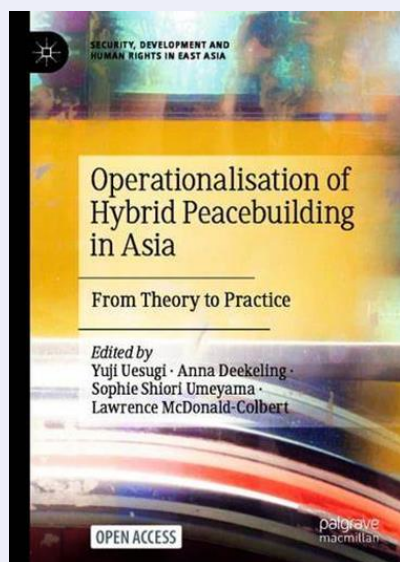


BOOK REVIEWS

Contextualizing International Cooperation for Sustaining Peace:
Adaptive Peacebuilding Pathways research project



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Operationalisation of Hybrid Peacebuilding in Asia: From Theory to Practice.

Edited by Yuji Uesugi,
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Reviewed by
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In this book, editors and contributors provide insights on **how to unpack the theory of hybrid peacebuilding into practice**. By bridging the gap from existing studies on hybrid peacebuilding theory and presenting empirical evidence in the Asian context, this book offers a more profound understanding of the operationalisation of hybrid peacebuilding. It contributes to the theory and practice of international peacebuilding and introduces alternative approaches to peacebuilding theory, which is distinct from the western-centric discourse. In particular, three features make this book significant.

First, this book substantially contributes to the notion of hybridity and complexity in the operationalisation of peacebuilding theory. At the beginning of this book, Yuji Uesugi (Waseda University), Anna Deekeling (Waseda University), and Anton Ingstedt (Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies) provides an assessment of relevant literature reviews related to hybrid peacebuilding theory and analyse it from economic, liberal, and feminist perspectives. The authors argue that hybrid peacebuilding does not follow a standardized approach to peacebuilding. Rather, hybrid peacebuilding comes from the assumption that peacebuilding is a complex, multifaceted, dynamic, and interactive process. In this context, Cedric de Coning (Norwegian Institute of International Affairs) and Lawrence McDonald-Colbert (Waseda University) highlight a deeper explanation of the complexity and its connection to hybrid peacebuilding. According to the authors, complexity theory is essential in understanding the role of hybrid peacebuilding in complex systems and providing a more holistic perspective of hybridization. To explore the link between complexity and hybrid peacebuilding, several characteristics of complexity, such as relationality, dynamism, radical openness,

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contextuality, and adaptivity, are defined and discussed in this chapter. To deal with the issue of unpredictability in complex systems, the authors introduce an alternative approach called adaptive peacebuilding to assist hybrid peacebuilding. The authors argue that adaptive peacebuilding offers a specific method for peacebuilders to collaborate and cope with complexity. The authors explain how external intervention needs internal adaptation in the peacebuilding process, with an iterative process of mutual adaptation and self-learning is critical to achieve sustainable peace and resiliency. The authors also note that the adaptive approach intends to nudge the societal change process towards sustaining peace without heavy intervention.

Second, this book presents empirical pieces of evidence to bridge the gap between theory and practice. In this regard, a typology of mid-space actors is addressed in this book to bridge the disparity between the theory and practice of hybrid peacebuilding. Anna Deekeling (Waseda University) and Dahlia Simangan (Hiroshima University) explore the mid-space actor's typology to solve the problem of how to bridge external interveners with national elites and grassroots stakeholders. The analysis of mid-space actors as gatekeepers and their potential to become 'bridge-builders' or 'spoilers' are identified and explained throughout the chapter. One of the critical insights emphasized by the authors is to avoid binaries of "bridge-

building" versus "spoiling" or labelling "right" versus "wrong." As the authors underline that spoiling is not necessarily sabotaging the peace process. Instead, it can be understood as the re-configuration of the peace process based on the interest of their constituency.

Furthermore, this book presents empirical case studies from both insider and outsider perspectives. The case studies in Cambodia and Mindanao provide realization of hybrid peacebuilding from insider perspectives. Sophie Shiori Umeyama (Waseda University) and Will Brehm (University College London) analyse the role of Buddhist monks as the mid-space actors in post-conflict Cambodia. The authors employ identity as the pivotal concept to examine the role of the Buddhist monks in the peace process. According to the authors, identity is closely tangled with power relations. In the post-conflict setting, identity conflicts might arise during the process and potentially affect the peacebuilding progress. In this regard, the authors also note that identity could be used as a meaningful tool to support bridge-building activities, or it can also hinder it. Therefore, a careful understanding of identity and power relations is required to achieve successful bridge-building among social groups. For instance, the evidence shown in this case study illustrates that the identity of Buddhist monks as religious figures successfully bridged the horizontal gap between communities yet, failed to bridge vertical gaps with national elites.

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By the same token, Ferth Vandenstein Manaysay (Ateneo de Manila University) and Jovanie Camacho Espesor (Mindanao State University) discuss the operationalisation of liberal-local hybridity of peacebuilding in Mindanao. The authors demonstrate the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) as the mid-space actors dealing with frictional binaries between local practices and liberal institutions in the hybridized environment. As mid-space actors, CSOs in Mindanao play essential roles in settling diagonal bridges between local and international and channeling horizontal gaps between different communities in the conflict areas. The authors highlight the involvement of people's diplomacy, participation of indigenous people, and women empowerment in illustrating hybrid peacebuilding practices in the region. The authors argue that in the case of Mindanao, hybridity analysis should not be limited to institutions only but also need to expand the study to scrutiny the layers of interaction such as the practices, competitions, and cooperation among actors. The authors also indicate that local actors' contribution to the international peacebuilding agenda and the amalgamation of top-down approaches and bottom-up plans in hybridization are crucial issues for future research.

Third, this book offers alternative approaches to international peacebuilding. Kwok Chung Wong (Waseda University) and Fujian Li (China Foreign Affairs University) analyse the practice of China's

peacebuilding model from a hybrid peacebuilding lens. The case studies of China's peacebuilding style in Myanmar, Afghanistan, and Pakistan explain several characteristics of China's developmental peacebuilding model, such as a principle of non-intervention and economic development approach. The authors attempt to examine whether the Chinese government's operationalisation of 'developmental peace' can be classified as a hybrid peacebuilding form. The authors argue that China's peacebuilding approach is unique and does not apply a standardized peacebuilding approach. Instead, the approach is adaptive to different conflicts on the ground. The author suggests that it is a type of Asian peacebuilding with the characteristics of hybrid peacebuilding. However, the authors also point out the probability of China's developmental peace becoming elite-driven due to its lack of grassroots engagement. Furthermore, the aspect of human rights is also mentioned as another shortcoming of the China's peacebuilding approach. In addition, Yuji Uesugi (Waseda University) and Anna Deekeling (Waseda University) highlight the practices of Japan's peacebuilding approaches by investigating three case studies in Timor Leste, Myanmar, and Mindanao. The authors explain that Japan's method of peacebuilding defined by the Japanese government as the "consolidation of peace" and "nation-building", have three distinctive features, which are apolitical in nature, non-intervention, and request-based.

The authors note that the traits of Japan's peacebuilding style also emphasize the relationship with gatekeepers. Through the case studies, the authors illustrate the significant role of civil society organizations in empowering mid-space actors as bridge-builders. Moreover, the authors underline that Japan's approaches have demonstrated its capacity to become a hybrid peacebuilding facilitator between local and international, mainly western donors. However, the authors also recognize several dilemmas of Japan's approaches, such as the possibility of the unequal representation of mid-space actors and un-even access to aid due to its 'request-based' practices and the limitation of the area where Japanese actors can operate due to its apolitical principle. According to the authors, the case studies of Chinese and Japanese peacebuilding efforts demonstrate

alternative approaches to peacebuilding. Although having some similarities, the authors convince that both China's and Japan's approaches are different from western-style peacebuilding.

Overall, this book successfully bridges the gap between the theoretical approach and practice on the ground without compromising the notion of complexity and hybridity. Rich in theoretical insights and complemented by four empirical case studies, this book is highly recommended and compulsory for academia, peacebuilding practitioners, social-movement leaders, and policymakers who seek deeper insights to operationalize the hybrid peacebuilding theory. However, further discussion and illustration through case studies on how adaptive approaches can assist hybrid peacebuilding in dealing with complex systems are needed to make this book more practical.

Reference

Uesugi, Yuji, Anna Deekeling, Sophie Shiori Umeyama, and Lawrence McDonald-Colbert, eds. 2021. *Operationalisation of Hybrid Peacebuilding in Asia: From Theory to Practice*. Security, Development and Human Rights in East Asia. Cham: Springer International Publishing. doi:10.1007/978-3-030-67758-9

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About the Research Project:

JICA Ogata Research Institute conducts this research project with the aim of examining contemporary forms of international cooperation for peace in protracted, complex and recurring armed conflicts, and assess how they are fostering and/or hindering the related sustaining peace process.

<https://www.jica.go.jp/jica-ri/research/peace/20190401-20220331.html>