

Research Project

International Peacemaking in Pursuit of a “Good Peace”: Integration or Separation?

Third-party funded project

Project title International Peacemaking in Pursuit of a “Good Peace”: Integration or Separation?

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The challenge of peacemaking has predominantly been understood as a pragmatic exercise in problem solving - how to devise the most effective peace deal that will be adopted by the conflict parties and end the violence. However, international peacemakers and conflict parties do not only ask “what works?” in trying to end conflicts; they are also driven by the question “what is the right thing to do?”. This research project asks how this normative dimension shapes international peacemaking, thereby addressing a thus far undertheorised facet. To do so, it focuses on a particular aspect of peacemaking: approaches to managing diversity after conflict. What do international peacemakers and conflict parties believe to be a “good peace”, and how does this shape their views on diversity management? From a purely pragmatic viewpoint, diversity can be managed in a range of ways, which entail either the integration or separation of groups, including through partitions and the re-drawing of borders, the resettlement of populations, or the recognition or denial of minority rights. And yet, while some of these may reduce violence, not all are considered equally acceptable or desirable. This indicates that there is a normative dimension to international peacemaking, whereby peacemakers’ visions of a “good peace” contribute to shaping their actions. Despite the important influence of this normative dimension in delineating the options available to peacemakers, mediation scholars have overlooked how it operates. The project draws on constructivist assumptions of interests and identities as socially constructed, and of political actors choosing strategies as much out of a sense of wanting to do the right thing, as wanting to do what works best. In other words, we assume that actors make decisions based on both normative imperatives and utility-maximising, and we employ tools from norms research to study the contestation over norms of diversity management in peace processes. The project connects three bodies of literature filling gaps in each: the literatures on peacemaking, on norms in international relations (IR), and on diversity management following ethnic and other inter-group conflicts. It contributes to these by foregrounding normative dimensions that are undertheorised in peacemaking scholarship. To do so, the project studies the discourses and practices of international peacemakers in relation to their vision of appropriate diversity management and how those interact with the conflict parties’ respective visions. Further, it conceptually extends the existing scholarship on diversity management in peace and conflict studies by mapping approaches across policy levels including demographic, territorial, institutions, and legal spheres. The project contributes to theory building and sheds light on an understudied phenomenon, making inductive use of case study methods through a combination of conceptual work, intra-case analysis with process tracing, and cross-case comparisons. Empirically, the project explores visions of a “good peace” in relation to

diversity by studying how questions of population displacement and resettlement, political boundary-making, and institutional and legal recognition of diversity have been addressed in six different contexts of international peacemaking over the last decades. Within each of these contexts, a number of discrete peacemaking episodes, spanning several decades and including a range of different peacemakers, are explored in depth through process tracing. The final research step consists of exploratory comparisons that aim at theory building about peacemaking's underexplored normative dimension.

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