

**Concept paper: International Conference on Liberal peace: Value-Based
External Models and Local Alternatives in Peacebuilding**

**June 16-17, 2008
Paris, France**

Purpose

In general, enquiries into peacebuilding missions have dealt with efficiency questions, i.e., how actors are integrating, how they are planning and how they are assessing success, and whether integration or coordination is the best modality for peacebuilding. Less, however, has been developed about the legitimacy of actually “building” peace on the basis of a set of presumptions on values.

Driven by the general notion of democratic peace, the international community has utilized liberal models to reconstruct societies after conflict. Liberal peace in practice can be characterized as embracing certain processes and values—democracy, free markets, human rights, integration into globalization, state-based security and citizenship.

Yet, these components of the liberal peace model are not necessarily universally understood or accepted. Furthermore, these models are often both premised on competition and participation, processes that can exacerbate existing tensions or conflicts, particularly in societies having recently experienced violent conflict. Local alternatives or adaptations have also emerged and force us to reflect upon the liberal peace model as it has been operationalized by the international community.

While these processes and values may be desirable end goals, the diversity of interpretations amongst actors—international, national, and local—requires at least clarification of understandings around liberal-based models and assumptions about “peace”. Attention now needs to be focused on how underlying assumptions impact the strategy and implementation methods of peacebuilding operations. There is also a need to evaluate the liberal peace model for its relevance in a variety of local settings.

The process of inquiry must therefore begin at the conceptual level to examine the current conception of liberal peace, critiques, and the assumptions that accompany and support the promotion of the concept in peacebuilding. Although liberal peace conjures up images of particular types of societies, what are, in fact, the assumptions behind the values and models of the desired end-state of peacebuilding initiatives?

The inquiry must continue to two specific models— democracy and market economy—to examine them in practice. The linkages between the assumptions of liberal peace and the

implementation of specific models, how the models have been implemented, and what have been the outcomes, and whether alternatives exist that need to be further studied.

Finally, the inquiry must converge on assumptions about the nature, role and responsibilities of the post-conflict states. Is the Liberal State the ultimate end goal and what would be its responsibilities? What alternatives are available?

Conference Description

The CERI Program for Peace and Human Security (CPHS) at L'Institut d'Etudes Politiques (Sciences Po) in Paris has been engaged in research and policy development in the field of peacebuilding for over two years. Having held an international conference on integrated peacebuilding in June 2006 and an international seminar on the role of the UN Peacebuilding Commission in November 2007, the CPHS has participated dialogues concerning the integration of institutional actors, the inclusion of local actors and the tools utilized in peacebuilding initiatives.

The CPHS is now organizing a third international conference, *Liberal Peace: Value-Based External Models and Local Alternatives*, to be held June 16-17, 2008 in Paris to focus on the conceptualization of initiatives around the liberal peace model and their alternatives.

The aim of this conference is:

- To elaborate on the conceptualization of the liberal peace model and its current critiques;
- To examine the processes and the related assumptions around democratization in post-conflict situations
- To examine the processes and the related assumptions of economic liberalization in post-conflict situations;
- To identify local alternatives or adaptations that have emerged, and
- To enquire about the ultimate nature, role and responsibilities of the post-conflict states.

The two day conference will include plenary sessions and concurrent workshops:

Plenary Session 1: Liberal Peace: concepts, critiques, and challenges

Some of the questions to be examined include:

- What are understandings and assumptions around the concept of “liberal peace”?
- Is there consensus on the models and methods and if so, what are the elements that consist of this consensus?
- What are the current critiques of the model?
- What challenges have emerged through an examination of the implementation of liberal peace?

Workshop 1: Models: Democratization post conflict and its alternatives

Some of the questions to be examined include:

- What are assumptions about “liberal democracy” in post-conflict settings?
- How have these assumptions been negotiated between external and internal actors?
- How has the implementation process converged or diverged with assumptions?

- Has the process of democratization been a source of peace or instability or both? How?
- What are the possible different or alternative models of democracy?

Workshop 2: Models: Development models post conflict and their alternatives

Some of the questions to be examined include:

- What are assumptions about “liberal market economy” in post-conflict settings?
- How have these assumptions been negotiated between external and internal actors?
- How has the implementation process converged or diverged with assumptions?
- Have the processes of liberalization and economic development been a source of peace or instability or both? How?
- What are the possible different or alternative models of development?

Workshop 3: Local alternatives: ownership, resistance, and cooption

Some of the questions to be examined include:

- How have liberal-based assumptions about peace been negotiated between external and local actors?
- What examples have emerged on local or indigenous models or processes for peace and peacebuilding?
- What alternatives to the liberal peace model have emerged from local settings?
- Can these processes (international initiatives and local alternatives) occur concurrently and what are the implications for peacebuilding?

Plenary Session 2: Ultimate nature, role and responsibilities of the post-conflict states.

Some of the questions to be examined include:

- What are presumptions about the nature, roles and responsibilities of the post-conflict state in the liberal peace model?
- How can this model for the state be evaluated?
- What alternatives are available?

Anticipated Outcomes

The conference represents an important contribution to the dialogue at the very core of peacebuilding initiatives: the conceptualization of liberal peace and the institutionalization of the liberal peace model in peacebuilding.

Expected outcomes of this conference include:

- Renewed emphasis on the conceptual level to identify and address challenges in peacebuilding;
- Dialogue among the academic and policy communities on the conceptualization of liberal peace;
- Support to research focus on liberal peace in France;
- Identification and examination of alternative models and local responses to liberal peace
- Edited publication entitled: *Liberal Peace, External models, and Local Alternatives*.