"Why State-building?"

A report on the workshop held at the Graduate Center, City University of New York, to discuss the conceptual framework paper by Susan L. Woodward, "Why State-Building?"

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Rapporteur: Jason G. Harle

I. Introduction

Professor Susan L. Woodward begins the workshop by laying out her reasons for convening this group of scholars and practitioners. "The study and practice of post-conflict reconstruction lacks consensus on the substance of what is meant by the "state." This lack of a common concept of the state makes operations more difficult. Particularly now, as an organizational basis for coordinated action (or coherence) is being developed, a common conceptual and analytical framework is needed. However, the development of mechanisms such as the Peacebuilding Commission may actually make consensus on the concept of the state more difficult to forge, as the stakes are raised for various international actors. Current academic and policy discussions on state-building tend to spiral out, encompassing an ever broadening array of subjects. Therefore, there is a need for a clearer clarification of terms and concepts that allows for defining the core elements of state-building and setting priorities for policy implementation." The object of the workshop and the paper is not to merely critique existing practices, but to develop positive responses where the participants observe shortcomings.

Woodward's paper forms the basis of the discussion. She argues that academic knowledge on state development can be used to set priorities for post-conflict missions that aim to reconstruct states. Establishing priorities is vital to the success of state reconstruction or stabilization projects because the development of state institutions is *path dependent*. This means the initial formulation of rules and interactions between domestic and international actors have long-lasting ramifications for the future development of post-conflict states and societies. Woodward proposes a three-step model for how to sequence state-building. The first priority is to define and enforce the rules that govern the legitimate authority over the use of force. Initially this means efforts to reduce the uncertainty by finding agreement on constitutional principles governing who rules. As long as there is a political struggle over rules governing the legitimate use of force, the other elements of state-building will be infected by instability, no matter how well designed the programs in other sectors are. The way the initial institutions for who rules establishes the conditions for all the other activities. The next steps are to develop capacities for genuine domestic economic development and for the state to operate democratically in accord with the current internationally prevailing minimal expectations.

The implementation of this three-stage model would require a change in current practices. The division of labor and responsibility between international and local actors would in many cases be different than it currently is. International actors might do less initially, but what they do could be done better. Woodward says, "The strongest position that I take in the paper is that what we want to accomplish with state-building can only happen domestically, but it needs a certain international context. Currently, international policies are not providing a supportive environment or allowing autonomous domestic development." Instead, current interventions prioritize the external aspects of states that benefit external actors.

In the paper, Woodward provides evidence for her argument by drawing on the academic literature and examples from existing state reconstruction projects. During the workshop, participants discuss how Woodward's model differs from current practices and can be applied to future state reconstruction projects. Participants offer praise, criticism, and alternative perspectives. Even where disagreement exists between participants' points of view, the discussion pushes towards clarification of concepts and greater recognition of assumptions.

II. The Historical Development of the State-building Agenda

Fittingly, the early part of the discussion focuses on the question posed by the title: Why state-building? A useful point of entry into the conversation is the consideration given to the historical development of the concept and how it has come to figure prominently in current debates around policy implementation.

One argument is that the move to state-building seems to be merely a shift in academic fashion. In the 1960s, nation-building, as understood in the work of such scholars as Karl Deutsch, was used. One participant says, "Why the shift to state-building? Is it because the Republicans in the US used nation-building pejoratively? The problem still seems to be that nations have not been achieved and that people do not have a sense of common nationality."

Woodward responds that the use of state-building rather than nation-building is appropriate for two reasons. First, state-building is more appropriate to the administrative aspect of the programs of the World Bank and other agencies. Secondly, the question of whether a nation is needed to have a functioning state is still hypothesis, an untested empirical question from that earlier literature.[ii] Subsequent studies show that a sense of common nationality came relatively late in the historical state building process. Also, in America and Europe, there is not a single trajectory or path to state or nationbuilding. As one participant noted, "There are ups and downs in terms of the power of the central government, and the historical trajectory is not very clear."

Another participant sees the move from nation-building to state-building as occurring in three distinct shifts since WWII. "First, we had the problem of the post-colonial state: what kind of state should we create to control these ungoverned territories? The state was created and then worries about nation-building emerged. In the 60s and 70s, we moved to the developmentalist state and the concern for how it provides for the population. Globalization examined the shrinking role of the state, because a different kind of state was required to deal with economic changes. Only in the 1990s, has state function been seen as containing internal problems and violence. After 9/11, the agenda has changed again."

After WWII came the biggest wave of state-building. There was an expectation that states would play a certain role in the international system and in the balance of power, choosing between the Soviet or Western bloc. Most states were propped up financially and through incentives, and now the negative consequences of that model are becoming clear. The second wave of state-building is happening now, after 9/11, with a very different approach and expectations. Today, there is almost a single model for the state, a liberal internationalist state. A case study of Namibia shows that because it gained independence after the end of the Cold War, it took a drastically changed path. While Namibia had no choice but to follow the liberal model, it does have greater control of its economy than other states. The international and historical context in which the state-building project occurs has consequences. World markets also have consequences. As one participant noted, "in addition to seeing the nature of state-building as dependent on changes to global regimes, one should also look at changing resource flows. The price of oil has its own effects on some countries."

On the question of the new salience of the state as an international concern after 9/11, Woodward responds that in the academic literature, the international environment in which states emerge has always been a concern. For instance, the developmental and globalization literatures look at the international dynamic and provide different answers as to its effects upon states.

One participant describes the perspective inside UN missions. From the end of the 1980s, the UN approached peacebuilding from a functionalist angle that is not directly concerned with state-building.

States were seen primarily as a bundle of institutions that performed various functions. This model of peacebuilding also has a three-step process:
1. End the fighting through the placement of peacekeepers
2. Popular welfare and relief
3. Move from relief to development

State-building was neglected because early on, there was a sense that the UN didn't want to respond with a kind of neo-colonial operation (even if it could afford to). The UN wanted to leave behind an elected government that would hopefully promote human rights as well.   Echoing the logic of this model, one participant says, "Why start with state-building? The problem is peace, so we need peace-building. Or there is a service delivery problem, or a problem of administering justice. Intervention doesn't necessarily have to occur at the state level to address these problems and how to intervene is very case specific."

There is still some reluctance to consider state-building as central to peacebuilding missions. For instance, " it is interesting that there is Peacebuilding Commission but no state-building commission." However, the participants generally agree: increasingly state-building is seen as a crucial part of peace-building missions. In looking for reasons why, one participant says "the challenges of cases today are different than they were in the mid-90s. The international and UN institutions developed from these cases in Africa and the Balkans. But today, the cases from Haiti, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine are not really civil war cases. What they have in common is that the US or the UN is not happy with the situation, and we want some other kind of government there."

Some see the state-building agenda as more of a concern of the international policy community only after 9/11. Traditionally, concern for state fragility or effectiveness was a way of policing delinquency and subject to powerful governments' policy concerns. But since 9/11, the problem of controlling the use of force within fragile states' borders has brought renewed focus on the state. An earlier example of this is Palestine after the Oslo Accords. "The state was central to the program for peace. Developing a Palestinian state was the animating strategic vision for the international community, both in bargaining with Palestinians and providing security. There were interesting differences in the conception of how to go about it, but there is little doubt that state-building was the central strategy."

This example highlights that the recent focus on the state has come from outside affected countries. The World Bank has been a key actor, as it has made the sovereign state more central to its support for development. The architecture of International Financial Institutions demands dealing with sovereign states as capacious actors that meet certain demands. The Bank is trying to "come to terms with the opportunities presented by peacekeeping" for building new states. It is unclear if the international architecture has the ability to deal with quasi-states, local governments, or non-state entities that might have greater legitimacy than the state itself. Somalia is an example where empirical evidence shows that trying to resurrect the state has fueled violence, making the process long and tortuous.

Woodward responds that such consideration of alternatives to the state shows that the state is ultimately whatever outsiders accept it to be. Statehood in Somalia depends upon what is internationally recognized. This is the empirical element-- the criteria for international recognition change over time, which has ramifications within affected states. What is done operationally through interventions is concerned primarily with this external role of the state.

One participant notes that under international law, the norm for recognition remains the capacity of a state to protect its territory. Even if this does not reflect the reality of many states, there is a lot of opposition to changing this notion of sovereignty. Sovereign equality too is a myth, but a very useful

myth. Finding an alternative to the sovereign state would be seen as an affront to other states and would cause tremendous international chaos. This highlights the gap between juridical statehood, and the actual requirements of the international community.

The intersection of international interests and expectations with post-conflict situations means that state-building as a policy term has come to refer to activities that can be supported with international assistance. Thus for international actors, it is vital to set out what they can hope to accomplish, and what must happen through the exertions of domestic actors. [iii]

One participant argues that "there is now a move away from a *transformationalist agenda* to a more limited vision of developing states that do a few things that are internationally desirable, like dealing with internal terrorist threats or treat its people decently.[iv] While the Peacebuilding Commission is empowered to be an institution employing grand strategy in post-conflict cases, it doesn't have access to the level of knowledge that will enable it to operate in a meaningful way." Transformationalist agendas, or plans to radically restructure the state in accord with a certain model, are limited by a lack of knowledge about local conditions. Ambitious plans are likely to go awry, like "the Goss plan for Haiti."

Others in the group see transformationalist agendas as still at work, even in current operations that avow a more limited goals. Most international programs intend to address root causes and create a society that does not resolve its conflicts through violence, although the degree of success in such efforts is another question. Woodward says, "I think we are following the transformationalist agenda after cease-fires, but without recognizing it." The group disagrees about what elements should be included in any possible transformationalist agenda, which in part reflected differing concepts of what the state should do. The future of state-building is thus unclear-- is there or should there be an ambitious push towards a more comprehensive reordering of states from without, or should goals be more limited and directed towards what is achievable?

The ensuing discussion examines Woodward's proposal for developing a more limited and focused agenda for state-building that can enable the positive transformation of the state to emerge more from domestic rather than international politics. In her understanding, emphasizing state-building does not imply a grand strategy for all cases that will unite all international actors under a common program. Instead, her understanding of the state-building agenda has the smaller intention of triggering a refocusing, particularly upon questions of security.

III. Conceptual clarification: The specific nature of the post-conflict moment and proposed typologies of cases

The above description of the historical and conceptual development of state-building considers a broad range of cases, not all of which are post-conflict. Some participants argue that focus on post-conflict cases can yield an understanding that is more relevant to operations. "We do ourselves a disservice to put cases like Liberia and Iraq under the same rubric. We need more manageable categories that enable institutions to focus on the cases they handle best. Categories of post- and pre-conflict also need to be separated." Consensus can be found more easily when similar cases are separated from others. Thus the term state-building could be reserved for the post-conflict moment, while in other cases the conceptual focus could be upon building state capacity or on stabilization.

Woodward agrees with the need for a typology because she has seen the bad outcomes that result from using the same policies regardless of national context or whether it a post-conflict or a "reform" situation. Such policy approaches are often based on the assumption that the state is there, also in the cases of fragile states or developing states. A useful typology could start with what kind of government exists prior to intervention and the basic question: has the state collapsed or not? Another example is that of Cyprus where civil war emerges not for the lack of a state, but because there were "too many states." In most post-conflict cases, there are already state structures in place, not a vacuum. These structures provide public goods and international missions should look at how to build on these existing institutions. Civil war cases should be separated from secessionist or independence movements. In cases like Eritrea, there is a strong state, and the problem might "be too much certainty" about authoritative control rather than too little.

A more complex typology of pre-existing political environments is more helpful than a simple distinction between pre- and post-conflict. Also one participant points out, "what Boutros-Ghali called post-conflict operations are actually post-peace agreement operation or peace implementation operations." Post-conflict is not without conflict or necessarily peaceful. Instead it indicates that an international presence has been deployed to help end the violence.

Some see state-building in a post-war environment as a rather specific case that may be relatively easy to solve for the policy community. It is easier to get additional resources and international actors involved. Civil war discredits the past, making a degree of constitutional restructuring possible. The bigger problems will come with state-building in situations that are not post-conflict, in order to prevent conflict. Here it is more difficult to find the points of entry for reform.

However while there are analytic gains from focusing on post-conflict cases, participants agree that lessons from post-conflict cases can be fruitfully applied more broadly. Post-conflict environments generally require a focus on security and establishing mechanisms for the legitimate exercise of authority, which are issues that have a broader resonance and are often neglected. Several participants see security as the biggest technical failure of international organizations, especially in Africa. Woodward says that her theoretical argument is that stabilization requires a focus on the state. This is also true for preventing conflict, but that is a separate argument.

An alternative typology could emphasize the differences in the nature of the international intervention. "Cases differ according to the resources, time and knowledge we have. These set the constraints on how much transformation international intervention can accomplish. Especially knowledge about a country constrains programs. Without knowledge, it is difficult to build the robust shared analysis that is

necessary to understand tradeoffs, and it is uncertain if that can be achieved in many countries." A basic typology focused on interveners could better enable different organizations to work together.

Typologies on the actor side should provide information about their sincerity, limitations, and capabilities. Sincerity here is meant in the game theory sense that there is a stated agenda, but actions are actually intended to achieve other goals. Do interveners really want to create stable functioning democracies? The discussion here centered primarily upon US interventions. One perspective is that stabilization of states is a goal, because if successful, countries will interact better internationally by obeying WTO rules and not creating regional problems. But what happens internally is not really a concern so long as it doesn't impact the US.

Other participants responded that what seems insincere is actually a reflection of the complexity of goals pursued in a multilevel game. The lesson learned in the 1990s is that if regime change without state transformation is the only action, the problem will return in a couple of years, as the exemplified by Charles Taylor. There are good reasons to pursue state transformation-- to change the people who rule and ultimately the rules by which leaders are selected, right down to the constitutional level. Still, the goals of interveners can be considered in a typology of missions, and as way to organize arguments from academic literature.

One participant offers another potential model: "We can think about the problem as competing notions of what a post-conflict state needs to be. I see them as overlapping circles of the reliable state (international system), the effective state (administrative provision of services and authority to control force), and the democratic state. These three circles can interlock and each can reinforce the other. The ideal spot is in each circle simultaneously, a reliable international actor that is effective and democratic. There may be spots along the way that are tolerable, but if that doesn't include "the reliable state" there will not be a lot of support from the international community. There is a part of the policy community that is fixated on creating reliable states, as trade partners, as non-destabilizers, as controllers of borders and terrorist elements."

Because there is disagreement about the goals and intentions of state-building projects, these may not be the soundest basis for a typology of cases. As Woodward says, a transformative agenda for remaking a state is an inherently political one. The various international and domestic actors have different and often competing stakes, especially where some see changes in political leadership as necessary for meeting a particular goal such as creating an internationally reliable state. This illustrates that competing notions of what comprises political legitimacy prevent a unified understanding of it as a goal. Even when actors agree upon the desirability of establishing a state that fulfills specific functions (controls violence, fosters economic developments, is effective in its administration and is viewed as legitimate internationally and domestically) there is still disagreement about how to accomplish this and what it should look like. Thus, a typology of cases built around goals may be unable to gain consensus in policy communities. Because goals vary between the actors within particular cases, the environment prior to intervention provides a more empirically grounded basis for a typology of cases.[v][n2]

However, the clarification of goals can help us analyze state-building's successes and failures in post-conflict environments. The study of outcomes requires attention to what interveners hoped to achieve and to the empirical starting point of the conflict and post-conflict environment. Empirical evidence shows that in many cases, the state-building goals of external actors need to be modified to fit the reality of what can be realized in particular post-conflict settings. Taking local context as the starting point has ramifications beyond use in an analytic typology-- local context should also inform how interventions proceed and what they hope to accomplish.

IV. Goals and priorities of the state-building agenda -- one proposal for increasing consensus

Perhaps a more fundamental reason for not using a typology based upon the goals of international actors is that part of the purpose of this workshop and paper is to formulate an approach to state-building with a more unified set of goals. This approach, which also builds off of knowledge of local context, should, in line with the recommendations of the Brahimi report, inform the resources and methods used by international actors. It should also help in the definition of the roles to be played by the various international and local actors and their coordination. Woodward proposes that a more unified approach can be developed from what the academic and policy worlds have learned from the experiences of previous interventions.

Drawing from the academic literature on causes of civil war, Woodward argues that generalizations about post-conflict contexts can be based upon the nature of the structure of power in particular countries. Here, the structure of power is different from the state. One participant adds two examples:

> At a recent meeting, an anthropologist noted that where peace is built in Africa it is not kept by states but by other social relations. In Afghanistan, the state collapses and reforms quickly from time to time. But these are social structures that maintain peace. We should not see this as a negation of the state. Rather it makes state-building possible.

Wars are fought to change that structure of power, and this effort continues after the violence has stopped. A serious problem with the goals of outside actors is that they often have a stronger "transformative" agenda for changing power structures than do locals, which can actually feed conflict rather than ameliorating it. As international actors pursue this agenda, they sustain a high level of uncertainty about the structure of power. This inhibits the establishment of a stable, self-sustaining peace and the development of other aspects of state. The empirical studies show that post-conflict state-building projects don't last until the process becomes indigenously driven.

An example is Bosnia, where currently it is still not clear what the government is, because outsiders have been trying to transform the Dayton constitution into something different. People can't plan if today X is going to be making decisions about drivers' licenses or jobs through a patronage system, but tomorrow they might not be. People have to hedge their bets, and this kind of uncertainty keeps the game going and nothing can change. Setting rules stabilizes expectations.

A relatively stable set of rules governing who uses power and force and how has to be in put in place before other goals are addressed. This should be recognized as the basic element of the state and the first priority for state-building interventions, and these rules "shouldn't be undermined by trying to get our people in power, to put it bluntly." This kind of bias can also be subtle. For instance in Mozambique, "all the international actors work with the government, and they are strengthening the ruling party daily. Internationals are doing nothing to strengthen the opposition party. They treat the opposition party as if it had a personality problem, without realizing that there is a huge imbalance in the political structure because of whom internationals are supporting." As one participant says, "the problem is that outside interventions are always seen as impositions and this creates resentment. In Sierra Leone, there was significant outside pressure to change the constitution. Today, there is a growing perception that the UN is on the side of the donors, not acting as the neutral party it once was." The lack of trust is so deep that even reforms that make sense are not accepted. Woodward argues that "in most interventions, even if under a UN mandate, the lead actors have a clear idea of who they are going to support as a legitimate ruler and where the authority over force lies." But for stabilization to happen, this legitimacy needs to develop through local processes. The international community should support these processes rather than favor specific leaders.

Currently, there is agreement on the various identifiable functions of state-building, but what is done now are the less important things. An example of this is the CSIS grid defining task areas, which is widely used, but it does not give any weight, priorities, or sequence to these tasks. Given that the task areas have been established, Woodward says that it is even more urgent to define the fundamentals and make operational changes accordingly. For example, Macartan Humphrey's research shows that DDR needs a government that settles force questions. Once there is a government, there are social mechanisms to do DDR. Then a state program often isn't even needed, but without a government DDR programs don't work.

The first priority of state-building, especially in a post-conflict environment, should be to establish the rules governing authority over the use of force that are locally recognized. Woodward says, "Thinking of the state as authority over coercive force is often contentious, as the question arises, "What happens when the state is itself violent?" But if one accepts the academic literature on the state, this is what the state is. We can't ignore it. A successful state is one that doesn't have to use coercion because it has unchallenged authority over the use of force. Political legitimacy is also an institution, a set of rules, which decides when force is used." This aspect of state authority over coercion-- citizen self-control and participation, what makes people stop at a red light when no one else is around-- is missed by the UN-related literature, which tends to see states as bundles of functions.

Many political theorists, such as Hobbes and Bodin see the state as originating with the need to provide security. To prevent civil war and protect against outside threats, a single sovereign with a "responsibility to protect" its citizens was created. An alternative theory is Locke's social contract, which emerges more from civil society than conflict. In this conception, the authority of the state depends more upon its legitimacy in the eyes of citizens than its control over force. Woodward says that these different concepts of the origin of the state are partly the result of the fact that Locke was not writing in a time of civil war, while others were. In conditions of violence "the academic literature agrees that nothing can happen without first some general understanding of where the right to use force lies and a trust that this can be implemented. This is not an alternative to civil society, but its precondition."

Referring to the work of Tilly and Duffield, one participant says that "violence can be a way of expressing legitimate grievances. The states we know and love have been built through violence, but the whole agenda, particularly since the Cold War, is directed toward trying to arrest those processes." Thus there are contradictions between peace- versus state-building. Jeremy Weinstein looks at the cases where state-building happened without international intervention. This is important, but the cases he highlights (Uganda, Somalia) do not look like what international actors are trying to accomplish. There are many historical cases where, after massive civil wars, a state was put back together over a long period of time, as in China. With an international presence, the time frame for successful development of institutions generally shrinks. Virginia Page Fortna's work investigates this contradiction. She shows that there are fewer military victories in civil wars, which means that strong institutional and leadership capacities are not present at the end of conflicts. Instead, decisions are made to intervene sooner, so more political work is required of intervening forces.

Woodward asks if some of that political work needs to be done at the diplomatic moment, during negotiations to stop the fighting, rather than through post-conflict operations. "There is the problem of diplomatic peace, as with the Dayton accords. Once an agreement is entered into and elections have been held for external reasons, the constitutional moment, as academics call it, has already passed. The constitution is already set. We know that El Salvador and Mozambique were successful because there

was a long peace process. Would we have fewer tradeoffs if we recognized the need to reduce uncertainty about who the rulers are in the early stages?"

Another participant adds, "In my mind, negotiation processes set the trajectory in the post-conflict environment." Part of the negotiating should be developing the political processes that determine who rules. One negotiating tool that can lay the path for more successful state-building is Senator Mitchell's concept of trust-building as a means of developing social contracts that legitimize states. The tricky questions are what stabilizes who rules and what are the factors needed to ensure the political processes can move forward and transform itself. "A better effort during the diplomatic moment may then avoid some of the problems later on. But diplomatic settlements also require tradeoffs. They have to account for the objective situation on the ground and the abilities of outsiders to apply leverage."

One participant asks "Are the types of things we are doing up front enabling this or locking states into perverse relationships?" One response to this problem might be to reduce expectations of what is expected of states. The minimal functions literature, like the work of Ashraf Ghani and Lockhardt can be invoked here, although Woodward says that it is "not very specific yet in its recommendations." Woodward also says that reducing initial priorities for international missions should not mean reducing the functions of the state over the long term. Reducing the uncertainty about who rules initially is a necessary precondition, but not a sufficient step for building a state. Here, she disagrees with the conclusion of the World Bank research project led by Paul Collier that democratization is in part a problem because it sets expectations too high when capacity is insufficient.

Autocracy can settle the question of who rules and govern the use of force, but should it be implemented? The empirical literature, particularly the work of Stinchcombe asks what brings stabilization after revolutions, which often resemble post-conflict environments. Stinchcombe provides nine mechanisms, and democracy is the least likely mechanism to do that work. However, in terms of policy development, the normative value of regime type should and does play a role in the kind of stabilization that is pursued. Here, it is also important to remember that the immediate post-conflict moment is different from long-term state development. Woodward says that initially the pre-conflict power structure, often more autocratic, may do the stabilizing, provided that there are means for then transforming the state from within and peacefully. There may also be greater political opportunities available in the long run if the initial focus remains only on the precondition of reducing the uncertainty about legitimate authority.

A current example is Sierra Leone. There, a majority believe that the government reinstalled by the British that negotiated the peace agreement and created some stability now, is the same government or power structure that was a problem in the first place. Therefore, this stability will not last in the long run unless the power structure can be transformed. Now there is some control over the violence because one accepted structure of power is in place that everyone more or less believes they ought to comply with. If in the diplomatic moment, there are ways to create democratic space-- the possibility for locals to go through a political process and then transform it-- then it is possible to move to a more open and democratic system.

Although state-building projects start with existing capacity, existing capacity shouldn't set fast limits on the future state. "Sticking with the status quo in the worst possible way" is not a desirable solution for state-building. Woodward's point here is that an initial focus on the need to establish control over the use of force through clear and accepted rules does not mean that state-building should stop here. In the diplomatic moment, there should also be an effort to maintain some openness for future political change, even as the rules governing how that change takes place are introduced. The case literature on

interventions shows that the lack of transformative space is often a result of specific policies of international actors.

One participant says, "I'm a believer in the path dependency dynamic. If you give authority to a limited group of people, the tendency is for them to want to hold on to it. An internal willingness for transformation needs to be melded with the international communities' willingness to guarantee that process. If you were saying it didn't matter who you turned the keys over to, I wouldn't agree with that." If state-building programs attempt to recreate the historical path of state development, there are other risks. The state could be prevented from developing as an autonomous organization and instead be handed over to the land-owning class. State institutions could sharpen a particular class's control over the rest of country.

In respect to the problem of path dependence, several participants noted that it is important that a particular model of the state not be imposed. One question is if every society has a different idea of what their state should do for them?" Woodward responds, "That's exactly why I think we should reduce what we try to accomplish by intervention. Part of the academic literature is that there may be different forms -- parliamentary or presidential, different property regimes. Different forms may be used to address the same problem. The institution is only as good as the task it is designed for. There should not be too much emphasis on the form, without understanding what it is designed for." Also, Woodward's proposal for a state-building agenda does not require that all power be located with a central state. "Power does not have to be located at the center. For instance, the IMF insists on an independent central bank. But you need a lot of resources to create an independent central bank, which could be spent on healthcare or schools. But the US had and has a federal reserve system, and not having a single central bank has worked fine. Many things can be decentralized." What is important for federalism is that there be clear rules governing competition between different regions.

A contentious issue with regards to reconstructing states is legitimacy. Rules need to be established governing the use of force, but for these rules to stick, they need to be seen as legitimate. In one participant's view, legitimacy is "part and parcel of the social contract and how individuals relate to their government and it is intrinsic to the problem of state-building. The problem is who defines legitimacy. Western yardsticks like Freedom House reports may be problematic. But what is it that the people themselves think, and how much is an imported agenda? We need to insist on a notion of legitimacy that is rooted in the culture of the people you are dealing with." But, "often [international and domestic] actors are using the concept of legitimacy to preserve their own power or to give leaders room to maneuver." Woodward says that an issue with legitimacy is that people don't like it to be imposed, as it depends on indigenous values.[vii] Others emphasize that imposing democracy is a contradiction, and even with the best motivations of the international community imposing democracy may be virtually impossible.

Part of the solution can be "to inform policy makers about the thoughts of local populations. We so rarely ask non-elites or poll them. We don't even ask the simple question of what do you think we are doing here? Once we are there, we don't measure the progress." Woodward adds "often there are surveys about what people want, but those results are ignored. People will say they want jobs, and that is ignored. Academic research can encourage the posing of assessment questions and tell how to phrase them." An example is a recent Rand study that showed that "when development aid adheres more to what the locals want, it is more successful." Even though this is obvious, local concerns are not researched or implemented enough.

In reference to legitimacy, it is important to remember Arrow's theorem. It is fallacious to think that what people want is clearly definable and accessible. "Instead, on every question asked people, what they want is not well defined. It depends upon the alternatives people are given. The preferences revealed by political behavior depend on the alternatives faced and how they are ordered. This is why people will denounce people as warlords then vote for them the next.[viii] There is an interaction structured by social context between what people say they want and the preferences exhibited by what they do. This applies to outsiders as well, which is a reason they are seen as hypocrites."[ix] Thus, a state-building agenda needs to look at what alternatives can be made more available. This approach also applies to economic development. One approach to transforming the state is to adjust redistributive elements and thus create different incentive structures. Post-conflict countries tend to be quite poor, and state reconstruction is needed to aid economic development. Development done well can be an important means of generating legitimacy for more peaceful state-building processes. However, empirical studies show that security is not necessarily tied to either economic development or democratization. In the immediate post-conflict context, security questions need to be given precedence.

Woodward's proposal for a refocusing of the post-conflict agenda has implications for current practices. Less should be done by internationals because negative outcomes are generally a result of outside actions.[x] Participants agree that unintended consequences result from outside actions because of hubris-- outsider's ambitions are too great and do not recognize complexity.[xi] Even so, Woodward says that some activities could continue to be done as they are now. "Some things need to be done by the international community because they are not being done by locals. But we should realize that the reason they are not being done by locals is because the political and security conditions are not in place." Assessments can be run to figure out what locals can do in a post-conflict environment, and resources can be provided from outside to build capacity and develop self-sustaining institutions. Thus programs can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Aid and interventions should have the purpose of making themselves unnecessary and currently that isn't being done.

The literature delimiting the various functions of the state can be useful here, because in some cases outsiders do help provide services while building indigenous capacity. What outsiders or locals should do is mostly case specific, meaning local ownership is not needed in all sectors. Also, if the institutional elements of the state and the normative rules governing the use of force are distinguished, there may be a greater opening for alternative ways of thinking about the state, including drawing on indigenous traditions. Some functions can be done well without state-building, including perhaps service delivery. Other functions cannot be done without state-building, like building an effective police force or other elements of security sector reform. While USAID considers policing as a service, Woodward says this is a mistake as effective policing is one of the core[n4] functions of the state.

One participant takes up the argument for narrowing the objectives of outsiders by calling for interveners to focus on the global processes that often undermine the goals of state-building rather than attempting to apply "cookie cutter" models for state transformation with proscribed forms of participation. Examples of negative global processes include illegal trade in drugs, sex, and natural resources. For instance in West Africa, attempts to build up the fishing industry are affected by European and Asian fishing businesses raping [n5]the resources there. Instead those resources should be channeled through places like Guinea-Bissau, which helps them build up a viable state. Now, those resources are being lost. This can be done with a viable security system. Woodward says this example illustrates an operational consequence of her model, which calls for examination of the security problem, and an assessment of who are the local and international actors that can assist with the development of security systems.

Some participants make the counter argument that prioritizing the control of violence in the initial establishment of the state may not necessarily be the best way to develop the state. Some note that people generally interact more with the administrative aspects of the state than with the coercive aspects. For instance, postal services have been very important for building states. Postmen are tangible and legitimate representatives of states, who deliver a public good. The international community is actually very limited in its influence and is not very good at state- or nation-building. Thus, internationals should focus on a few areas where they have influence and know how to do it better, like service delivery.

However, there is a tension here between leaving functions to outsiders or having outsiders help build state capacity. World Bank documents and the experience in Madagascar show since the 1980s a push towards letting NGOs or other actors run services that have traditionally been the purview of the state. For instance, in Yemen state-building seems to require strengthening the state vis-à-vis its population to prevent the alienation of the state from society. But what is done is just the contrary. The internationals are providing healthcare, aid and services to the population, while the state is expected by the international community to handle the security front. This illustrates "the contradiction between national political processes around legitimacy and technocratic modes of producing administration."

The participants generally agreed that a current problem of the state-building agenda is that it is too often driven by the demands of international actors and not concern for the legitimacy of the state for its own society. This not only distorts relations of post-conflict countries to other countries, but also shapes the internal dynamics of countries. A study of seven countries by the International Peace Academy on the security-development nexus[xii] shows "what happens internally, in terms of state-society relations, is quite irrelevant to most national policy-makers. Their concern is for the external function of the state. The problem is how to deal with the variety of states within a state-based international system, who are more concerned with their relations to other states and the international agenda than their own constituencies." To some degree the tension between external demands and internal processes is unavoidable, because of "the current juridical framework of the world system" that requires sovereign states according to a specific model. However, Woodward's proposal provides a useful means of refocusing on what outsiders need to accomplish so that indigenous processes of state development can unfold and allow countries to achieve the domestic peace, legitimacy and economic development that all parties desire. The remainder of the discussion focuses on ways to translate insights from the academic literature, such as Woodward's paper, to the policy community.

V. How academic research can influence on policy development and implementation

Woodward begins the discussion of the role of academic knowledge by asking, "If I could demonstrate empirically that there is a lack of success in stabilizing post-conflict countries and that this lack of success is because of current practices (not indigenous cultures and histories), would there be a willingness to change?"

Some participants find that this is a good case to make -- that there is a marginally higher cost of maintaining current practices. International organizations have their own path dependency, which is often based on sectoral specialization. "To change this, we need to be able to explain to them why their functional approach is counterproductive." Also, "currently confusion reigns in bureaucracies. It is useful to bring some intellectual clarity or an intellectual framework to the state. Although, it will take bureaucracies time to catch up, in part because different models of the state are a part of turf battles."

Another participant agrees while adding the important caveat that a new agenda must also work with the agenda of creating reputable states, because there are powerful interests that see this as the most important goal. "If you can say that your proposal for a more limited set of objectives also aids reliability, I think you have a powerful argument. If there is a tradeoff, or a lack of progress on insuring reliability, then it might be attractive to some parts, but not for those of a more realist viewpoint, who will do anything to create reliable states."

The state building agenda can be used to make the following key points to the policy world, which are not yet widely accepted: 1) Giving aid to parallel structures undermines political legitimacy 2)The way security institutions are constituted is key to the legitimacy of the state.
The state-building concept's most important contribution is its illustration of the interrelationship of coercion, capital and legitimacy. However, "even if understood by individuals, it would still be difficult to integrate into standard operating procedures. The nature of bureaucracy is to try to apply general rules across cases and divide tasks into subtasks rather than coordinate, which is the job of leadership. The intentional lack of coordinating capacity of the UN (as it is not supposed to operate as a sovereign) prevents international operations from having a coordinating capacity."

Another problem with attempting to influence policy bureaucracies through academic argument is the broad range of levels of sophistication within the policy community. "To apply research, understanding actors means knowing the differences between them. Some are much more open, like those trying to figure out how to organize missions and see the bad outcomes." But oftentimes, the analytic rigor and empirical research of academic literature is ignored or misinterpreted. "On the Hill, people may be somewhat naïve or limited. But that is certainly not the case at USAID. Over the past year, it conducted a major applied research effort on improving the effectiveness of service delivery in fragile states. It looked at the tension between short-term goals, which can be met by NGOs and the need to give the state an important role in managing the service delivery process. It also looked at how donors can also be part of the problem. This group of people, who are more interested in academic work, have an equal level of frustration with the episodic engagement of people on the Hill."

Timing is thus important. "When the student is ready, the teacher will come. There are moments when it is important to have empirically grounded ideas available for policy-makers. One example is the task framework provided by CSIS. There was some substance to it, but its availability was key to its popularity. It migrated from think tanks to the policy world (and in classrooms too as a principle for organizing lectures). You never know when these moments will occur, so it is important that the material already be out there. The target audience should be the professionals in the agencies and think

tanks. We bring people in to give presentations to try to bring in new ideas, some of which have traction and some don't. As new issues emerge, there is also an opening. Fragile state weren't on the agenda three years ago. I find I spend a lot of time educating people about the existing literature. I am not so pessimistic about the possibilities for academic work to have influence, but its impact is not predictable."

Knowledge is often not taken upon directly in policy bureaucracies. "It has to be a homegrown effort. No matter how academically literate an argument may be, that isn't the evidence that resonates. It has to be translated into the going institutional imperatives. It is unlikely that an outside consultant will be aware enough of what those imperatives are. The question is then if the analytical people inclined to look at literature. The most gratifying aspects of recent work on service delivery is that it has necessitated a link between policy types and operational bureaus. It is interesting to see how they have latched onto various issues in unexpected ways. A good analytical framework provides a basis for rich conversations. People's attitudes about the indicators that matter and about partners such as NGOs have begun to change, as they see them as both part of the problem and part of the solution. Policy makers are even looking more closely at themselves as potentially part of the problem."

In part because academic literature is not translated directly into policy change, it can sometimes be more influential by playing different roles. One is to "explain tradeoffs" rather than attempt to resolve them with policy suggestions:

> One of the more successful parts of the paper was the discussion of the tension between international requirements of states and indigenous ones. What you have done is show a series of tensions and dilemmas, with some indications of how they can be resolved by reference to academic literature and empirical studies. But I think it is more likely that within the policy world, competing sides will be able to draw on significant examples to make different arguments. Instead of resolving tensions, academic literature can only highlight them and explain tradeoffs. For instance, one successful argument is that in post-conflict environments there is a rush to elections to establish some kind of legitimate leadership, which can exacerbate conflicts. But on the other hand, how long can an interim authority or a shared sovereignty arrangement expect to exercise legitimacy? Often the interim leaders are from the military and not particularly politically astute. How do you put together a coalition that can govern effectively? There isn't necessarily a right answer to this question. Perhaps we can identify a flexible process for how to achieve it, or that the makeup of transitional governments is considered more carefully. Again, defining the tradeoffs is very helpful.

One participant says this explication of tradeoffs may be the most that academic literature can hope for. "In my mind, state-building is about the dilemmas between the advocates for different interests and the different international players (humanitarian aid, human rights, security). No amount of coordination can resolve this, and we can only highlight these tradeoffs." Mary Anderson's "theory of change" can also be used to emphasize for practitioners what they hope to accomplish realistically.

Woodward replies, "I disagree on the point that we can only highlight tradeoffs. If we have clarity on what we mean by state-building, that will enable us to argue for priorities, not just highlight tradeoffs." One example is the success of the concept of social capital, which has helped to reorder the priorities of some international actors, particularly the World Bank. Woodward explains that a recent article on the history of the concept, social capital, at the World Bank shows the role a concept can play for people with a substantive agenda within an organization and how they can build alliances based upon even a concept with weak empirical grounding. However even in this case, the division between the analysis and operational people remains a barrier to the role of ideas on the ground.

One participant warns that an emphasis on state-building may have some of the same problems that an emphasis on social capital has. "Once it is shown that something matters, it means that it needs to be "built" through projects. I think states emerge when you are trying to do other things, and it is often a violent process rather than through social contracts, which are a little ahistorical. I think the state

emerges over the long term, but it can be undercut, for instance through outsides intervention. I think we should do more sensitive peace-building that doesn't prejudice the state." She proposes an alternative approach -- rather than proposing policy changes a state-building agenda could be oriented more towards critiquing current attempts to aid state-building that have unintended consequences.

Another participant emphasizes the need for a rigorous development of concepts even if they cannot be implemented. Restated, rigorous conceptual development can also show why certain highly valued concepts cannot be directly implemented. For instance legitimacy has a wide currency in policy circles, but as the earlier discussion illustrated, it cannot be externally imposed. Clarification of the concept can shed light on current misuses of the concept. "Broad sweeping claims are constantly being made on the basis of either output-based or input-based legitimacy to justify sectoral priorities. It would be valuable to study comparatively what the determinants of legitimacy are, if only to show that these sweeping arguments are not accurate.

Woodward says that legitimacy is used in the policy sphere in a way that does not incorporate the political science literature on the concept. However because the concept is used, could it provide a means of engaging with policy makers in places like the World Bank or the State Department? One response is that "if people who were looking at central tasks were actually thinking about legitimacy, that would be a step forward." Also detailing what legitimacy is "doesn't give priorities or strategic direction." However, "helping us understand the term and what we can do with it would be very helpful. Internationally, there is even less consensus on what legitimacy means. The emphasis is upon will and capacity, which are often largely synonymous with effectiveness and administration."

Also "discussion between policy and academia can help clarify the conceptual confusion within organizations. It is helpful to draw from things outside to clarify the arguments." This is particularly helpful when organizations can highlight or define consensus, because policy people don't have the time to figure out if something is in the mainstream or not or to process academic disagreement. A current BPU project seeks to create a dictionary of terminology to clarify missions. There has been a lot of unanimity on the need to clarify terms because ambiguity during operations can cost lives. Thus conceptual clarification can have direct effects on operations.

One participant summarizes: "Academic work and macrohistorical comparisons are extremely important to bring to the table in real-time situations because it can provide insight on: 1) The tendency to neglect the larger international environment 2) The ability to understand in micro-terms what the real effects of introducing new institutions is likely to be 3) The tension between demands to consolidate leadership and institutionalize effective states.[xiii] Academic knowledge can thus play a large role in informing better policy.

Finally, Woodward says that academic knowledge can clearly contribute to greater seriousness about evaluation and assessment. That may be the best avenue for academics to play a role, especially as evaluation can be too contentious for organizations to handle within themselves. Participants agree that academic literature can help us understand societies better and how to measure what international actors are doing there.

In closing, the group agreed that workshops such as this one provide a useful opportunity for coordination between academics and analysts. This is especially important now. "In recent months, we have become victims of our success in establishing the importance of peace- and state-building. We run the risk of losing sight of our core goals, as there is a certain diffusion." "At the official level, there is more coordination, so we too need to have more frequent conversations, or even an integrated strategy."

Why State–Building?

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The Graduate Center, CUNY

<u>List of Participants</u>

Séverine Autesserre
PhD Candidate
New York University

Megan Burke
Consultant, Governance and Civil Society Unit
Ford Foundation

Elizabeth M. Cousens
Vice President
International Peace Academy

Susanna Campbell
PhD Candidate
The Fletcher School
Tufts University

Spyros Demetriou
Policy Advisor, Strategic Policy and Planning
United Nations Development Programme

Jason Harle
Research Associate
Program on States and Security
Graduate Center, CUNY

Tania Belisle Leclerc
Peacekeeping Best Practices Section
United Nations

Thant Myint-U
Policy Planning Unit
Department of Political Affairs
United Nations

Madalene O' Donnell
Research Associate
Center of International Cooperation
New York University

Bernard Harborne
Lead Conflict Specialist (Africa Region)
The World Bank Group

James O.C. Jonah
Senior Fellow
Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies
The Graduate Center, CUNY

Francesco Mancini
Senior Program Officer
International Peace Academy

Sumie Nakaya
Program Coordinator
Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum
Social Science Research Council

Savita Pawnday
Research Fellow
Program on States and Security
Graduate Center, CUNY

Gordon P. Peake
Associate
International Peace Academy

Necla Tschirgi
Director
Security-Development Nexus Program
International Peace Academy

S. Tjip Walker
Team Leader
Warning and Analysis
Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation
United States Agency for International
Development

Susan L. Woodward
Professor
Department of Political Science
The Graduate Center, CUNY

Bree Zuckerman
Research Associate
Program on States and Security
Graduate Center, CUNY

Barnett R. Rubin
Director of Studies
Center on International Cooperation
New York University

Karin Von Hippel
Co-Director
Post-Conflict Reconstruction Program
Center for Strategic and International Studies

Teresa Whitfield
Director
Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum
Social Science Research Council

Vanessa Hawkins Wyeth
Program Officer
International Peace Academy

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ii "The literature in the 1970s, like Eugene Weber's book on France, showed that a sense of the nation came relatively late. The peasants of France for instance, only gained a sense that they were French in the late 1800s. More recently, Joel Migdal says that the key coercive element of the state is not its use of violence, but the effort to use coercive tactics of assimilation to give citizens a sense of who they are. But how much does this matter empirically?"

iii "In the political economy literature, we see this in the American approach to empire, where economic and strategic allies shape their domestic systems to be complementary to empire. We have been doing this more since 1945. Can we address this tension of policy between the international and domestic?"

iv "This is akin to the development of colonialism. In the mid-19ᵗʰ century there was a very expansive agenda for what could be achieved by liberal, colonialism. Fifty years later, that had become more limited. Britain in India came to emphasize the things that were easy to do, like cultivate specific elites."

v One participant gives an example of conflicting goals: "In Afghanistan, the project to build a state was literally an afterthought. The goal was to depose a regime, which they did. And then they had to replace it with something. Initially, the US was only interested in strengthening the military forces that would fight against its enemies, which were not in the government. They were warlords. The central government was put there to give a legitimacy to this project. Because they outsourced the state-building to the UN and Brahimi came in and worked on constitutionalizing that rule. The US then switched sides from the warlords to the central government as it built a national army."

vii An example from Afghanistan: "In that region of the world, the key to what states should do is 'justice.' The model is that justice comes from the state, and reconciliation comes from the people. The traditional notion of state formation is called the "circle of justice," which goes back to Persian writings and the Islamic literature.   There is a notion that the ruler should be virtuous, which is more important than being lawful."

viii In Afghanistan if you ask people what is legitimate, they will say a strong central government, but if you observe their behavior when they try get services, they go to local power brokers. Patronage and favoritism work, but others argue that it is not the system we want. Mark Duffield refers to war economies as actually existing development. This is actually existing state formation.

ix "If you look at Iraq, it is a great example. We are supposedly teaching democracy, which has the fundamental tenant that civilians run the military. But the Department of Defense is telling everyone what to do. Also, I'm not sure if the business there is very accountable. Moreover, the standards regarding gender are not present in our own organizations most of the time."

x A participant says, "I think people tend to ascribe very large negative consequences to international actors and very small positive consequences. Part of the explanation for this contradiction is that international actions have large consequences, but they are not the intended ones. Unintended consequences are a given of interventions."

xi A participant points out: But failures are not just the fault of outsiders or of donors. Many corrupt, self-seeking patrimonial systems have emerged not because of the desires of donors but as a product of indigenous social situations.

xii The seven cases are Khyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Yemen, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Namibia and Somalia.

xiii Arafat provides an example where a bargain was made to support him in the hopes of strengthening his ability to push for peace, as opposed to building effective institutions. The resulting patronage system delegitimized the Palestinian Authority, when it failed to provide adequate services. Academic work can show how such relations between leaders and institutions play out over time and contribute to

policy debates (such as those between EU countries and the US on how hard to push Arafat to improve service delivery). Now, there is a need for fresh ideas on how to deal with Hamas.