Socio-Cultural Viability of International Peacebuilding: An Inquiry Based on Cultural Theory

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Abstract
A socio-anthropological theoretical framework of the so-called Grid-Group Cultural Theory provides a typological model for understanding and mapping of cultural biases (shared values and beliefs), corresponding social relations and strategic behaviours. The starting argument of this paper is that this model can be used to illuminate and investigate the socio-cultural differences in peacebuilding approaches as the four theoretical ideal-types of individualism, egalitarianism, hierarchy and fatalism, correspond to different peacebuilding approaches used by different international actors and in different post-conflict contexts. This typological understanding of approaches to peacebuilding enables also a theoretical analysis of socio-cultural viability of different approaches in different socio-cultural context. The final argument of this paper is thus that viable approaches to peacebuilding are those that are synchronized with the socio-cultural context, i.e., with the cultural bias, social relations and strategic behaviours used by the major social and political actors in the local society.

Keywords
Cultural Theory, International peacebuilding, Socio-cultural viability, grid-group model,

Biography
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Introduction

Post-conflict peacebuilding processes are usually viewed as instrumental processes where the international community can (and should) engage in the creation of practical solutions leading to sustainable peace in a war-torn society. This is underscored by the words of former United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who defined international involvement in post-conflict peacebuilding as “actions to identify and support structures which will tend to support and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict.”\(^1\) However, it is clear that the scope, size and time span of contemporary peacebuilding operations exceeds that envisioned by the Secretary-General in 1992.\(^2\) The overall goals of peacebuilding operations are much broader than just to the objective of avoiding a relapse into conflict and the actions undertaken by peacebuilders in the field go far beyond identifying and supporting structures designed to support and solidify peace. In most of the recent cases, the representatives of the international community have interfered deeply in the political, economic, administrative and judicial systems of societies in a quite direct manner, through the exercise of executive and even legislative political power, through protectorate-like arrangements, while aiming for a transformation of the local society including a transformation of its constitutional framework, political system and administrative tradition.

This leads to a broadening of the definition of peacebuilding as such, towards a proposition that the international peacebuilding in war-torn societies is first and foremost an externally promoted transition process, including goals of broad political change, as well as an even broader, externally-promoted social change.\(^3\) Continuing this tradition of defining international peacebuilding, it can also be said that peacebuilding processes are all-encompassing transition processes aiming to promote major changes in the local socio-cultural context, including but not limited to, local political culture, established value and belief systems, preferred mode of social organization and so forth.

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2 Apart from theoretical debate about the concept, the meaning of the term had been debated even within the UN system. Since the publishing of an agenda for peace, a number of UN reports have addressed the issue. See, for example, Ramesh Chandra Thakur and Albrecht Schnabel, *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Ad hoc missions, permanent engagement* (New York: United Nations University Press, 2001).

Accordingly, the scholarly focus on peacebuilding needs to be broadened\(^4\) to include the concept of ‘culture’, meaning ‘political culture’. There are, indeed, many theoretical approaches that can be used for analyzing and explaining differences in social and political contexts of different societies – but there are few that give promise of having the ability to analyze and explain the processes of socio-cultural change. One such approach is the neo-Durkheimian ‘theory of socio-cultural viability’\(^5\) or as it is commonly termed, ‘grid-group Cultural Theory’ or ‘GG-CT’.\(^6\) This theory holds promise of being able to contribute to conceptual understanding of the phenomenon of international peacebuilding and thus improve our ability to analyze and explain the failures and successes of international contributions to complex peacebuilding processes.

As a response to the call for theorizing about international peacebuilding, this paper will outline a Cultural Theory approach to studies of peacebuilding, as it will: a) briefly introduce the Cultural Theory framework, b) present a typology of approaches to peacebuilding according to Cultural Theory framework, and c) discuss its theoretical and empirical (meaning conceptual and analytical) usefulness for studies of international peacebuilding.

**Grid-Group Cultural Theory Framework**

The Cultural Theory framework rests on the ‘grid-group’ model whose roots are found in Emile Durkheim’s work on sociology of religion that outlined the way society shapes individuals’ thinking. According to Durkheim, people form their ideas about God based on the cohesiveness of the society.\(^7\) Individual action is based on values and beliefs, which are in turn defined by the institutional form of organization. Furthermore, these forms of organization can be defined, measured and used for understanding and explaining different values and beliefs, possibly even for predicting behaviour. In addition, Durkheim defined two dimensions of social organization: 1) ‘social regulation’, the extent to which social life is governed by role, rule and social facts and 2) ‘social integration’, the extent to which individuals are held accountable to larger collectives.\(^8\) These ideas created the epistemological and ontological foundations for the understanding of a ‘social solidarity’, the institutionalized form of social organization.\(^9\)

British anthropologist Mary Douglas made practical use of these concepts in analytical work, through her ‘group-grid model’ when she created a two-by-two matrix of cultures or, to use Douglas’ term, ‘ways of life’.\(^10\) The grid dimension referring to the acceptance of legitimacy of external prescriptions\(^11\) and the group dimension referring to the extent individuals are bound in groups.\(^12\) From this, the four-field typology of social relations was born and the

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\(^5\) Karl Dake and Michael Thompson, "Making Ends Meet, in the Household and on the Planet", in GeoJournal 47, no. 3 (1999).


\(^11\) The “legitimacy of external prescriptions” refers to the varying ease with which persons accept that other persons’ judgments are valid for, and binding on, them. For a career-enlisted person in a military service, for instance, this legitimacy is apt to be high because he or she will have chosen a life that routinely involves accepting the instructions of officers with few questions. See Charles Lockhart, "Cultural Contributions to Explaining Institutional Form, Political Change and Rational Decisions", in Comparative Political Studies 32 (1999).

\(^12\) See Mary Douglas, Natural Symbols: Explorations in cosmology (London: Barrie & Rockliff, 1970).
resulting four ways of life or cultures: 1) the ‘individualist’ (low group / low grid), 2) the ‘fatalist’ (low group / high grid), 3) the ‘egalitarian’ (high group / low grid) and 4) the ‘hierarchist’ (high group / high grid).\(^{13}\)

The model was initially used as a tool to map differences in the way individuals make choices in their everyday lives, and was perceived as the “taxonomy of social context and their supporting cosmologies.”\(^{14}\) Cultural theorists have used the typology to explain how and why individuals can have quite differing views on everything from basic human nature and environmental concerns to views about risk, technology, consumption and more.\(^{15}\) The four ways of life (or cultures), i.e., the four different cosmologies and their typical social relations, were defined through four ideal types, archetypes of each of the four ways of life, depicted in figure 1 below:

![Figure 1 – Grid-Group Cultural Theory Model](image)

1) The **individualistic** type. This way of life is characterized by low group membership and few external constraints. Individuals are bound by neither group incorporation nor clearly prescribed roles. The ideal type is a self-made manufacturer. The individualists consider themselves to be the masters of their own destinies and they are pragmatic materialists.\(^{16}\) Individualists see nature as forgiving, able to absorb whatever we throw at it.\(^ {17}\) Hence, managing institutions can act in a *laissez-faire* manner.\(^ {18}\) As human beings are viewed in all circumstances as self-seeking; incentives can be used to channel their efforts.\(^ {19}\) When things go wrong, individualists blame personal incompetence.\(^ {20}\) Economic growth is regarded as possible and desirable and resources are unlimited.\(^ {21}\) Risk is perceived as an opportunity – without risk, there would be no possibilities for gain.\(^ {22}\) Network social relations correspond to the individualistic cultural bias: both the grid and the group are low, meaning that people are not bound in strong groups and the external prescriptions are few and weak.\(^ {23}\) The networks are created, maintained and utilized by individualists seeking personal materialistic gain and respect, based on merit and competence.\(^ {24}\) This freedom to create temporary utility-based

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13 See Figure 1.
15 For an excellent overview of cultural biases in regard to a variety of different concepts, see John Dixon et al., *Responses to Governance: Governing corporations, societies and the world* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2003).
17 Ibid. pp.26-29
18 Ibid. pp.27-32
19 Ibid. pp.33-37
22 Michiel Schwarz and Michael Thompson, *Divided We Stand: Redefining politics, technology and social choice* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990)
relations results in the egocentric network as the primary way of social organization. This means of socializing is also referred to as ‘equal individualization’.

2) The egalitarian type. This way of life, sometimes referred to as the sectarian type, is characterized by high group membership and few external constraints. Individuals are bound by incorporation in groups yet their behaviour is not constrained by prescribed roles. An example is a member in a western-style commune. The individual members have strong bounds to their group (the commune), yet their lives are not controlled by external prescriptions. Possibilities for influence over their own lives are perceived as existent, inasmuch as egalitarians participate in collective decision-making. Egalitarians view nature as unforgiving, where the least jolt may cause total collapse. Consequently, the managing institutions must treat the ecosystem with great care. Human beings are viewed as born good, corrupted by power and evil institutions, in both the market and the public sphere. When things go wrong, the egalitarians blame the system since they reject authority. Economic growth is regarded as unimportant, or at least as less important than equality. Natural resources are limited and overexploited by the system. Egalitarians are not risk-takers; they view nature as unforgiving. ‘Enclaves’ social relations correspond to the egalitarian cultural bias: the group is high and the grid is low, meaning that people are bound in strong groups but the external prescriptions are few and weak. The enclaves are created and maintained by the egalitarians that seek people with similar values and beliefs and organize in highly participative-bounded groups. Respect is awarded by virtue of membership. Power relations within the enclave are flat and all members have equal value. This manner of socializing is also referred to as ‘collectivized equality’.

3) The hierarchical type. This way of life is characterized by high group membership and many external constraints. An example is a high caste Hindu who has strong bounds to his/her group (family, caste) while his/her life is strongly regulated by the social context (strong traditions). They view nature as forgiving, but vulnerable to extreme interruptions. The managing institutions should, therefore, regulate and minimize unusual occurrences. Human beings are viewed as born sinful but they can be redeemed by good institutions. When things go wrong, the hierarchists blame no one (blame shedding) or they blame deviants. Economic growth is, as in the case of the individualists considered possible and desirable, but the hierarchists see increases in wealth as a result of group sacrifice, not a result of individual competence. Resources are, as in the case of the egalitarians considered limited, but the hierarchists are ready to trust the experts within the system to make the call about resource use. Risks are to be considered, but they are manageable, and experts within the system are once again to be trusted. ‘Positional’ (or ‘pyramid’) social relations correspond to the hierarchical cultural bias: both the grid and the group are high, meaning that people are bound in strong groups and their lives are controlled by strong and many external prescriptions. The positional hierarchical relations are created and maintained by adherents of the hierarchal cultural bias, seeking order and stability through pyramid-like social order. Respect is awarded to the loyal, rule-obeying members. This way of socializing is also referred to as ‘collectivized inequality’.

4) The fatalistic type. This way of life is characterized by low group membership and many external constraints. An example is an un-unionized weaver. He/she is not strongly bound to groups, while external prescriptions guide his/her everyday life. The possibility for any kind

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of influence is perceived as poor. They view nature as a part of a random world. The managing institutions cannot manage or learn, only cope with erratic events. Human beings are viewed as unpredictable and, therefore, not to be trusted. When things go wrong, the fatalists blame fate and bad luck. Economic growth is regarded as generally desirable, but unlikely to be profitable, except by chance or luck. Risk taking is viewed as unnecessary since there are no possibilities for gain. The preferred strategy is avoidance of risk taking. Isolates’ social relations correspond to the fatalistic cultural bias where the group is low and the grid is high, meaning that people are not bound in strong groups and external prescriptions are many and strong. The isolates are excluded, voluntarily or involuntarily, from group activities, yet their lives are controlled by factors outside their control. They view social cooperation as problematic; they neither give nor receive respect. This way of socializing is also referred to as ‘unequal individualization’.

The above essentially synthesizes the characteristics of the basic grid-group typology of social solidarities, or cultures. At first, the model was a simple classification scheme designed to compare systematically the modes of social organization and the corresponding shared values and beliefs. As in the case of most other cultural approaches in social sciences, the critics accused the model of being deterministic, incapable of explaining change and lacking empirical support. However, later developments of the Cultural Theory framework transformed the model into a powerful tool for the understanding and explanation of complex social phenomena, including social and political change. Among other things, these new theoretical developments argued for the separation of social solidarities into three separate, but very much inter-connected, concepts: namely, 1) ‘cultural bias’, 2) ‘social relations’ and 3) ‘strategic behaviours’. This facilitated analysis of the way values and beliefs affect behaviours, which in turn affect the way people organize social relations, and vice-versa. Or, in other words, everything affects everything.

Furthermore, this approach provided for a conceptualization of change in biases, behaviours or relations, as being a result of change in one or two of the other categories. The theory was no longer static, nor deterministic. In addition, the founding fathers of the theory defined a so-

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27 It should be noted that there is a fifth way of life as well. There is also the full autonomy of the hermit who voluntarily excludes himself from any social interactions. However, this category is used only theoretically and as is many other studies, the hermit will be completely disregarded in this analysis. For more about the fifth way of life, see ibid. p.10. See also Michael Thompson and Richard J. Ellis, "Introduction" in Culture Matters: Essays in honor of Aaron Wildavsky, ed. Richard J. Ellis and Michael Thompson (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1997) pp. 5-7.


30 Karl Dake and Michael Thompson, "Making Ends Meet, in the Household and on the Planet", in GeoJournal 47, no. 3 (1999).
called *requisite variety condition*, which postulates that all four social solidarities are present in all social systems, and that the observed differences are merely differences in degree to which certain ways of life dominate a particular social system, meaning society, group or a situation. Different social solidarities must exist for two reasons. First, every way of life has its blind spots and needs the other ways of life for correction. Monocultures are otherwise prone to self-destruction. An unchecked individualism creates anarchy and unchecked hierarchy has no flexibility.\(^{31}\) Second, the presence of other ways of life is a precondition for cultural identity. Without others, one cannot define one’s own identity. Thus, there is constant competition in every society, a constant cultural rivalry of social solidarities where the domination of the public sphere is at stake. Individuals shift from box to box in the model and, since the comparative strengths of different ways of life constantly change, there is a ‘permanent dynamic imbalance’.\(^{32}\) The (unreachable) goal is balance and equilibrium in which all ways of life exist and coexist without conflict. This gives the theory a new, normative dimension: a good society has the voices of all four social solidarities present in the public life; a good democracy is culturally pluralistic; and a good policy is constructed for (and presented to) the adherents of all four social solidarities. The grid-group model represents a ‘social map’, a plane field where solidarities compete,\(^{33}\) rather than being merely a heuristic device for the creation of ideal-types. The social map depicts the social space where the social solidarities compete for new adherents. Through speech and action, the adherents of social solidarities constantly push and pull others on the social map from one corner to the other. Hence, the model is not merely dynamic – it is extremely unstable; changes are the rule, rather than the exception.

In summary, there are three major components of the Cultural Theory framework that equip it to be a potent conceptual and analytical tool for understanding and explaining international contributions to complex peacebuilding processes. First, the grid-group model is tool for mapping of different culturally biased approaches to politics, governance and policy and the framework thus enables a typological understanding of culturally biased approaches to peacebuilding. Secondly, the social map understanding of the GG-CT models enables a systemic understanding of the functioning of a society and the process of socio-cultural conflicts and competition, which lead to socio-cultural change. This understanding of how social system function and change is based on the idea of a permanent socio-cultural conflict and socio-cultural equilibrium. Finally, the third component includes a number of prescriptions regarding politics, governance and policy, and defines good policy and good governance as policy and governance that are socio-culturally pluralistic.

Following section of this paper will outline how this theory with all its components could be used to enhance the inquiry of international peacebuilding.

**Cultural Theory Framework & International Peacebuilding**

As mentioned at the very beginning of this inquiry, international peacebuilding is not an instrumental process of finding the best solution for a practical problem. Rather, it is a process of change, which is in itself culturally biased. Accordingly to the Cultural Theory, there are only four possible cultural biases and thus only four possible types of distinctively different approaches to peacebuilding.

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31 For more, see the section on political cultures below.
Intervention Approach of Adherents of Hierarchical Social Solidarity

The adherents of the hierarchical social solidarity define human beings as bad, (born evil and only possibly redeemed by good institutions). They are incapable on their own and are in need of guidance by rules and regulations, strong institutions and knowledgeable elites. The adherents of the hierarchical social solidarity perceive peace as the existence of stability and order, achieved through strengthening of the institutional setting. This results in conflict management mechanisms of balance of power and strengthening of the institutions that regulate the behaviour of different groups in conflict. If the system is strong and balanced, the people will be submissive to the collective, obedient to the social rules and government regulations and there would be no conflict and no warfare. The lasting and sustainable peace is therefore found in institution building, strong government, good elites, clear rules for inter-group relations, and the creation of power-sharing mechanisms and institutional checks and balances. In practical terms, all of the above translates into an acknowledgement of group differences, an acceptance of territorial management of conflict, strong and clearly defined power-sharing mechanisms, a development of institutional control mechanisms and a consociational democratic system.

The peacebuilders that adhere to the hierarchical social solidarity see themselves as guardians and institution builders. Their role is to control the local society and to build the necessary institutions that will continue to control the local elites and the local population in the future, when the intervention is over. The peacebuilding process is seen as a medium-long process, shorter than a process of reconciliation and re-integration of society but longer than processes for improving and creating procedures that allow for a correct functioning of the market mechanisms. International involvement is viewed as a solution that has the ability to correct ‘bad behaviour’ of elites, to replace the authority of the state (rejected by deviant and/or marginalized groups) and, ultimately, to build a stable and strong system (both social and political).

The hierarchical social solidarity rejects the narratives of the other social solidarities. Adherents of hierarchical social solidarity find narratives about the inherent goodness of man to be incorrect and naïve. Accordingly, they do not accept democratic procedures, as such, to be a solution to all problems. To the contrary, they might view a democratization process as risky, because it may decrease stability. Furthermore, they do not believe that an active and developed civil society (with participation from below and consensus-seeking dialogue between the groups) can remove the risk of renewed fighting. They find that particular approach unrealistic as it entails a process whose length and scope would be much longer and broader, extensive and almost indefinite. In that sense, the adherents of the hierarchical social solidarity are pragmatists, believing that a lasting peace is best built through creation of mechanisms that will ensure a well functioning, balanced and stable system of government.

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34 Myths of human nature corresponding to the four social solidarities are discussed in Michael Thompson et al., Cultural Theory (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1990) pp. 33-37.
35 This translates to state-building and institution-building agendas in peacebuilding. For an elaborate discussion on necessity for building strong institutions, see Roland Paris, At War's End: Building peace after civil conflict (Cambridge University Press, 2004) pp. 151-212.
36 A consociational democratic system is a system where minority participation is ensured through institutional mechanisms, first and foremost the right of veto. For more, see Arend Lijphart, "Consociational Democracy", in World Politics 21, no. 2 (1969).
37 Guardian model of democracy is the preferred model of democracy according to the hierarchical cultural bias. See more in Frank Hendriks and Zouridis Stavros, "Cultural Biases and New Media for the Public Domain" in Cultural Theory as Political Science, ed. Michael Thompson, et al. (London: Routledge, 1999) p. 125.
38 Time perspective of adherents of different social solidarities is outlined in Michiel Schwarz and Michael Thompson, Divided We Stand: Redefining politics, technology and social choice (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990) p. 67.
The adherents of the hierarchical social solidarity, when in charge of a peacebuilding process, create a pyramid-like hierarchical organization. Both in their contacts with the representatives of other agencies in the field and with the local authorities, they attempt to organize a structure where command and control is in focus. They seek to build few relationships with top-level officials. On the other hand, if faced with a prospect of failure, they would use to the fullest extent the power given to them by virtue of their position. If the local governmental elites are unable to live up to the task, i.e., if the elites do not respect the legal-rational authority and the knowledge of the experts, then the adherents of hierarchical social solidarity would look for opportunities to correct this kind of behaviour. They would seek to establish a higher position in the pyramid, gain more power and use this power to force others into obedience.

Concerning the preferred strategic behaviour, adherents of the hierarchical social solidarity would attempt to influence the behaviours of others through rules and regulations. They would engage in construction of the legal and administrative practices that can control the behaviour of local elites and would base their authority on the legal framework that guides the process. When failing, they use their ‘hammer’, their all-purpose tool – straightforward and top-down regulation. The adherents of the hierarchical social solidarity believe that society is governable and social contexts can be influenced and changed through strong institutions that control the people and punish them when they act contrary to rules and regulations.

**Intervention Approach of Adherents of Egalitarian Social Solidarity**

The adherents of the egalitarian social solidarity see people as good, capable and primarily in need of access. Accordingly, they would acclaim active participation to be a solution to all problems in the public arena. Given that they have an inherent collectivist view of the social life, their definition of public interest is quite wide, practically encompassing almost all aspects of society. Their definition of peace is closely connected with notions of equality, but not equality of opportunity (as is the case with individualist cultural bias), but with their specific definition of true equality – equality of outcome. The peacebuilding process after an inter-communal conflict is therefore all about the civil society solutions that enable participation and that lead to integration, reconciliation, forgiveness, justice and equality between groups. The path to peace is not found in negotiation compromises between elites or in good rules that regulate behaviour, but are based on a higher moral stance – notions of inherent goodness and equality between human beings, regardless of their group membership. The peacebuilding process is therefore defined as a broad and long-term, almost indefinite process. The adherents of the egalitarian social solidarity involved in a peacebuilding process will see themselves as teachers. Standing on a higher moral ground, they seek to educate the people and make them understand their collective interest, which is defined by the egalitarians as peace and cooperation through collective action and through participation in the public arena. They perceive international interventions as a moral obligation of the international community to get involved and teach good values, participative democracy, basic human rights, equality and justice.

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40 On definition of public and private, see the introductory chapter in Michael Thompson et al., eds., *Cultural Theory as Political Science* (London: Routledge, 1999).
41 Time perspective of adherents of different social solidarities is outlined in Michiel Schwarz and Michael Thompson, *Divided We Stand: Redefining politics, technology and social choice* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990) p. 67.
The egalitarian cultural bias rejects the narratives of other social solidarities. They find arguments about causes of war based on group differences and inherent malignance of human beings as inaccurate, even offensive. Thus, they judge that the approach of the hierarchists, which includes intrusive intervention with the international community forcing solutions on the local society, to be counter-productive because the result is not based on the collective will of the people. Furthermore, they are reluctant to accept the ideas of an individualistically biased intervention since they see it as utterly inefficient, possibly even counter-productive. There can be no lasting peace based on the rules of the market, which could possibly increase competition and thus increase inequalities. The lasting peace, they assert, is to be found in cooperation, a deeper understanding between the parties in conflict and through a commitment to collective action, driven from the bottom-up, by the civil society.

The adherents of the egalitarian social solidarity, if in charge of a peacebuilding process, would seek out a wide range of actors with similar moral stance. In their contacts with other representatives of the international community and in contacts with the local political elites, their inclination would be that those willing to participate would be invited to the table. Egalitarians would deal with lower-level officials and even directly with the population, through the NGOs and civil society. In contact with other organizations and agencies working in the same process, they would try to create many tight relationships between different actors who would be perceived as being equally important.

Concerning the preferred strategic behaviour, adherents of the egalitarian social solidarity would attempt to influence the behaviours of others through information and education. They would engage in consensus seeking negotiations, confident in the moral superiority of their own point of view, expecting others to learn and accept their will and their values. When faced with a prospect of failure, they would use their ‘hammer’, their all-purpose tool – education and consensus-seeking dialogue. In the view of the adherents of the egalitarian social solidarity, society is governable and its social context can be influenced by the people, if they are acting collectively and if their action is based on higher moral values, i.e., if they seek justice and equality.

**Intervention Approach of Adherents of Individualistic Social Solidarity**

The adherents of the individualist social solidarity define people as good, capable and needing nothing more than opportunities. They see market mechanisms as a solution to all that is private. They envision a non-intrusive and small government, which allows for individual preferences to sum up to a collective definition of public interest, as a solution to all problems in the public arena. The individualist definition of peace is closely connected with freedoms of the individual. Rational people would not choose war, since the war decreases resources for all. Consequently, if people were allowed to make free choices, there would be no wars. Furthermore, people are perceived as self-seeking. Therefore, the sum of their individual choices must lead to cooperation, since cooperation increases wealth and well-being for all. The path to peace, according to the individualist cultural bias, is based on market mechanisms that allow rational individuals to make free choices. Free and fair elections, freedom of movement, organization, trade and freedom of information are seen as ultimately leading to a lasting and sustainable peace. The peacebuilding process is defined as a short-term process.

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43 Once again, time perspective of adherents of different social solidarities is outlined in Michiel Schwarz and Michael Thompson, *Divided We Stand: Redefining politics, technology and social choice* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990) p. 67.
in which the international community has a limited role. The adherents of the individualist social solidarity see themselves as providers of a temporary assistance, as a pool of resources created by the international community, invited by the local society with the specific task of providing solutions to specific problems. The international involvement can temporarily aid in providing and maintaining security and can temporarily assist with expertise in the process of creation of correct market mechanisms, by organizing elections, through facilitation of negotiations or through mediating the negotiations between the parties.

The individualist cultural bias rejects the narratives of the other social solidarities. They find arguments about the causes of war based on group differences and inherent malignance of human beings as inaccurate and offensive. Granted that individuals might be incapable, but such generalization about groups of people is unacceptable in their frame of reference. Thus, they find intrusive intervention to be counter-productive, since the results do not express the will of the people, either through markets or the electoral process. Any interference that sets market mechanisms and democratic procedures aside is not productive. It can be tolerated only when it is indisputably aimed at correcting the behaviour of the incompetent elites who stand in the way and represent obstacles to correct functioning of market mechanisms. The individualists also reject the egalitarian cultural bias, particularly because it focuses on what individualists perceive as the private sphere, thus limiting individual freedom.

The adherents of the individualistic social solidarity, when in charge of a peacebuilding process, would create egocentric networks. Among their contacts with the representatives of other agencies working in the field and with the local authorities, they would ‘invite to the table’ those who share the same interests and are willing to help. Eternally optimistic about the possibility of achieving their goals, the individualists would seek out, without regard for their position or their right to participate, persons perceived to be capable and able to contribute, and would avoid others. This would result in their dealing with both top-level and low-level officials, in both civil society and in public office, in both business (private) and politics (public) and from both (or all) groups in the conflict. The effect of this would be that there will be many loose relationships between different actors, organized in egocentric temporary networks.

Concerning the preferred strategic behaviour, the adherents of the individualistic social solidarity will attempt to influence the behaviours of others through negotiations based on rational arguments. They will gladly engage in competition between opinions, confident in rationality and logic of their own meta-narrative, expecting others to be rational and accept their arguments. When faced with a prospect of failure, they will use their ‘hammer’, their all-purpose tool – the economic incentives. Supporters of the individualistic social solidarity believe that society is governable and social contexts can be influenced through economic incentives that alter the calculations of rational actors and thus enable them to make the right choices.

**Fatalist Social Solidarity in Peacebuilding Processes**

The fatalistic cultural bias defines people as untrustworthy, incapable and in need of luck in order to succeed. Its adherents see the public sphere as threatening, an arena where people get hurt. The path to peace, according to the fatalist cultural bias, is predetermined by higher

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powers, luck or chance. It follows then, they contend, that little or nothing can be done to build a lasting peace – managing institutions (representatives of the international community) can only pretend to do something and only time will tell if peace becomes stable or if armed conflict explodes again. The peacebuilding process is, therefore, not defined in terms of time limits. Peacebuilders that adhere to fatalistic social solidarity see themselves as drops of water in a sea, unable to influence events. They try to survive: they create policies that will enable them to raise funds and stay longer, hoping that things outside their control will provide the wanted result, namely, a lasting peace. The international involvement cannot build peace and it cannot influence the local society, the fatalists claim. It can only fool the people (in the local society as well as in the international community) that something is being done in the name of peace.

The fatalist cultural bias rejects the narratives of the other social solidarities. The causes of war are neither institutional nor structural; likewise they are not caused by bad elites. It is bad luck, bad history, bad neighbours and other things that cannot be controlled that are to be blamed. They also reject the other solidarities’ notions of peace and their ideas about how it can be reached. The ideas that democratization, reconciliation through dialogue and participation in the civil society could lead to a lasting peace are considered naïve. The regulation of behaviour through the institutional arrangements is the only accepted narrative. Yet even here, the fatalists wonder who will regulate and conclude that those people, whether they are the old elites, new elites or the international peacebuilders and experts, have bad intentions and cannot be trusted. Thus, they reject the idea that someone could regulate and prevent bad things from happening. While not endorsing the approach, they could possibly tolerate a hierarchical approach since it neither requires nor expects active participation.

The adherents of the fatalistic social solidarity, when in charge of a peacebuilding process, would isolate themselves from the risks they see in participation. In their contacts both with other international agencies active in the process and with the local authorities, fatalists would not attempt to organize in a meaningful manner. Eternally pessimistic concerning possibilities of achieving their goals, the fatalists would follow the flow and hold to the status-quo, without any grand ideas about achieving dramatic changes. Accordingly, they would create as few and as loose relationships as possible.

The preferred strategic behaviour for adherents of the fatalistic social solidarity is to avoid attention, keep their heads down and avoid taking unnecessary risks. They would engage in a competition of meta-narratives with the adherents of other social solidarities, acting as prophets of doom. When faced with a prospect of failure, i.e., the prospect of a disaster due to their inactivity, they use their ‘hammer’, their all-purpose tool – isolation and avoidance of the problem. Supporters of the fatalist social solidarity believe that society is not governable and social contexts cannot be influenced.

Thus, the first contribution of the Cultural Theory Framework to the conceptual understanding of international peacebuilding consists of a classification of approaches to peacebuilding into four coherent, distinct and conflicting ideal-types. Yet, the ambitions of the Cultural Theory, as well as the ambitions of this paper, do not stop here.

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45 Once again, the time perspective of adherents of different social solidarities is outlined in Michiel Schwarz and Michael Thompson, Divided We Stand: Redefining politics, technology and social choice (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990) p. 67.
46 See appendix
Socio-cultural Viability of International Peacebuilding

As mentioned in the previous section, the Cultural Theory also defines what are ‘good policies’ and/or ‘good governance modes’, through the notion of socio-cultural viability. A policy will succeed if it is viable, i.e., if it is pluralistic and in line with its socio-cultural context. A governance institution will be perceived and accepted as legitimate if it is socio-culturally viable, i.e., if it is pluralistic and in line with its socio-cultural context. Thus, even in the case of international peacebuilding – any particular peacebuilding policy and/or peacebuilding institution will succeed if they are socio-culturally pluralistic and in line with its socio-cultural context, meaning the dominant shared values and beliefs and the preferred mode of social relations existing in the local society.

In other words, the representatives of the international community arrive, introduce policies and engage in the process of governance of the war-torn society. They do so based on their cultural biases, their preferred social relations and their preferred behavioural strategies. The local society, on the other hand, represents a socio-cultural context that is presumably different, especially given that a war-torn society is a collapsed state, a non-functioning social system. Thus, there are two options for possible interactions between the representatives of the international community and the local society, and there are two possible results in terms of socio-cultural change. First, the representatives of the international community can attempt to introduce policies and engage in governance of the society in a manner than is consistent with their own values and beliefs, social relations and strategic behaviours. While the possible and intended benefit is a change of the political culture of the local society, as it learns new ways of governance, there is a risk of misunderstandings, conflicts and policy failures. The second of the two options is that the representatives of the international community can instead adapt to the local socio-cultural context, introduce policies and engage in governance in a manner similar to that preferred by the local authorities and local social elites in order to achieve socio-cultural viability, policy success and governance legitimacy. The possible benefit is short-term policy success; the possible risk is failure to achieve major changes in the local society in the long run, as the socio-culturally viable policies reinforce the already dominant values and beliefs. In this case, it is the representatives of the international community who are learning and changing, rather than the local authorities and the local society in general. In both cases, the policy and/or governance mode must also be somewhat pluralistic; meaning not culturally biased as to reveal its blind-spots and thus open for heavy criticism by adherents of other social solidarities.

In this, it can be said that the Cultural Theory framework defines a basic problem of international peacebuilding with the defined goal of promotion of political and social change, a problem that can be labelled as a ‘socio-cultural viability dilemma’. On one hand, the representatives of the international community can attempt to teach the locals and thus risk failure. On the other, the representatives of the international community can attempt to learn from the locals and thus risk reinforcing the social solidarities already dominant in the society, consequently failing to achieve major social and political change. The question for empirical research is to define which of the two is occurring in a specific case and with which effects.
Concluding Discussion

Finally, the last section of this paper consist of a brief discussion of the theoretical and empirical (meaning conceptual and analytical) usefulness of the Cultural Theory framework for studies of international peacebuilding.

All in all, the Cultural Theory framework constitutes a general theory, presumably able to explain a number of interesting aspects of the dynamics in relationships within international peacebuilding operations in war-torn societies, based on the concept of socio-cultural viability of peacebuilding policies and peacebuilders’ governance modes.

First, the Cultural Theory framework represents a conceptual contribution to studies of peacebuilding through its typology. The theory provides a heuristic conceptual tool that can be used to gain an understanding of the type of peacebuilding involvement through concepts of cultural bias, social relations and strategic behaviours.

Second, the Cultural Theory framework also provides for an analytical tool, able to explain failures and success of peacebuilding operations, through a focus on the relationship between the representatives of the international community and the local authorities. The effects of intervention on the local society and the effects of local society on the representatives of the international community can be traced and evaluated.

Last, but not least, probably the most interesting contribution of Cultural Theory is found in its idea of permanent competition and disequilibrium between the four social solidarities. This opens up for a systemic analysis of what occurs within a complex peacebuilding process. If the representatives of the international community opt to increase the strength of the individualistic values and beliefs, through for example financial aid to business sector, which effects would such a policy have on the totality of the values and beliefs within the local society. Will this mean decrease of egalitarian values, or decrease of isolationist social relations, or both, or neither? Such questions are difficult to analyze and almost always impossible to answer. Cultural Theory opens up for a possibility to do so with more likelihood of success.

Through these three contributions, Cultural Theory framework opens endless opportunities for gaining new and useful knowledge about the work of international institutions involved in peacebuilding operations. Its application to this field raises new questions about the appropriateness of the mechanisms un-critically used in peacebuilding processes, mechanisms such as democratization policies, rule of law programmes, economic transition policies, even international tribunals. Most importantly, it sheds light on problems in the design of such policies and such institutions, as it illuminates ever-present naïve beliefs that solutions that function in Brussels, Paris or New York will have similar effects in Sarajevo, Kabul or Mogadishu.
## Appendix: Typology of Peacebuilding Approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Individualism</th>
<th>Egalitarianism</th>
<th>Hierarchy</th>
<th>Fatalism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human nature</strong></td>
<td>Good, self-seeking</td>
<td>Good, corrupt by evil institutions</td>
<td>Born sinful, redeemed by good institutions</td>
<td>Not to be trusted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paths to peace</strong></td>
<td>Democracy and free trade</td>
<td>Reconciliation and forgiveness</td>
<td>Security and stability</td>
<td>Absence of war. Lasting peace unreachable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The goals of the process</strong></td>
<td>Economic integration</td>
<td>Social integration</td>
<td>Order</td>
<td>Survival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The role of the international community</strong></td>
<td>Technical assistants</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Guardians</td>
<td>Undefined (possibly survivors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basis of authority of intervention</strong></td>
<td>Competence and skills</td>
<td>Moral ground</td>
<td>Legal grounds – Peace agreement and int. law</td>
<td>No legitimate basis of authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time span of intervention</strong></td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Indefinite</td>
<td>Medium long</td>
<td>Unpredictable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scope of intervention</strong></td>
<td>Narrow</td>
<td>All-encompassing</td>
<td>Medium-size</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Democracy style</strong></td>
<td>Procedural</td>
<td>Participatory</td>
<td>Guardian</td>
<td>Unimportant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Management Mode</strong></td>
<td>Choice-ism</td>
<td>Group-ism</td>
<td>Boss-ism</td>
<td>Chance-ism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy based on:</strong></td>
<td>Interests</td>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Survival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Governance challenge</strong></td>
<td>To enable markets to function</td>
<td>To facilitate promotion of public interests</td>
<td>To enable domination of elites and experts</td>
<td>Does not expect and require participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perception of politics</strong></td>
<td>“I decide what I want to do”</td>
<td>“We decide what we want to do”</td>
<td>“We decide what they must do”</td>
<td>“They decide what I must do”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social organization</strong></td>
<td>Ego-centric networks</td>
<td>Enclaves</td>
<td>Positional</td>
<td>Isolates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relations</strong></td>
<td>Many and loose</td>
<td>Many and tight</td>
<td>Few and tight</td>
<td>Few and loose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Invited to the table</strong></td>
<td>All who want to participate</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>All who have power</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic Behaviour</strong></td>
<td>Individualist</td>
<td>Egalitarian</td>
<td>Hierarchical</td>
<td>Fatalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy style</strong></td>
<td>Top-down and Bottom-up, through the market</td>
<td>Bottom-up through civil society</td>
<td>Top-down through the apparatus of the state</td>
<td>Top-down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy implementation tools</strong></td>
<td>Pricing, economic incentives</td>
<td>Training and information</td>
<td>Regulation and legislation</td>
<td>None – (garbage can)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bibliography


Schwarz, Michiel and Michael Thompson, *Divided We Stand: Redefining politics, technology and social choice* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990)


Thompson, Michael et al., eds., *Cultural Theory as Political Science* (London: Routledge, 1999).
