisation of post-conflict interventions. It can be broken down into gradations, which can be conservative/realist, orthodox or emancipatory in nature, depending on which discourse of liberal peace is most favoured from the four strands that comprise it (Richmond 2005). Despite the multiplicity of components and emphases that the discourses and practices of post-war interventions can have, which Richmond himself acknowledges can be “theoretically rather incoherent” (Richmond 2008: 15), the central motif of the work is that it can be *usefully understood* as the ‘liberal peace project’ – a “blueprint for stability and sustainability” (Richmond and Franks 2007: 44) adhered to by peacebuilders across the spectrum. This includes military interventions that focus on the ‘conservative’ aspects of a liberal peace as well as NGOs that envision an ‘emancipatory’ version of the liberal peace.

Duffield’s critique of contemporary post-war and developmental intervention makes much bolder claims about the role of liberalism now and historically, seeing it as fundamentally shaping both security and development, and therefore relations between North and South. Adapting Foucault’s application of the notion of ‘biopolitics’ to the Third World, Duffield argues that “[l]iberalism is a technology of governance that supports freedom while governing people through the interconnected natural, social, and economic processes that together sustain life” (2007:6). In its contemporary guise, it supports the

joining of development and security discourses to secure a form of liberal governance that is modernity's solution to the problem of the 'surplus' life required and produced by capitalism (10). As such, a rethinking of "whether liberalism itself, rather than being seen as a solution, is counted as one of the problems" is required in order to improve the situation (31).

Whilst, of course, some form of simplification is a legitimate course of action for any theorist of the international system to take, what emerges from all of these critiques, individually and as a whole, is that an expansive, inclusive ideological programme identified as 'the liberal peace', 'liberalism' and/or 'neoliberalism' is the key feature of intervention in the South by international agencies. This creates the narratives of a single hegemonic interventionary framework that is ideologically unitary, if not coherent, and intentionally driven according to this ideology.

#### **b. The ideology-origin problematic, cultural inappropriateness and 'hybridity'**

With different degrees of qualification and variegation, the tendency in the critical literature is to associate this ideology very generically with 'the West', and to disassociate it from the spaces of intervention, where 'traditional' or 'local' values are narrated as opposed to those of liberal political structures. This consciousness underpins a number of critiques of the liberal peace, which highlight the incompleteness or ineffectiveness of trying to impose an alien system on another society.

The notion of 'hybridity' has, however, emerged as an assessment of the results of liberal peacebuilding, whereby 'indigenous' or 'local' actors have combined and/or adapted post-conflict institutions to fit other 'traditional' patterns of legitimation. For example, in his discussion of Cambodia's statebuilding project, Roberts notes that various political structures and processes, such as the Senate and land reform were 'indigenized',

representing a continuation of traditional forms of rule and politics within the statebuilding experience (2009: 165). Roberts sees the Cambodian case being one where statebuilding had “a superficial impact on very resilient indigenous societies and polities” (163), but argues that essentially this may have been a good thing from the point of view of being both “culturally appropriate [and] pragmatically necessary” (167). Whilst Roberts recognises the inherent dangers of ‘Othering’ other states by normalising ‘liberal democracy’, it is clear that there is a basic division that underpins the argument between the ‘indigenous’ and the ‘democratic’.

Other theorists have grappled with the problematic also, warning against the dangers of romanticising or essentialising the ‘local’ (Richmond 2009a), but do not dispense with it as the key distinction within analysis. Richmond, in a discussion visualising a ‘post-liberal peace’ argues that

“A research agenda is needed which engages with an understanding of the dynamics of the relationship between the *liberal and the local*, and of the interface between the two in terms of everyday life for local communities and actors, as well as for more abstract institutional frameworks. This *‘liberal-local interface’*, and the nature of peace that it suggests requires extensive and ongoing consultation and research in order to develop these ideas” (2009b: emphasis added).

One of the questions that is being identified here is that of the diverse origins of interveners and recipients as leading to a basic alienation from the ideas of intervention on the part of the latter. The implication is that statebuilding / the liberal peace needs to find a way of developing a type of meeting point between the liberal and the local depends on the claim that they are basically different.<sup>ii</sup> As Chandler (this volume) argues, the

problematization of alterity underpins both the power-based critiques of liberal peace such as these, as well as the more technocratic approaches that seek to limit the liberal nature of the practices.

### **The limits of global critique**

Whilst both interesting and powerful, many contemporary critiques of intervention remain distant from the sites of intended 'emancipation' – that is the 'recipients' or objects of domination, hegemony and empire. I do not mean this in a physical or geographical sense – increasingly fieldwork and familiarity with context and cases is becoming better used within the literature – but in an unwillingness to attempt the use of other embedded epistemological standpoints to act as a counterpoint, understood in a Saidian sense, to the dominant narrative of global 'liberalism' or 'neoliberalism', rather than purely re-inscribing its force through a critique from a similar viewpoint (Chowdry 2007: 101). The narrative of a liberal-imperial-West as the principal intervener in the Third World, shaping it into a formulaic liberal image through its actions is the principal thrust of much current critique. Whilst plausible and useful in a general sense, I argue that this formulation itself, if interrogated more deeply, also becomes problematic at precisely the site of attempting to engage with the 'local' or 'indigenous', which is constructed as the opposite of the 'liberal'.<sup>iii</sup>

It must firstly be noted that the label 'liberal' is used so variously throughout and within the critical literature and used interchangeably with 'neoliberal', that it is hard to argue that it has a consistent meaning. In Richmond's formulation, the 'liberal' peace is also a hybrid of different strands, including militarism, orthodox conservatism and emancipatory politics. In short, 'liberalism' becomes a breadth of different political positions and activities that characterise interventions by a broad group of actors. This is perhaps a formally valid move in the sense that between political philosophers, there are deep divisions as to what

constitutes 'liberalism' and who its true heirs are, as well as political differences between the values of polities that are thought to have 'liberal' foundations.

However, given the way that it is used, and particularly when it is used as a quality distinct from the 'local' or the 'non-Western', it seems clear that it denotes a marker of origin as much as a marker of political philosophy. As such, the West is narrated as liberal, and liberal ideas are narrated as Western. This is also the case in Duffield, whose account of liberalism strongly ties it to Western domination and imperialism as a technology of government. What he means is that liberalism is a set of ideas and beliefs that has been used to exercise and legitimate control over various parts of the non-Western world.

Such accounts of liberalism draw a boundary of an ideology-power-origin problematic of the liberal peace, that is for Richmond overcome through a pluralist Eirenism that demonstrates 'empathy' for the 'local' (2009b). Such a formulation is intended to respect difference and not erase it, as has supposedly been the tendency of the liberal peace. However, the conception of 'difference' is one that seems to rest on the liberal-local binary, which, despite the various deconstructions that the critiques of the liberal peace do, is not one which is subjected to sufficient scrutiny. Whilst 'othering' is challenged in the discourses of intervention, it is not fundamentally challenged within the critiques themselves, which seek to reconstruct the structural impasse, albeit in a more emancipated way. This construction also reflects either epistemological humility or epistemological scepticism, or both, when it comes to analysing, narrating or 'knowing' the post-conflict environment and people that live within it. As such, there is usually a deferral against articulating anything more specific than either the origin of people ('local' / 'indigenous'), although this sometimes also becomes 'non-liberal' or 'non-Western'.

The risks of such a 'solution' to the 'liberal peace' become clearer when trying to actually execute the principles of engaging 'the everyday' empathetically. What emerges is that the ethical and political problems of 'liberal' interventions are not in and of themselves a clash with the 'local' or the 'indigenous' as abstract or concrete forms. In many formerly colonial states, the meaningfulness of the 'local' or 'indigenous' is as problematic as the meaning of the 'liberal' is amongst the interveners. Indeed, the Todorovian Encounter that seems to haunt critical engagement with today's global South feels misplaced. But if critique remains in a principally abstract form, it seems inevitable that it will reproduce these categories. A related critique might be made of Duffield's appeal to the notion of 'the governed' which underpins his appeal for a 'practical politics of solidarity' (2007). Whilst he is keen to focus on the similarities between people rather than the differences, the very broad level of his critique – entirely directed at the ideas underpinning liberalism and development – does not permit him to go there in any substantive way. As such the meaning of 'the governed' as a class of peoples amongst which solidarity might be constructed seems to dissipate in context.

## **II. Situated revolt: intellectual inversion, immanent critique and creativity in anti-colonial protest**

When thinking about whether the liberal peace is imperial – a term frequently used in the critiques – it is worth remembering that historically many anti-imperial thinkers and activists did not focus their intellectual attacks on imperialism and colonialism as a *European or liberal ideology per se*. They certainly made trenchant critiques of imperial and capitalist economic exploitation, and attacked the racist foundations of rule.<sup>iv</sup> However, in many cases this was not so much derived from the principles of an underlying *fundamental* alterity or 'local' character as the differentiated, violent and unjust *experience* of life under colonial rule.

Intellectually and politically, it was articulated strongly in terms of universalist and immanent critiques of the existing order, around which solidarist and internationalist political coalitions were formed (Jones 2010).

As such, the relevant response to the question of empire was a forceful concretisation and articulation of its problematic effects. Beyond structural economic analysis, thinkers identified and described a range of problems, including racism, dispossession, psychological control and violence of many forms, through seeking to engage the experiences of the colonised. It was this situated critique of the *experience* of empire that undermined its claims to being a 'civilising' influence; what became nakedly apparent was that it was a system of violence, exploitation and instrumentalisation despite its own propaganda.

Indeed, an important part of this critique of colonialism was their failure to extend the application of universal rights to peoples under their rule:

"And that is the great thing I hold against pseudo-humanism: that for too long it has diminished the **rights of man**, that its concept of those rights has been – and still is – narrow and fragmentary, incomplete and biased and, all things considered, sordidly racist...that at the very time when it most often mouths the word, the West has never been further from being able to live a true humanism – a humanism made to the measure of the world." (Cesaire 1972, emphasis in the original)

Cesaire's critique is stinging because it turns ideas about domination back on their proponents as a means of critique. This suggests that an immanent critique<sup>v</sup> of 'European' ways could be a sincere, provocative and useful way to engage others on common political terrain. The major themes then become about deliberate exclusion from these processes, and

a denial of the humanity of the colonised as a basis for a much more ambitious pan-African vision. This is expressed neatly in Cabral's public declaration against the Portuguese:

"The African anticolonialist organisations of the Portuguese colonies representing the legitimate aspirations of their people want to re-establish the human dignity of Africans, their freedom, and the right to determine their own future. These organisations want the people to enjoy real social development based on fruitful work and economic progress, on African unity and fraternity, on friendship and equality with all peoples, including the Portuguese people. They want peace in the service of humanity." (Cabral 1981: 27)

Indeed, the early post-colonial thinkers acknowledged their various intellectual debts to the West, even as they sought to subvert or expand the frameworks with which they worked, the better to capture what they understood as their realities (Chabal 1981). Their move then becomes not purely an 'ontological' one in the pitting of the rational individual against the forces of production or race, but also a *positional* one to do with the standpoint from which problems are viewed and the experiences in which they are embedded.

This is not to say that these thinkers necessarily validated the universalist discourses which legitimated empire, nor that there were no important differences between them and the universalisms of the anti-colonial movement. The point is that they understood universals as embedded in and productive of a particular kind of politics, and re-thought them accordingly. Simply because forms of power validate themselves in universalist and exceptionalist terms does not mean that they are what they say, nor that successfully opposing them requires a fixation on their imagined opposite. Rather, it might also involve a subversion and redeployment of these ideas to express an alternative idea of politics in a creative manner.

So far, critiques of the liberal peace have not tended to recognise this,<sup>vi</sup> although given the politics of inclusion they demand (e.g. 'a practical politics based on the solidarity of the governed' for Duffield) it is clear that such work might usefully complement, help re-think and re-articulate the core problematic of international power in post-war environments. In what follows, I will briefly illustrate the potential of this alternative critical project through an engagement with the recent politics of the 'liberal peace' in Mozambique.

### **III. Exploring the case of Mozambique and the 'liberal peace'**

Mozambique, whilst often put forward as an example of a 'success story' within both the peacebuilding and development literature, is also put forward as a case of a 'governance state', as discussed by Graham Harrison (2005). Since 1990, and slightly beforehand, it has been subject to large quantities of targeted international intervention and assistance in the name of peacebuilding, governance assistance, capacity building and democratisation, which have sought to transform it away from being a socialist one-party state towards a multi-party democracy. As an example selected to develop a critique of the liberal peace, then, I argue that it represents an important case – one where the intervention of the international community has coincided with the cessation of violent conflict, the holding of regular elections, the rebuilding of state institutions, impressive rates of economic growth and macroeconomic stabilisation, an increase in the numbers and sizes of civil society organisations, the attraction of foreign investment, the awarding of a 'good governance' prize to its former President, a sizeable fall in the level of absolute poverty and so on. It regularly gets cited within policy documents as a representation of precisely what can be achieved through the correct type of engagement (Hanlon and Smart 2008: 5).

Interestingly, neither the critics nor supporters of the liberal peace have engaged with it very extensively within the literature as evidence for their various positions,

although there is a growing literature rooted in development and anthropology that deals with Mozambique's trajectory over time. The exceptions to this are Mark Duffield's work on the role of NGOs (2007), which extends his account of global liberal governance, Michel Cahen's assessment of success in the *Making States Work* volume (2005), Roland Paris's analysis in *At War's End* (2004: 135-148) and its inclusion in a new study in this volume (see Zuercher). Duffield shows that NGOs have become part of the governmental process in Northern Mozambique. Cahen, asked to provide an analysis of Mozambique's success for the volume, argues for an only qualified success with regard to societal involvement, and Paris argues that given the shallow domestic roots of the war, it does not provide a basis for assessing the outcomes of liberal peacebuilding, although it can be considered largely successful.

What remains unexplored within the literature on this subject, with a slight exception to the work of Cahen, a sociologist, are the internal processes and politics of Mozambique as they relate to intervention. Within broader debates about development and intervention, as well as emanating from within policy organs themselves, there is a much richer literature on what has happened over the last twenty years, although again, the majority of this is framed by the objectives of interveners or by other particular debates. Work that deals with the ethics and politics of intervention in Mozambique, with a few notable exceptions<sup>vii</sup>, is neither sought after nor produced with much frequency.

The rest of this chapter will sketch briefly some selected political critiques made within Mozambique of co-operation with the West, which uses the critical interpretation of the 'liberal peace' as a set of pervasive social transformations. These viewpoints are drawn from various forms of primary and secondary research collected within and outside

Mozambique on the subject of internationally-sponsored reform and transformation. These critiques are selected, interpreted and articulated by the author in terms of insights they shed on the liberal peace debate in terms of concretising issues. As such, there is no claim being made that these are statistically representative nor that they in any way exhaust the range of critiques of intervention that are made within Mozambique by various groups. Indeed, given the practical and political problems of reliable access to non-elite and non-urban sources of critique, , these are somewhat skewed towards urban and elite critiques. This is a general limitation of the narrative. Nonetheless, they attempt to shed some light on the dynamics of intervention as experienced and understood by its supposed non-liberal Others. As I will argue in the conclusion, these preoccupations suggest a rather different approach to the politics of critical engagement than that hitherto displayed in the debate on the liberal peace. In this sense, the case material is not intended as an ethnographic treatment of the 'everyday', as advocated by Richmond, which I have suggested reproduces discourses of Otherness within critique. In offering these specific critiques as important on their own terms, the paper seeks to challenge more radically the normal hierarchies of critique between scholars and subjects.

#### **IV. Situating critiques in Mozambique**

##### **a. Problematising economic neoliberalism**

Critiques of the liberal peace suggest that liberal ideology is a key aspect of intervention in the South, and that this is problematic for 'local' communities, whose values are not incorporated (see Richmond, this volume). However, in interpreting responses in Mozambique about the various forms of intervention in the country and the associated relationships with aid partners, there were rarely objections articulated to the ideological principles behind programmes based on 'local' values, even from those who were most

exercised about the system as it currently stood. This is not to suggest that there are not distinctive traditions of politics across Mozambique, but it does indicate that it is not their disruption that informs primary objections to intervention.

More commonly, particular principles associated with 'liberal' policy discourses were often selectively redeployed to critique the impact of neoliberal development, which had resulted in deep economic vulnerability. There was a consciousness amongst those that worked in the policy levels in the agricultural sector and more widely that the international financial institutions were conscious that they had been proved wrong over their choices for the cashew industry, errors which stemmed from arrogance and heavy-handedness as much as from policy failure.<sup>viii</sup> Those very few that did talk self-consciously about the turn towards capitalism in the late 1980s presented it as an expediency above all else for getting foreign assistance,<sup>ix</sup> although not one to which there were sustained objections.

The more prevalent and cutting objections towards the economic reform agenda was that it did not either reflect any historical pattern of development, nor was it fair in how it was set up:

But economic activity must be public before it is private. If you look at the USA in the 30s, the EU until today – they are giving subsidies, they have the biggest force in innovation and technology, in product quality. So Mozambique, if it follows the rules, couldn't compete. So we were still poor, because we didn't make the rules.<sup>x</sup>

The critique here of neoliberal economics is much more blunt than it being inappropriate or incomprehensible – it is that it is a basically false model for development. The same was echoed in discussions with low-income farmers in rural Nampula, who wanted "above all, markets" for their crops, but despite reforms lacked access to ones in

which they could compete.<sup>xi</sup> In both cases, it is the promises of free markets and development which are turned against the actual effects of reform.

Visible public anger of recent years has focused on discontent with rising food and fuel prices, which have in the last three years resulted in unprecedented political riots and a restoration of the subsidies that donors had encourage the government to remove. Within the context of these riots have been articulated resentment of visibly rising inequalities and widespread unemployment, for which the extravagant wealth of the political elite has become a focal point.<sup>xii</sup>

What is of note for the liberal peace debate is that it is *policies* themselves that are being contested politically, for their incoherence and failure to generate the promised well-being. In the case of the price riots at least it is clear that anger is directed towards Mozambican political and business elites much more so than the general presence of international intervention, although the specific role of international financial institutions is noted by some. Importantly, though, the axes of critique – unfairness, inequality, hypocrisy – are not the assertions of a fundamental alterity but appeals to values associated with universal relevance.

#### **b. International assistance and the suppression of politics**

This is not to say that value is not placed on any form of pluralism. Indeed, an important charge levelled against the various forms of international assistance is that it has stifled the political creativity and imagination of elites and blunted their capacity for critique. For example, the director of a civil society organisation focused on accountability and good governance, itself funded by the UK government argued:

“There is no alternative there – they don’t do ideology; they just do what the donors want. Co-operation has really corrupted the thinking of African

leaders. They know that they can lose their jobs and consultancies if they are too critical. There are two forces contributing to this – the state: people want an easy life, and the donors."<sup>xiii</sup>

Another argued that:

"Development needs to be less dependent. If Mozambique accepted this, there would be room to think. But there is not a debate at the moment. There is lots of accommodation... we need to think about depending less."<sup>xiv</sup>

From these and other commentaries it is clear that a major area of concern was that the perception that donor assistance monopolised the economic, and subsequently political, concerns of ruling elites. From the perspective of government insiders, this situation was not denied but framed as the necessary pragmatism of a poor country – indeed a historic pragmatism that had formed part of the Frelimo political tradition since its pre-Independence struggle. As is now publicly commemorated as part of Frelimo folklore, during the Cold War, Frelimo leader Eduardo Mondlane famously received money from the US, Soviet and Chinese governments to fund the anti-colonial war. The receipt of money from a wide range of donors in the present day was justified in similar terms.<sup>xv</sup>

Critical political economy approaches to development and aid have often framed this situation as the co-optation of Southern elites through the development of their ability to profit from the proposed reforms. Indeed, this correlates with other accounts in this book of the actual impact of particular forms of transformation (see Hameiri, this volume). Indeed, as these critiques demonstrate, it is a conscious interpretation that is made within Mozambique itself of the behaviour of ruling elites. What is interesting however is that these critiques are made by actors who themselves use the discourses of donors – such as good governance and ownership – to develop force for their own political messages which are

critiques of vested power. This is not to claim that therefore these discourses are necessarily emancipatory – it is to point out that they can be and are subverted and redeployed to challenge power as well as maintain it. Critiques of the liberal peace, through an emphasis on the formulaic, liberal character of the discourses nonetheless miss the ways in which they can be leveraged in the service of particular and pointed critique.

### **c. Wastefulness and introspection**

From the perspective of those implementing projects associated with donor assistance, when discussing the nature of the intervention, the issue of 'imposition' did occasionally arise. Again, this was not articulated as because the substance of the ideas was not comprehensible to 'locals', but because donors wanted to call the shots and prioritise their own requirements. Another substantial issue was that of the waste of resources through the spending of money on things that were not needed, too expensive, and that these were not having any intended effect:

One thing I feel is not really good; in general, and this is the point of view of the donors. As a Mozambican, I feel that the donors give money but want to control everything... Normally when MINAG [Ministry of Agriculture] develops some plan to do themselves, they say no, do outsourcing. But this means that you have to give money to the company – you can't assume it's a better service. But the donors are just happy to subcontract and for someone to do the job in name. But we had experience – we were doing outsourcing in Zambezia and Nampula; the donors say they are happy, but in the end, I'm not happy; the company don't take responsibility like the DPA [Provincial Agricultural Directorate] or MINAG. This contract is signed by MINAG, but you know it's not the decision – it's an imposition. This is a big problem; we impose a lot of

things... but I don't think this is a good way, and this is why MINAG do some things themselves. Because sometimes they have seen the opportunity to change, add, but the donors don't want. I feel that donors don't really want to reduce poverty. We started with PROAGRI [the common fund] in 1995. There were millions spent on consultant studies – four studies, but if you see how much is going to the farmer, it's just 25% - I say why? Each donor wants to do the study, and to use the money of PROAGRI. And the amount of money they pay for the study is unacceptable. They always want the evaluation, and they contract out – and how much do they support? But the support for the farmers itself, they are not getting a lot. *With one study, you can buy ten tractors, can really solve some problems.* I am not saying that the study is not important, but you need to let them do what they want, let them direct.<sup>xvi</sup>

The overwhelming critique within this narrative however is that intervention in this case was fundamentally and obviously disconnected, both from its own objectives – i.e. the improvement of governance and the reduction of poverty – and the recipients – in this case the rural poor. Instead, intervention was more focused on things that could be executed by the donors to their own specifications or around their own needs, particularly those of familiarisation and evaluation. More respondents highlighted the percentages of programme and project budgets that were either spent within institutions on salaries and living costs for international and domestic employees, and the very small percentage that reached the intended recipients.<sup>xvii</sup> Again, this seems very distant from the critique that 'Western liberal' norms are not appropriate for 'local' populations, or that there is some necessary friction between them. It rather seems that there is a more fundamental lacuna in

that projects and programmes are not seen to actually use their money to do very much that has any impact in practice.

A clear issue articulated by those who were the intended targets of programmes was that whilst extensive training in governance and capacity was offered and given by organisations, very little material was supplied to actually carry out the things that they had been trained to do, whatever the notions underpinning the programmes. Health activists, farmers and religious leaders each mentioned that they had received training ('capacitação') in various skills which they were meant to pass on to others or carry out, but they lacked basic transport such as bicycles to even reach the places where training had to take place.<sup>xviii</sup> Whilst they worked around this, either by using borrowed means, or undertaking lengthy journeys by foot, it seemed an odd discrepancy that so much could be spent on the front end of the programmes and so little at the back. Overall, the sense was that whilst assistance might be generally welcome, it did not often do very much, its stated objectives being only loosely delivered, and its material focus being largely internal. These aspects of intervention are visible and obvious to those on the receiving end of it. Whilst this image of development has perhaps become something of a cliché, I would argue that it remains a constitutive aspect of the experience of intervention.

In terms of implications for critical theory, it has seemed so far within discussions of the liberal peace that such issues of wastefulness, introvertedness and incomplete, reversible implementation are rather too banal and pedestrian to deal with at the structural level. They operate so much as commonsense both for 'recipients' and those working within the system that trying to understand the politics of this seem overly obvious.

In terms of critique, it does however point towards more distributive issues that fundamentally call into question the nature of intervention if it consistently fails to get near

its objectives through a tendency to absorb its own resources. Certainly, amongst quite a few people, such as the respondent above, this set of practices suggested that intervention was not about *really* reducing poverty but the donor circus, and thus generated a level of cynicism amongst them. This seemed to be a much more obvious and widespread cause of alienation than the fact that practices or values of intervention were in some way 'foreign' to societies. Viewed from this perspective, intervention practices can present themselves as a form of introspective consumption for those involved.

#### **d. Populism, control, nationalism and resistance; changes in the relationship**

Indeed, particular politicians have made a good deal of political capital out of demonstrably resisting the perceived cultures of time-wasting, high foreign earners and kickbacks that are popularly associated with international co-operation. The former Health Minister Paulo Ivo Garrido is one such figure. He was almost universally a figure who caused discomfort amongst both the donor community and some of his colleagues due to his extremely centralised managerial style and forceful personality. However, amongst a large proportion of non-elite respondents, he was something of a hero for preventing his staff from attending various seminars paid for by the international community, with their attendant per diems and catering, for seeming to clamp down on corruption in hospitals, and for performing unannounced visits which often resulted in the dismissal of staff caught not doing their jobs, for which former leader Samora Machel was approvingly remembered. That he is a qualified surgeon also seems to gain him much respect amongst the general public who tend to view him as someone who works hard, does not suffer laziness, knows what he is doing and who stands up for himself.<sup>xix</sup>

An incident which occurred in 2009 seemed to demonstrate the ways in which intervention practices play in populist politics. The US Charge d'Affaires threatened to

withdraw a large amount of US aid, including in the health sector, if eleven US health workers were not cleared to work in the Embassy's HIV/AIDS programme.<sup>xx</sup> Their visas, similarly to the visas of a large number of other international workers at the present time, were been processed extremely slowly and painstakingly, pending the production of original documentation from medical schools and so on. The Minister said publicly that the Government must be able to determine what kind of health workers they need – the issue quickly became one about control, US high-handedness and 'attempted blackmail'.<sup>xxi</sup> A number of respondents raised this as an example of US arrogance, a hark back to colonial master-servant relations, the US trying to impose their will and so on.<sup>xxii</sup> This inspired a certain amount of indignation and resentment about imposition, and became a point for discussions of national control of the agenda. One respondent however, working for a US-funded NGO, was keen to stipulate that there were no problems in relations, that the whole thing was a misunderstanding and that people didn't know what they were talking about.<sup>xxiii</sup>

The increasing perception that Mozambique had the power to say 'no' to large donors, even if only occasionally, was clearly something that interested a number of respondents, even those critical of the government.<sup>xxiv</sup> Particularly within the government, there was a sense that in recent years Mozambique had entered a new era of co-operation, whereby it developed its own plans, was in control of its own agenda and so forth. Even with the IFIs, small victories such as the allowing of some protection for the sugar industry demonstrate that the government is willing to push the limits of their apparent regulations, and, in the case of the national development bank, completely side-step them through co-operation with another donor.<sup>xxv</sup>

Of course, as is well documented, the impact of new co-operation initiatives with partners such as China, Brazil and India has given African governments more options in

terms of financing without political conditions, and this is not less true in Mozambique. In the context of the relations with Northern donors, a Government Minister interviewed argued:

This is the major impact of Brazil, India, China... We don't waste months or years negotiating. You say what you want; you do it now and the road is there. You see the results immediately. We want results, not processes. We do not want to waste time discussing conditionality. There is no interference. The EU and US say that China is not democratic, it doesn't respect human rights, but that is not our business. What we want is the agreement and to fulfil it. If they keep their obligations, that is ok. We are not changing their internal policies – that is not our business. We will not ask Zimbabwe to change its policies – it's their business. They will ask for something – here we will ask them to accept our constitution. This principle of non-interference with India and China is better. It is not because we are against human rights. But we understand that they have their own systems and intelligence. It is not our business. We wouldn't go to the US, to try and change the face of A and B. We would never go to Europe and ask for a President to be taken to court. We are not the champions of democracy. But in our relationships with China, we say what we want.<sup>xxvi</sup>

It is clear that politically, it is important to the government to try to assert control over its development and intervention agenda as far as possible. This type of resistance at is something which has played well with the public – current President Guebuza's critique of Chissano's laxity (*deixa-andarismo*) in dealing with donors and internal corruption seemed to be one with which people could identify, and one which gained momentum going into the 2004 and 2009 Presidential elections.

Once more, there seems to be a political value to public resistance at work in Mozambique in the relationship with partners than one might have expected from reading the critiques of statebuilding, as well as successful instances of agenda control. However, it is important to note that this is not a resistance against all foreigners, or against interventions from the outside, or even of liberalism – what seemed to be important was the ability to negotiate and choose the types of intervention and the kind of relationship it has with partners. This indicates that there is a politics about the relationship between Mozambique and the outside world, but it is not one marked by rejectionist attitudes so much as the desire to control and choose the means of equitable engagement.

## **V. Conclusions**

Whilst the global critiques of the liberal peace have opened up, quite rightly, a number of ethical and political questions that need addressing, I argue that their emphasis on the origins of ideas and practices, and the division between the liberal and the local fundamentally obscures the concrete politics of intervention, and in particular the counter-claims and critiques being made by its intended objects. However, I argue that in beginning to move towards a situated critique of intervention, we engage in analysis that can be more politically challenging, policy relevant and more radical in terms of its calls for reform. The situated critiques show that not only is there disconnect between theory and policy, but between both of these and the concrete issues raised through experience.

Experience in this case suggests that there are the beginnings of immanent critiques of intervention taking place within sites of intervention whereby the claim that intervention consists of transformative practices which operate to improve the host state and society, are fundamentally dubious. The emerging critiques made by the intended objects of aid in Mozambique - that assistance is often wasteful, ineffective, ill-informed, introspective,

illiberal, repetitive and capricious – are not just operational critiques regarding implementation from people that have been co-opted into a particular ideological system. I argue that they can also, and should be read as political critiques that reveal much about the nature of the experience of intervention.

Given the material situation of a country like Mozambique, these critiques are not surprising. When one considers the complaint of waste, it is clear that this is the flip-side of a politics of survival – what seems to accompany the international community's rhetoric of alleviating poverty for subsistence and survival is a practice of internally maximising resource consumption and self-protection, which also reinforces the instrumentalisation of the process and alienation from it amongst recipients. The popularity of seeming to assert control and strength over the co-operation process however also indicates the significance of a sense of autonomy and direction that is not reducible to output and material benefits.

Fanon's account of racialised existential angst and violence, and Cabral's focus on the 'reality of the land' expressed and animated an situated and 'humanist' response to the practices of colonialism that contributed to a wider consciousness of its problems. I argue that critical theories of intervention in IR can gain much by thinking in a similar way, in order to fully engage and understand the dysfunctionality or otherwise of the system. Such a focus can open up areas for contestation and debate that are currently hidden or ignored, such as the problems of insularity, hypocrisy, waste and resentment. These issues in a sense more radically challenge the mythologies of liberal intervention through systematically undercutting its self-image as competent, efficient bringers of peace and development. It is through engaging these important aspects of intervention's lived experience that critics might be best placed to realise Duffield's ambition for a 'practical politics of the solidarity of the governed'.

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<sup>i</sup> For more detail, see chapter 1 of this volume, Sabaratanam, M. 'A brief intellectual history of international conflict management, 1990-2010' and the Introduction to this volume.

<sup>ii</sup> Richmond grapples further with this problem in his chapter in this volume, as does Mac Ginty, but I would suggest that it may not be resolved. However it is beyond the scope of this chapter to engage with these frameworks in detail.

<sup>iii</sup> A somewhat nuanced and complex exception is the work of Graham Harrison, who discusses the 'embedding' or internalisation of 'neoliberal' policy mechanisms in governance states (2005).

<sup>iv</sup> See Fanon (1963) and Cabral (1981) as key examples.

<sup>v</sup> By use of the term 'immanent critique' I do mean a critique based on analysing the contradictions within the current system, however, I do not mean to imply anything about its role as a dialectic in history.

<sup>vi</sup> With a few exceptions, e.g. Heathershaw (2007).

<sup>vii</sup> In terms of work published in English, the work of Joseph Hanlon in Mozambique spans several decades, and has been critically engaged with the problems of developmental intervention since its inception. See Hanlon (1984, 1990, 1996), Hanlon and Smart (2008).

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viii See Hanlon (2000). " This incident was mentioned to me independently by, at least, a senior journalist, (Interview, Beira, July 6<sup>th</sup> 2009), a major civil society activist (Maputo, August 21<sup>st</sup> 2009), a senior agronomist (Nampula, August 10<sup>th</sup> 2009).

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x Interview with senior adviser, Provincial Government of Nampula, August 12<sup>th</sup> 2009

xi Interview with farmers' association, Monapo, August 7<sup>th</sup> 2009

xii Langa, J. 'Editorial' *O Pais*, 1 September 2010.

xiii Interview, Director of a major civil society organisation, August 17<sup>th</sup> 2009, Maputo.

xiv Interview, [another] Director of major civil society organisation, August 22<sup>nd</sup> 2009, Maputo.

xv Interview with junior Minister, Maputo, 11<sup>th</sup> July 2008

xvi Interview with Mozambican agronomist working with European development agency, Sofala, July 7<sup>th</sup> 2009.

xvii Interview with Mozambican NGO worker, August 6<sup>th</sup> 2009, Conversation with Mozambican secondary school teacher, June 17<sup>th</sup> 2009,

xviii Interviews with Health NGO worker, Beira, July 10<sup>th</sup> 2009, Farmers organisation, Monapo, August 7<sup>th</sup> 2009, Methodist priest, August 6<sup>th</sup> 2009, Nampula.

xix Diary notes, various.

xx Reported widely, see AllAfrica: 'Employ Our People or No Money, Says US Embassy', 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2009. <http://allafrica.com/stories/200905220822.html> Accessed October 17<sup>th</sup> 2009.

xxi Ibid.

xxii Interview with newspaper editor, Sofala, July 6<sup>th</sup> 2009, Conversation with young theatre director, *ibid.*, June 12<sup>th</sup> 2009, Interview with junior Minister, August 19<sup>th</sup> 2009.

xxiii Interview with Mozambican NGO worker, *ibid.*, August 6<sup>th</sup> 2009.

xxiv Interviews with high school teacher, June 17<sup>th</sup> 2009, former civil servant, June 17<sup>th</sup> 2009.

xxv See BBC, 'Mozambique's sugar faces a new threat', 16<sup>th</sup> November 2004: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/4002529.stm> . Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> October 2009, and Net News, 'Mozambique, Portugal, agree to set up \$500m investment bank', <http://www.netnewspublisher.com/mozambique-portugal-agree-to-setup-500m-investment-bank/> . Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

xxvi Interview with junior Minister, *ibid.*, August 19<sup>th</sup> 2009.