

2 *Political Order in Post-Conflict States*

A Theoretical Framework

Peacebuilding interventions typically fall short of achieving their aspirations because of a mismatch between the objectives of the international community and those of post-conflict elites. The United Nations is intent on building the basis for effective and legitimate governance through a transformative approach to peacebuilding. Domestic elites, by contrast, are intent on forging a very different type of political order, one geared toward bolstering their own political survival and power, with claims to governing authority that are rooted in the distribution of patronage spoils. These post-conflict elites are empowered by the strategy of institutional engineering pursued by international peacebuilding interventions and, in turn, manipulate it, pursuing different tactics of institutional conversion that result in a neopatrimonial political order. This chapter advances a theoretical framework for understanding why and how this transpires, arguing that peacebuilding outcomes are best understood as the result of a phased contest over the course of the peacebuilding pathway between two alternative visions of post-conflict political order.

The practice of externally supported attempts to simultaneously construct states and democracies in developing countries is relatively new and offers fertile ground for mid-range theory generation. My approach to understanding the puzzling outcomes of peacebuilding interventions begins with the premise that the pursuit of effective and legitimate governance through peacebuilding must be situated in the context of the broader quest for modern political order. The first part of this chapter thus lays out a general framework for understanding the nature of political order and what we know about how it is typically established over time – focusing on the incentives elites everywhere face and the consequent choices they make in ordering power in specific ways. In that light, I then build a sequenced causal framework suggesting the outcomes we should expect to see obtain over the course of a peacebuilding intervention – one that links scholarship on conflict and

peace to that on political, institutional, and economic development. At each stage of this causal sequence, I weave together relevant thematic threads from different literatures in comparative politics, international relations, and political economy about the manner in which elites negotiate and respond to moments of transition and shape the political order emerging from those formative moments. These insights are grounded in a historical institutionalist approach, viewing institutions as the arenas in which agents interact with structural historical forces and emphasizing the temporal dimension of causal processes, especially their sequencing.¹ Through this lens, institutional arrangements can be seen as both an outcome of the power struggles of the past and a crucial factor in determining the form of political order that emerges as a result of transformative peacebuilding.

In post-conflict states, through the transitional governance approach, the United Nations attempts to create administrative and political institutions to underpin effective and legitimate governance and serve as the foundations for lasting peace. In practice, these formal institutional arrangements become the site of contest between the international community's vision of political order and the political-economic interests animating the power struggles among domestic elites. At each of the three critical phases of the peacebuilding pathway, therefore – the peace settlement phase, the transitional governance period, and the aftermath of intervention – we see a mismatch between the goals of the intervention and what transpires in the real world. The theoretical framework advanced in this chapter explains this gap, suggesting what we should expect to see at each phase as domestic elites attempt to build post-conflict political order and resist and manipulate international interventions as they do so. At the peace settlement phase, elites preoccupied with their own survival and empowerment come to an agreement to end the conflict. But that settlement, instead of serving as an end to conflict, becomes the next stage over which their internecine struggles to create a political order continue. In turn, during the transitional governance phase, the simultaneous attempt at statebuilding and democratization becomes co-opted by a small subset of domestic power-holders, paradoxically closing down the political space and stunting state capacity. In the aftermath of the intervention, domestic elites attempt to find the balance between

¹ Pierson 2004; and Thelen 1999.

distributing patronage through their clientelist networks to build political support and delivering a measure of stability and public goods in order to create an environment of some collective stability and prosperity. Thus, in post-conflict countries, we see a hybrid political order emerging that is neopatrimonial in nature – forestalling the effective and legitimate governance of the modern state to which international peacebuilding aspires.

The Pursuit of Political Order

How different societies construct political order is one of the single most important questions in the study of politics and perhaps the most elemental.² What are the forces that propel societies to move from the “traditional state,” characterized by persistent violence and patrimonialism, to a “modern state,” defined by stable, effective, and legitimate government?³ Political philosophers grappled with this basic inquiry as they articulated social contract theory. Thomas Hobbes’s *Leviathan* still gives us the label by which we understand that some concentration of sovereign authority in the hands of an individual or group of individuals is necessary to achieve the transition away from the state of nature; even as the debate between Hobbes’s insistence on the necessity of authoritarian rule in that transition and John Locke’s rebuttal in favor of the merits of constitutionally constrained government continues to the present day.⁴ The study of political order has a distinguished contemporary intellectual history, serving as the core subject matter upon which landmark theoretical works in the political science canon have been written.⁵ It has also enjoyed a resurgence in the past decade, with much of the renewed interest in the subject coming from the

² Margaret Levi, in her address as President of the American Political Science Association, noted that political science is “driven by a common desire to understand what makes for good governments and how to build them,” defining good governments as effective and accountable. Levi 2006: 5.

³ Here, I use the term “modern” in its Weberian sense, which is normative concerning the qualities of political order, as opposed to meaning “contemporary.” This conventional usage means that “traditional” or non-modern forms of political order can and do exist today.

⁴ Hobbes 1968 [1651]; and Locke 1963 [1698].

⁵ Bates 2001; Ertman 1997; Huntington 1968; Levi 1989; Skocpol 1979; and Tilly 1990.

economics discipline.⁶ Yet the links between the search for modern political order and the putative goals of peacebuilding – despite their great similarity – have been made surprisingly rarely in the peacebuilding literature, albeit with some notable exceptions.⁷

A political order constitutes the underlying system by which a society organizes its political actions and behavior. Institutions – formal rules, policy structures, and norms – are the cornerstone of this political order and are central to understanding how it evolves over time. These institutions are the legacies of the concrete political struggles of the past and, in turn, provide the contours of the political arena of the present – shaping the incentives facing individuals and organizations, guiding the patterns in which they interact, and constraining their political behavior.⁸ The process of defining a political order is thus best understood as the process of institutional development. It concerns the building of stable institutional arrangements that govern political behavior, including, especially, the rules and norms that give elites control over resources and social functions and constrain these elites from using violence. The process of ordering power, in other words, is in large part about how elites organize themselves – including, crucially, alliances among elite factions – to govern their subjects.⁹ In turn, institutions and the public policies they create reflect, magnify, and perpetuate the distribution of political power, actively empowering some groups and individuals while marginalizing others from the political sphere.¹⁰ These institutional outcomes need not necessarily reflect any particular set of interests – they can be compromises between actors

⁶ Acemoglu and Robinson 2012; Boix 2015; and North, Wallis, and Weingast 2009.

⁷ These exceptions include Barnett 2006; Boege, Brown, and Clements 2009; Hamieri 2010; and Paris 2004.

⁸ This definition of institutions follows the historical institutionalist perspective on institutions, for example in Pierson 1996; Pierson and Skocpol 2002; and Thelen 1999. Thelen 1999 observes that historical institutionalism emphasizes how institutions emerge from and are embedded in temporal processes, while rational choice institutionalism views institutions more as coordination mechanisms that generate equilibria; she also notes that this distinction, however, does not preclude much fruitful overlap and cross-fertilization between the two approaches. The theoretical framework in this chapter does indeed bring together both rational choice and historical institutionalist approaches to political order.

⁹ Slater 2010; also Waldner 1999. ¹⁰ Weir 1992.

with different goals or even the unintended consequence of conflict – and this, especially, makes them open to change.¹¹

The concept of “political order” is often discussed with a positive valence, connoting political stability and good governance – with its opposite, “political disorder” or “political decay,” seen as the undesirable outcome on the other end of the spectrum.¹² Here, I adapt this usage in part to conceptualize a political order as a set of political institutions and practices that rest in equilibrium. A political order is thus an institutional arrangement itself rather than a set of governance outcomes that are inherently desirable and the modifying adjective is crucial in telling us what kind of order we are talking about. In turn, there are three crucial elements by which a political order can be characterized: the control of violence through the rule of law; government effectiveness through state capacity; and mechanisms of legitimacy and accountability. The modern state is thus characterized by peaceful stability, state strength, and democratic accountability, or – to use the language of transformative peacebuilding – a stable and lasting peace, underpinned by effective and legitimate governance.

Conceived of in this way, political order can more usefully be seen as a characteristic of political systems that, as it varies in degree, also varies in kind. The governance challenge facing post-conflict countries is fruitfully viewed through this lens on political order. Fragile and conflict-affected countries are evidently in, or close to, the Hobbesian natural state of political instability, violence, and disorder. Indeed, state failure is commonly defined by the disintegration or absence of the main qualities of modern political order.¹³ There are also, importantly, hybrid forms of political order distinct from both the natural and modern state. There are four crucial things to note about these hybrid or intermediate states of political order. First, most obviously, measures of the control of violence, of government effectiveness, and of democratic accountability are at intermediate levels. Countries with intermediate forms of political order are those with some political stability and some elements of effective and legitimate governance – but recognizably not, for example, what peacebuilding interventions are intended to achieve. Second, the three components vary independently, to a degree, such

¹¹ Mahoney and Thelen 2010: 8.

¹² For example, Fukuyama 2011, 2014a; and Huntington 1968.

¹³ OECD 2008a; and Rotberg 2004.

that different pathways to the modern state are entirely possible. This logic runs counter to modernization theory, where all good things go together, a point I expand on below. Third, the three elements are, nevertheless, mutually reinforcing, which means that the hybrid or intermediate state is an equilibrium just like the modern state, albeit a sub-optimal one. Fourth, each of these components or characteristics of political order – indeed, the process of political development itself – are potentially reversible – they can improve or they can disintegrate.

What closes the “political gap,” as Samuel Huntington coined it, between underdeveloped and developed political systems?¹⁴ What is the process by which a country succeeds in “getting to Denmark,” a land of peaceful stability, rule of law, effective government, and democratic accountability?¹⁵ Max Weber gave us the bare bones of the answer in his very definition of the modern state: creating the leviathan requires endowing it with a monopoly over the legitimate use of violence. In practical terms, achieving a monopoly of violence for the state becomes a question of how to contain, in Robert Bates’s inimitable phrase, society’s “specialists in violence,” or rulers by might.¹⁶ In traditional political orders, these elites retain the ability to mobilize violence in the service of their own particular interests and to their own benefit. Carles Boix notes that individuals can either exploit or cooperate to survive.¹⁷ Getting to modern political order – rule-bound, effective, and legitimate governance – thus requires elites to agree to some binding of their power. Dan Slater frames this, in his study of developmental authoritarian regimes in Southeast Asia, as the intrinsic challenge of elite collective action, asserting that “severe threats to elites’ property, privileges, and persons are a *necessary* condition” for elites to give up some of their individual power to establish the leviathan.¹⁸ Stable, effective, and legitimate governance materializes when elites recognize that their interests are best served by deploying their coercive powers not for predation but to invest in the institutions, policies, and public goods that instead enhance the productive use of society’s resources.

¹⁴ Huntington 1968: 2. ¹⁵ Pritchett and Woolcock 2002; also Fukuyama 2011.

¹⁶ Bates 2001, 2008a. ¹⁷ Boix 2015: 7.

¹⁸ Slater 2010: 13, italics in original. On the importance of threat as an impetus to elite collective action in the service of statebuilding, see also Bates 2001; Ertman 1997; and Waldner 1999.

Why do elites – those with recourse to violence in the service of their own ends – form an agreement to restrict themselves? Elites bind themselves to cooperate in a coalition because their reward is access to the coalition’s spoils, through processes of rent creation and distribution. The political and economic foundations for development come together when those who are specialists in violence realize that their interests are best served by creating the environment for economic prosperity.¹⁹ Once a government has accumulated enough hegemonic power to ensure its survival, thereby lengthening its own time horizon, it serves the interest of that government to make the territory as rich as possible so that it can extract as much as possible over multiple time periods. Mancur Olson famously referred to this type of hegemonic government as a “stationary bandit,” recognizing that societal stability is achieved at the cost of institutionalized extraction.²⁰ Restricting access to the privileges of the coalition only to its members gives them a stake in the coalition and makes their commitment to protecting it credible, leading Douglass North, John Wallis, and Barry Weingast to dub this type of regime a “limited access order.”²¹ These elites secure political order by creating a monopoly on economic activity and, thereby perpetuating an extractive, instead of inclusive, political–economic equilibrium.²² The form that the elite collective bargain takes, in turn, structures the nature of the state’s interactions with society.

The Neopatrimonial Equilibrium

Patrimonial political orders are the default institutional pattern through which elites have reached these governing pacts with society over most of human history, including into today.²³ In a patrimonial system, authority is personalized – individuals rule through personal prestige and power, privileging their own preferences. The ruler ensures basic political stability and his own political survival by providing some measure of security and by distributing patronage spoils

¹⁹ Bates 2001; also Boix 2015. ²⁰ Olson 1993.

²¹ North, Wallis, and Weingast 2009. ²² Acemoglu and Robinson 2012.

²³ North, Wallis, and Weingast 2009 calculate that about 85 percent of the world’s population in some 170 of the world’s countries live in various forms of neopatrimonial (or limited access) orders, compared to 15 percent in 25 countries in modern (or open access) orders.

to his clients in exchange for their support.²⁴ In other words, the way in which most human societies have escaped the brutish state of nature is to endow some measure of sovereignty in one all-powerful individual or in a small group of elites. Patrimonialism is thus the prevailing form of political order that has to be overcome in constructing rule-bound, effective, and legitimate government. This is no easy task. Patrimonial political orders are stable equilibria, taking on the institutional forms they do because these systems benefit elites. Rulers in these orders sit atop hierarchical patron–client networks and the logic of instrumental exchange between patron and client serves as the ordering logic of the political system.²⁵ Weber drew a distinction between patrimonial authority, the principle of governance in traditional polities, and the rational-legal authority that is the hallmark of the modern state – a system in which the public and private spheres are distinct and the former is governed by the routine application of law and bureaucratic institutions.²⁶

The reality in much of the contemporary developing world is that the patrimonial and rational-legal systems of authority coexist, creating systems of personalized politics within the bureaucratic and legal trappings of the modern-state. It is conventional to use the label *neopatrimonial* to characterize these “hybrid political systems in which the customs and patterns of patrimonialism co-exist with, and suffuse, rational–legal institutions.”²⁷ What appears formally as a modern state apparatus is undermined by practices abusing the state in the service of systematic patronage distribution. The ruling group dominates and stands above the state apparatus. Officials lower down use their bureaucratic positions to gain access to state resources in order to enrich themselves and their networks and to demonstrate loyalty to their patrons. Typically, parallel structures of power such as party cliques and other patron–client networks hold more authority than the formal administrative structures. As a result of rivalry among elites to secure the top spot or, at least, for the top ruler’s favor, politics is often secretive and opaque. Neopatrimonial systems, moreover, have self-reinforcing properties. Upward mobility in these systems occurs in

²⁴ Bratton and Van de Walle 1997: 61. ²⁵ Scott 1972.

²⁶ Bratton and Van de Walle 1997; and Weber 1978.

²⁷ Bratton and Van de Walle 1997: 62; also Bratton and Van de Walle 1994; and Jackson and Rosberg 1984. This paragraph draws heavily on these seminal definitions of neopatrimonialism.

the context of the patron–client hierarchy and perpetuates rather than transforms the system. Elites enrich and empower themselves through patrimonial activities and accrue a traditional form of legitimacy on the basis of particularist patronage distribution through their networks. In turn, they use the rational-legal capacity of the state to the bare minimum degree required to deliver a modicum of public service delivery and collective welfare to the populace at large, earning some measure of output-based legitimacy; and rely upon the trappings of democracy to garner at least a stamp of the normative dimension of legitimacy sought by the international community.

Transformative peacebuilding represents the assertion that it is possible to guide countries in the move from political disorder to the effective and legitimate order of the modern state in a short period of time. Yet this assertion seems implausible at best, if not simply hubristic, when examined in the light of what the literature has established about the dynamics of building political order and, in particular, the pervasiveness and stickiness of neopatrimonialism in the contemporary developing world. International peacebuilding interventions attempted to transpose modern political order onto the post-conflict landscapes of Cambodia, East Timor, and Afghanistan, specifically by facilitating a process of administrative and political institutional engineering. Few would deny that some important successes were achieved in terms of stability, state effectiveness, and legitimate government: in all three countries, violence is below the levels scholars qualify as civil conflict, some degree of state infrastructure and a public service delivery footprint has been developed, and successive elections have been held. In no way do I wish to imply that any of the three countries considered here are worse off than they otherwise would have been as a result of peacebuilding through transitional governance. Indeed, they are all fundamentally more stable than before the interventions and maintain a basic degree of the government effectiveness and accountability that are the hallmarks of the modern state and among the essential ingredients of a modern political order.

Yet what best characterizes Cambodia, East Timor, and Afghanistan is the hybrid state of neopatrimonial political order. In these post-conflict countries, a patrimonial logic pervades the institutional trappings of the modern state and orders the political system, structuring political incentives and behavior. The evidence from the three countries demonstrates that no matter how well administrative and

political institutions are designed, during the course of transitional governance powerful domestic groups co-opt the process of determining new institutional arrangements and, through strategies of institutional conversion, subsequently consolidate their holds on power. As they do so, they move the political order away from the goal of rationalized and democratic governance, coming to rest, instead, in the suboptimal political economy equilibrium of neopatrimonialism. The remainder of this chapter elaborates a theory about how this happens over the course of peacebuilding interventions. At its heart, this theory is a story about how the dynamic contest between two alternative visions of post-conflict political order plays out over the temporal course of the peacebuilding pathway.

Elites and Transformative Events

Theories of political order typically cast the process of organic institutional development as a gradual, even glacial, process of change over time. Yet historical institutionalist accounts of political development also emphasize the importance of seeing continuity and change as two sides of the same coin.²⁸ Establishing political order may take a long time – but it is not a uniform, linear process of change. It happens in fits, starts, and reversals, which are often the most revealing parts of the process. At these crucial moments, it is the interaction of structural patterns with exogenous shocks and the actions of individuals, especially elites, that serve in establishing patterns of political order. Transformative peacebuilding represents an attempt to make a deliberate break with the past, through a conscious process of institutional engineering and political management. Yet a peacebuilding operation cannot be understood simply as an exogenous event to be analyzed for its treatment effects on desired outcomes. The patterns through which these interventions unfold are, like all other transformative political events, the product of temporal processes that combine the effects of structure, shock, and agency. They are critical junctures of extraordinarily fluid politics that, in turn, set in motion specific pathways of post-conflict order building along which elites undertake recognizable strategies, especially vis-à-vis institutions, to continue to gain and bolster authority. Thus, the established scholarship on other key junctures

²⁸ Pierson 2004.

of political transformation – such as democratization, the transition from socialism, revolutions and mass movements, and so forth – offers a number of stylized lessons to apply to our understanding of peace-building.

The central argument of this book is that the incentives motivating post-conflict elites interact with international interventions and shape their outcomes, paradoxically undermining the possibility and quality of effective and legitimate governance in the longer term. The role of domestic elites – their incentives, their interactions, their choices – is thus crucial in creating the outcomes that obtain. Peacebuilding is a hyperpolitical process, seeking to fundamentally transform polity and society in the quest for sustainable peace. It is therefore inherently a highly contested process, in which local stakeholders are central over the course of intervention – agreeing on an elite settlement, engaging with the interactive dynamics of state- and democracy-building, and shaping both the institutions and the governance outcomes that result. It is domestic political actors who make specific institutional choices within the parameters established by international interventions. In turn, these powerful elites maneuver within those formal institutions to shape the political order that emerges.

The “spoiler” concept has served as the main lens for understanding the role of elites in implementing peace operations.²⁹ In his seminal article on spoilers, Stephen Stedman defined them as the “leaders and parties who believe that peace emerging from negotiations threatens their power, worldview, and interests, and use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it.”³⁰ He cast spoilers as the greatest source of risk in a peace process, implying, in turn, that successful interventions require implementers to correctly diagnose and manage spoilers. Extensions of the spoiler concept emphasized that the preferences and strategies of spoilers must be understood in light of the structural context in which they are embedded and that their sources of power and legitimacy are historically formed. An excessive reliance on the agency of spoilers was seen to underemphasize structural factors, particularly the opportunity structure and relative power balance that define spoiler behavior.³¹

²⁹ Greenhill and Major 2007; Hoddie and Hartzell 2010; Newman and Richmond 2006; Nilsson and Söderberg Kovacs 2011; and Stedman 1997.

³⁰ Stedman 1997: 5.

³¹ Greenhill and Major 2007. On opportunity structures, see Tarrow 1998.

This book's approach to understanding the peacebuilding pathway broadens the emphasis on elites from a focus on their spoiler behavior or potential, focusing instead on the incentives motivating elites in concrete situations along the peacebuilding pathway. The causal narrative I develop here rests on the view that peace agreements themselves are elite settlements, and that the subsequent transitional process and its attendant process of institutional engineering are dominated by the elites designated by the UN as counterparts and legitimate contenders to power. The nature of these elites and their resource bases can vary dramatically, as evidenced by the cases considered here. In Cambodia, the leaders of the major political factions that fought the civil war were the key power-holders in society, supported by their factional armies and, in the case of what became the dominant Cambodian People's Party, by the institutional power vested in their control of the state. In East Timor, the organizational backbone of the guerrilla front stepped into the power and institutional void left at the nation's independence, bolstered by the powerful shared symbology of a widespread national resistance movement. In Afghanistan, the United States and United Nations played kingmaker, installing a compromise choice from the Afghan diaspora as the core leader – one who, in his subsequent attempts to consolidate the central state, was hamstrung by the diffuse loci of power throughout the country.

Yet, such differences among elites notwithstanding, a crucial part of my argument is that the political actors empowered by UN transitional governance interventions – no matter what *type* of elite they might be – act, surprisingly, in roughly parallel ways as they engage with and, eventually, undermine those interventions over the three phases of the peacebuilding pathway. The political landscape in contemporary post-conflict states is populated by elites who are attempting to solve the practical puzzle of protecting and expanding their own power bases while attempting to assure the international community that they are also acting in the service of legitimacy and political inclusion. The post-conflict context has been mistakenly inferred to resemble an institutional vacuum. The reality is that the political trajectory of the past, including the conflict itself, is enormously significant for what transpires next. Potential contenders to authority compete with each other, with different claims to authority based on their relative power and other political resources such as financing and social support. A perspective that focuses on the process of state engagement

with other social forces highlights the mutual transformation of the state and social groups that must be inherent to any statebuilding process.³² These political struggles and compacts must be viewed temporally, since they necessarily emerge from a country's historical experiences with political order. In turn, the temporal sequence through which domestic elites interact with international interventions matters a great deal. The following causal framework suggests what we should expect to see at each of the three phases of the peacebuilding pathway as domestic elites attempt to build their version of post-conflict political order and interact with and shape international interventions as they do so.

Elite Settlements: The Continuation of War by Other Means

Peace settlements have been emphasized as a crucial factor in explaining the relative successes of international peacekeeping operations in bringing an end to civil conflict. Treating peace settlements as mediated elite pacts, scholars have built a large body of knowledge along two main avenues of investigation. First, how are peace settlements negotiated? Here, the focus has been on the processes of bargaining and deal-making, with an emphasis on the mechanisms put in place to build credible commitment into peace deals.³³ Second, how can the substance of a peace deal be constructed to lead, in turn, to successful implementation and the desired outcomes? Here, the analytic focus has been placed on institutional design, with a particular emphasis on the merits and drawbacks of power-sharing in peace settlements.³⁴

Peace agreements are, in practice, conditional elite pacts. Political dynamics are heavily elite-driven at the peace settlement stage of transformative peacebuilding, reflecting the high level of contingency associated with critical junctures. This is, in part, a direct result of the conflict itself: during periods of civil war political participation becomes militarized, as civil society organizations and other institutional channels for nonviolent political participation wither away. The predominance of elites at this stage is also a result of the fact that, to stand a chance of

³² Herbst 2000; Mann 1986; and Skocpol 1985.

³³ Fearon and Laitin 2008; Licklider 1995; Martin 2013; Toft 2010; and Walter 1999, 2002, 2009.

³⁴ Hartzell and Hoddie 2007, 2015; Horowitz 1985; Jarstad and Nilsson 2008; Lijphart 1977; and Sisk 1996, 2013.

being successful, post-conflict peacebuilding must rest significantly on reconstructing the state's societal support.³⁵ Domestic elites are critical in helping to remedy both of these shortcomings since they are central in mobilizing political support and building social consensus around the legitimacy of new rules and institutional structures for the political and administrative arenas.³⁶

Yet post-conflict peace settlements should not be seen as the outcomes of rational deal-making, or as compromises that satisfice among the various claims to authority and legitimacy advanced by domestic elites. Instead, peace settlements are better viewed as the legacies of pre-conflict political trajectories and the particular power balances emerging out of conflict. Nor should they be reified as just outcomes or as a stable resolution of the preceding civil violence. Instead, they should be understood as momentary terms of settlement within an ongoing elite power struggle. Elite bargaining is better seen not as pertaining to a single isolated event – for example, embodied in the discrete settlement deal itself – but rather as a series of decisions embedded in a longer bargaining process.³⁷ In this light, a peace treaty does not represent an end to political bargaining. As Michael Doyle observes: “After the parties agree to the creation of a peacekeeping operation, they continue to compete for advantage. The agreement becomes, as do so many other constitutional texts, an invitation to struggle.”³⁸ Mediated settlements at moments of duress may represent the only possible solution at that particular point in time, but they are inherently unstable equilibria. In short, peace settlements should be interpreted as initiating a new phase of elite conflict through politics – the continuation of war by other means.³⁹

A peace settlement is hence the beginning of the peacebuilding pathway, rather than the end goal of an elite negotiation process. It is a crucial transformative moment, serving as the pivot away from violent conflict. As such, it is useful to view the elite settlement phase in light of what we know about how elites act at other moments of fundamental

³⁵ Doornbos 2002; and Zartman 1995.

³⁶ Barma 2006; Migdal, Kohli, and Shue 1994; and Snyder 2000.

³⁷ Walter 2009 makes this point in analyzing why more civil wars do not end through negotiation. The same logic applies when considering why elite pacts might not hold in the post-conflict aftermath.

³⁸ Doyle 1995: 66.

³⁹ Carl von Clausewitz's famous dictum that war is the continuation of politics by other means seems to hold equally true inverted in post-conflict countries.

political transition that are similarly critical junctures. In understanding how such pivotal transformations occur during democratic transitions, revolutions, and social movements, scholars have built explanations that combine attention to structural conditions with the central roles that elites play as agents of change. Crucially, as elites engage in the political bargains around moments of sociopolitical transformation, they do not simply rely on and reward existing support but also find it necessary to continually mobilize and manipulate new support.

Elite negotiations and pacts are a central feature of the democratization scholarship. Dankwart Rustow's landmark essay on democratic transitions explicitly abandoned the quest for the functional requisites of democracy rooted in modernization theory and other structural perspectives and argued that democracy was the fruit of the conscious decisions of political elites.⁴⁰ In this view, elite consensus on the new rules of the game is an essential requisite for a successful transition from authoritarianism to democracy. A particular emphasis has thus been placed on the role of elites, their strategies, and the pacts among them, in crafting democratic transitions and consolidation, as well as on the importance of the links between elites and their supporters.⁴¹

The literature on social revolutions echoes this emphasis on the centrality of elite bargains as well as their social bases of support. Arthur Stinchcombe conceived of a revolution as a period of uncertainty about who will govern – and crystallized the challenge of rebuilding authority coming out of that Hobbesian state as lying in the “difficulties of finding a set of bargains among the interests contending in a revolution and a reliable apparatus to enforce them.”⁴² In revolutions, elite competition for authority spurs leaders to mobilize and manipulate the mass participation of groups that were previously politically excluded. In turn, the elite group that finally consolidates its hold on power systematically reconstructs state organizations in order to embody direct control by their supporters. Other competing political forces are, in the process, eliminated from structures of control and authority, again through mass mobilization and the manipulation of major public institutions, including the legal system, schools, civil bureaucracies, and

⁴⁰ Rustow 1970. On modernization theory see Lipset 1959; Parsons 1951; and Rostow 1962.

⁴¹ On “crafting” democratic transitions, see DiPalma 1990; on elite links with supporters, see Bermeo 1997; Haggard and Kaufman 1997; and Karl 1990.

⁴² Stinchcombe 1999: 50.

military forces.⁴³ Some scholars argue that social movements fall onto the same continuum of mechanisms for political change as revolutions – the difference being the extent to which existing power structures are put at risk.⁴⁴

One crucial insight from these other transformative moments is that elites are central not only in terms of their own individual preferences but also because they are the leaders of specific sociopolitical coalitions. In negotiating peace settlements, elites are hence playing a two-sided game. They must negotiate with other elites and survive the collective battle for authority, while simultaneously satisfying the groups that keep them in power. Elites are thus not only self-interested; they are, of course, embedded socially, drawing on groups for their support. In turn, the status of such groups influences the resources that elites bring to the bargaining table. As I explain below, post-conflict elites manage this two-sided game by constructing a neopatrimonial political order. A peace settlement marks a new opportunity to create a political order – and it necessarily echoes the basic political order and struggles of the past. Understanding the sources of elites' power, especially their conflicts with each other and their relationships with their supporters, is crucial to explaining the political dynamics around the peace settlement phase. The process of coming to a settlement is, quite simply, a fascinating political struggle that should be seen not as resolving all the issues at play but as reflecting and perpetuating them.

Transitional Governance: A Process of Inherent Contradictions

The hallmark of the transitional governance approach to peacebuilding is that the UN works with domestic elites simultaneously on two aspects of peacebuilding over a transitional period of two to three years: it governs the country in collaboration with domestic counterparts during this period, which ends with the holding of an election; and it works concurrently with domestic elites to reconstruct the institutional and human capacity of the state apparatus and to build a democratic political system. The approach is thus designed around two intertwined assertions. The first proposition is that it is possible for the international community to help post-conflict countries build the foundations for a lasting peace by imposing and assisting a process of

⁴³ Skocpol 1988. ⁴⁴ McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 1997.

simultaneous state- and democracy-building in these countries. The second proposition is that the best mechanism for implementing a transformative peacebuilding intervention is a particular form of governance collaboration between domestic elites and the UN peace operation. In this section, I argue that both assertions are unfounded, illustrating that we should expect otherwise based on what we know about the dynamics of state formation and other transformative events starring powerful entrenched interests, especially post-socialist transitions.

The simultaneous state- and democracy-building process that is the centerpiece of the transitional governance approach has rarely, if ever, obtained organically. It is not accidental that the notion of “state formation” is expressed more passively than is the more muscular late twentieth century activity of “statebuilding.” Western European countries became states through a time-consuming process and only later evolved into democracies – and this is the quintessential trajectory upon which much of the state formation literature is based. The experience of the United States, which is rarely considered in comparative assessments of state formation, tells the opposite story in which statebuilding was purposefully retarded and central administrative institutions were intentionally kept weak by strong party machines to protect their political interests in the context of a flourishing democracy. Successful statebuilding in the developing world has generally preceded and hampered, and sometimes foreclosed, democratization, as evidenced by the strong, developmental, and long-time authoritarian states of East and Southeast Asia.

Political science scholarship, although filled with rich accounts of statebuilding processes on the one hand and democracy-building processes on the other, has no real conceptualization of the complementarities or tensions embodied in the combined approach. Indeed, Francis Fukuyama recently noted that “one of the most understudied and undertheorized relationships is that between democracy and the state.”⁴⁵ Even Samuel Huntington’s seminal thesis that the level of political institutionalization in the developing world must stay one step ahead of social mobilization in order to channel popular participation focused on *political* institution building, rather than articulating a theory of how *state* institution building interacts with democratization.⁴⁶ Cutting into the Gordian knot of indeterminate causality that plagued

⁴⁵ Fukuyama 2014b: 1326.

⁴⁶ Huntington 1968.

classical modernization theory, Huntington argued that all good things do *not* go together and that it matters a great deal in which sequence they occur. Political instability and disorder in the developing world results from the unequal dynamics of modernization. For Huntington, achieving political stability requires the level of political institutionalization to stay one step ahead of the forces of social mobilization brought about with economic development. Logically, and troublingly, then, the sacrifice of democratic pluralism is the price to be paid for stability in politically modernizing developing countries.

Others have extended this logic to the state realm as well, agreeing with the basic thesis that institutionalization must come first to properly handle the other fruits of modernization. Roland Paris's influential work on peacebuilding proposes the normatively easier to digest "institutionalization before liberalization" approach to democracy-building in post-conflict states.⁴⁷ He suggests postponing the electoral aspect of democratization until after complementary institutionalization has first been undertaken in both the political and state realms. Fukuyama echoes the basic sequencing thesis that a strong state must come first for modern political order to be consolidated, arguing that democracy coming first is a recipe for patronage and corruption.⁴⁸ Martin Shefter offered a causal explanation for this phenomenon in his pioneering studies of the presence or absence of clientelist politics in the United States and Europe. He critiqued the existing sociological approach to clientelism, which focused on social structure and political culture as the explanation for patronage, delivering instead a historical institutionalist explanation hinging on how the process of state formation interacted with patterns of political and social mobilization.⁴⁹ Shefter argued that when the rise of professional bureaucrats occurred before democratization, the clientelistic logic of spoils distribution did not take hold and parties were compelled to appeal to voters with programmatic appeals.

Conventional accounts of the rise of the modern, bureaucratic nation-state emphasize its functional advantages at collecting revenue, broadcasting authority over a territory, and providing security.⁵⁰ Modern – i.e., rule-bound, effective, legitimate – government was,

⁴⁷ Paris 2004. ⁴⁸ Fukuyama 2011; also Linz and Stepan 1996.

⁴⁹ Shefter 1977, 1994; also Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007: 5.

⁵⁰ Levi 1989; Skocpol 1979; and Tilly 1985, 1990.

therefore, first and most easily established in the states in which authoritarian governments had to wage war to ensure security, such as nineteenth-century Prussia.⁵¹ State formation in this account is inherently violent: in addition to protecting the state from without, the leviathan also had to take away the ability to impose violent coercion from all other agents within. By contrast, countries that democratized before they established modern state bureaucracies, such as the United States, developed patronage-riddled public sectors.⁵²

Post-socialist transitions offer a further illustration of the obstinate powers of entrenched interests in the face of reforms – along with the deliberate strategies vis-à-vis institutions through which they can powerfully resist and even prevent change. Scholars of Central and Eastern Europe have identified a common sequence of bureaucratic opposition to neoliberal economic reforms.⁵³ New institutional blueprints associated with reform threaten bureaucrats who in turn attempt, with their political supporters, to sabotage the implementation of those reforms. What begins as a backlash turns into strategies of institutional drift and conversion, manifesting through a process of bargaining and tinkering with institutional and policy reforms so that outcomes better suit the political balance of forces.⁵⁴ Post-socialist transitions also display the crucial significance of elite objectives and sequencing in the exceptionally fluid environment in which new institutional arrangements are forged.⁵⁵ Another important insight from political and economic transition in Eastern Europe is that social change emerges from a reconfiguration of institutional orders in different realms – political, economic, and social – that are in many ways incongruous instead of coordinated.⁵⁶ Thus, understanding how politics writ large changes over time is often squarely about the interaction of different, sometimes competing, ongoing political processes.⁵⁷ This fact is often obscure, however, to international agents supporting transformation because of their own particular normative and operational frames.

⁵¹ Tilly 1990. Cf. Ertman 1997, who elaborates four distinct combinations of regime type and state apparatus, each marking a different path-dependent sequence in early modern European state formation.

⁵² Shefter 1977, 1994; and Skowronek 1982.

⁵³ For example Bockman and Eyal 2002; and Hellman 1998.

⁵⁴ Hacker, Pierson, and Thelen 2015. ⁵⁵ Smith and Remington 2001.

⁵⁶ Stark and Bruszt 1998. ⁵⁷ Thelen 1999.

Historical institutionalist accounts of the relationships between statebuilding, democratization, and patronage politics illuminate more generally the shaky foundations of the assumptions underpinning the transitional governance approach to peacebuilding. Investigating the varying pathways out of socialism, Conor O'Dwyer demonstrates that many of the new democracies of Eastern Europe suffered from the excessive politicization of their state institutions, thereby undermining government effectiveness even in these administratively better endowed nations.⁵⁸ In particular, rapid democratization in an environment of unconsolidated state structures led to a rapid overexpansion of the bureaucracy as a result of patronage politics.

Two key patterns emerge in considering the prospects of a process of statebuilding and democratization. First, most obviously, simultaneity is an unpromising strategy – sequencing is crucial. The foregoing discussion has established that democratization in an under-institutionalized context contributes to instability and patronage-oriented politics. Second, more subtly, there is never truly a level playing field among contenders to power – incumbents hold a distinct set of advantages. Elites supported by formal or informal institutional power – resting, for example, in bureaucratic, party, or traditional power structures – retain and rely upon those resources and the legitimacy they generate. Paul Pierson catalogs the mechanisms through which “power may beget power,” including the ability of powerful elites to control the stock and flow of resources and encourage others to fall in line. Furthermore, these elites are adept at mobilizing new sources of power and legitimacy in their favor – by altering political discourse they change other elites’ and society’s views of what is desirable and target institutions and policies in ways that change societal preferences to their benefit.⁵⁹ Scholars have vividly described, for example, how post-conflict domestic elites have been able to successfully re-appropriate the resources and symbols of international peacebuilding strategies in their countries in ways that reinforced their own authority.⁶⁰

Institutional change and innovation often occur when entrenched stakeholders exercising vetoes over reform are neutralized. The transitional governance model tries to do that in principle by attempting to

⁵⁸ O'Dwyer 2006. ⁵⁹ Pierson 2015: 134–141.

⁶⁰ For example, Curtis 2013 on Burundi; and Hughes 2009a on Cambodia and East Timor.

create a level playing field among legitimate domestic elites. In practice, however, it does exactly the opposite. By appointing domestic counterparts, the UN gives certain elites the power to exercise a veto against reform, without other checks and balances, like the rule of law, a strong state, or enough democratic accountability to ensure that, if necessary, some other political force can “throw the rascals out.”⁶¹ Domestic elites view the politics of the transitional governance period and its aftermath as a “winner-takes-all” game. In turn, their determination to survive in the context of that game leads them into cementing a neopatrimonial political order, undermining both the consolidation of autonomous state structures and nascent democratic accountability. State capacity-building is hampered since the rulers of the state use it for patronage distribution; and democracy-building is thwarted by the use of patronage resources to bolster a hegemonic hold on power. State- and democracy-building, when pursued together, act at cross-purposes so that the objectives of neither are met.

Neopatrimonial Political Order: A Hybrid Form of Governance

The peacebuilding literature focuses for the most part on the implementation of peace operations and the extent to which they achieve their goals. Most such studies assess the durability of a peace operation’s performance by examining outcomes after the end of the mandate – but even the most sophisticated of these studies use a relatively short timeframe for assessment, for at least three reasons.⁶² First, a short-term perspective is due to the recent nature of such interventions; not enough time has elapsed across a large enough sample of cases to go much further. Second, this type of study reflects the scholarly perception of an international intervention as an exogenously imposed treatment, the effect of which can be fruitfully assessed through cross-sectional analysis. Third, it also reflects the relatively broad consensus that international peacebuilding seeks uncontested objectives; thus a reasonable topic of study is the extent to which the effective and legitimate governance of the modern state has indeed been met in post-conflict states subject to interventions.

⁶¹ Powell 1989: 119.

⁶² For example, Doyle and Sambanis 2006 focus on outcomes two years after the termination of conflict while Zürcher et al. 2013 assess outcomes five years after the start of a peace mission.

This book aims to add a new perspective to the peacebuilding scholarship by emphasizing that international interventions represent and seek to establish *one* particular conception of political order. Domestic elites in post-conflict states, by contrast, seek to establish a very different form of political order. It is necessary, therefore, to examine the dynamic contest between these two visions over time – and, especially, as long into the aftermath of interventions as possible. Doing so makes it apparent that post-conflict political order is typically neopatrimonial in nature. The analytical stance here is in line with new scholarship in the political economy of development that emphasizes that neopatrimonialism should be understood as a core element in explaining how states *function*, not simply advanced as a reason for their failure.⁶³ Clan-based and other forms of patrimonial governance, along with the “competitive authoritarianism” they regularly exhibit, coexist with more rational-legal and democratic systems of governance, often for long periods of time.⁶⁴ It is crucial to understand these hybrid political orders as resting in an equilibrium of their own, which is not simply a deviation from the pathway to modern political order.⁶⁵

Poor governance and economic outcomes in the developing world are not a result of inept leaders, nor of international organizations dispensing faulty advice. Political and economic institutions are the way they are because elites have an interest in structuring them that way; over time, those institutions replicate and perpetuate the power struggles of the past. Acemoglu and Robinson observe, for example, that there is a mutually reinforcing synergy between economic and political institutions.⁶⁶ Typically, inclusive economic institutions – featuring secure property rights, the unbiased rule of law, and equitable public service provision – create a more equitable basis for political power; in turn, inclusive political institutions, rooted in pluralism, ensure continued economic inclusion. Similarly, extractive political institutions that favor the political elite allow them to write the economic rules to benefit themselves at the expense of broader society; in turn, the

⁶³ Smith 2014 elaborates this point in the case of conflict-affected countries that have found their own pathways to peace without international interventions.

⁶⁴ On competitive authoritarianism, see Levitsky and Way 2002.

⁶⁵ Boege, Brown, and Clements 2009.

⁶⁶ Acemoglu and Robinson 2012. The discussion of inclusive and extractive institutions rests on their work.

extractive economic institutions that are structured to privilege powerful elite interests entrenches their future extractive potential and thus political dominance. Crucially, however, there is sometimes a mismatch between economic and political orders and these are typically unstable equilibria. Of particular note here is the negative spiral that can unfold. An extractive economic order can, over time, effect changes to an inclusive political system so that the political balance also becomes more extractive. In turn, the narrow interests that gain a concentrated hold on political order will gradually transform economic institutions into more extractive ones that more narrowly benefit and empower themselves.

A rich vein of contemporary scholarship takes as a starting point the insight that a better understanding of patronage and clientelism is crucial to better understanding stunted democratic consolidation across the developing world.⁶⁷ Programmatic and unbiased delivery of public goods and services to the population is a hallmark of a well-functioning democracy. By contrast, pervasive clientelism is both a cause and effect of a lack of democratic consolidation. In this book, I rely on Scott's seminal definition of patronage or clientelism as the logic of instrumental exchange – biased distribution of public goods and services from patrons to clients in exchange for votes and other forms of political support from clients to patrons.⁶⁸ Similarly, Stokes et al. have more recently defined clientelism as nonprogrammatic distribution of public resources in conditional exchange for political support.⁶⁹

Neopatrimonial political orders in Cambodia, East Timor, and Afghanistan, as in other developing and post-conflict countries, encompass both the patron–client relationship between elites and their immediate networks, typically referred to as patronage, and the less personalized and yet still instrumental exchange of goods and favors for broad political support, commonly labeled clientelism. In describing post-conflict political orders as neopatrimonial – hybrid systems where both patrimonial and rational-legal elements of governance coexist – I use the terms patronage and clientelism interchangeably.⁷⁰ In post-conflict states, the concern is not electoral clientelism per se but, more

⁶⁷ See, especially, Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007; and Stokes et al. 2013.

⁶⁸ Scott 1972. ⁶⁹ Stokes et al. 2013: 18.

⁷⁰ Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007 also use the terms interchangeably. Cf. Stokes et al. 2013, who distinguish patronage as the subset of clientelist practices targeted at party members.

broadly, relational clientelism, which constitutes a broader set of distributional strategies that deliver ongoing benefits to clients.⁷¹ This broader form of political clientelism is essential in the democratizing developing world as a means through which to achieve inter-elite accommodation and compromise, more so than to bind the population to different elite patrons. In other words, state and public resources are used to forge and cement alliances among different groups of elites, instead of serving the logic of mass party patronage.⁷²

This book emphasizes the clientelism and patronage associated with the building of post-conflict political order, focusing especially on the ability of elites to make credible commitments to each other and to the populace. This commands attention, in turn, to how political and administrative institutions shape time horizons and elite incentives; and to how the elites who control the state deliver the patronage goods and benefits that underpin their neopatrimonial compact with society. The liberal ideal embedded in the UN's peacebuilding model is that democratically elected elites will interpret social preferences and will use the state apparatus to deliver the programmatic policies, collective public services, and shared prosperity that serve as pillars of sustainable peace. The post-conflict reality, however – as illustrated in the empirical chapters that follow – is that the political-economic incentives facing elites are such that it is easier and more profitable for them to focus, for the most part, on distributing narrowly targeted public rents and particularist patronage goods to their clients in exchange for political support.⁷³

The relative weakness of party organization in post-conflict and other developing countries, moreover, makes clientelism even more appealing as a strategy for gaining political support.⁷⁴ In particular, while outsider parties with no access to state resources will attempt to make more programmatic appeals as their only viable strategy, incumbent parties with access to state resources will be more likely to mobilize those material resources in clientelist appeals for support.⁷⁵ At the same time, incumbents can continue to consolidate power by altering social discourse and by using targeted policies to reshape social preferences.⁷⁶ In furthering all such practices, elites find that they are

⁷¹ Gans-Morse, Mazzuca, and Nichter 2014.

⁷² Van de Walle 2007: 55; also Slater 2010.

⁷³ Joshi and Mason 2011; and Keefer and Vlaicu 2008. ⁷⁴ Reilly 2013.

⁷⁵ O'Dwyer 2006; and Shefter 1977, 1994. ⁷⁶ Pierson 2015.

able to channel their appeal to citizens through hierarchical patron-client networks, thus obviating their own need to build credibility with the populace – through, for example, institutionalized political parties – and undermining the formal structures of authority.⁷⁷ This equilibrium not only privileges elites and their networks over society at large; it also has adverse consequences for peace because underlying it is a new form of persistent insecurity.⁷⁸

Elite factions in limited access orders curb violence by structuring the creation, extraction, and distribution of rents; they also structure violence itself, serving as the main fault lines of conflict in patrimonial societies.⁷⁹ Most of what I have said about violence to this point has been implicit. The fact of violence – including coercive threats of violence – is, of course, central to theories of political order.⁸⁰ The logic is simple: those who have access to violence will use it to extract what they can from the rest of the population, unless they are constrained in some way – through a pact with others who have access to violence or because the costs of using it outweigh the benefits of using it. A modern, rational-legal political order limits violence through institutions, including both formal measures and informal norms. Yet Kalyvas, Shapiro, and Masoud observe, “. . . much of what we identify as order is simply violence in disguise. Political institutions are often erected on violent foundations, and maintained through implicit and explicit threats of bloodshed should obedience be withheld.”⁸¹ It should not surprise us that post-conflict orders rest on a delicate knife-edge balancing a certain degree of order with the ever-present specter of violence.

A suboptimal political economy equilibrium of the sort I have described here may be relatively common to new democracies suffering from weak credibility. Yet transformational peacebuilding purports to build legitimate and effective governance – and this book demonstrates that it fails to do so because domestic elites succeed instead at using the resources of international interventions to aid them in establishing a neopatrimonial political order. This neopatrimonialism has proven obstinate in the face of attempts to impose the

⁷⁷ Keefer and Vlaicu 2008; Olson 1993; and Scott 1972. ⁷⁸ Barma 2012a.

⁷⁹ North, Wallis, and Weingast 2009: 36.

⁸⁰ Weber defined violence as the essential feature distinguishing the political from the social, economic, and cultural. As noted in Bates 2008b.

⁸¹ Kalyvas, Shapiro, and Masoud 2008: 1, fn. 1.

rule-bound, effective, and legitimate governance of the modern state. The post-conflict regimes under study here are neopatrimonial before the outbreak of conflict; they retain some elements of neopatrimonialism during the political disorder that characterizes conflict; and, in the end, even after experiencing a peacebuilding intervention designed explicitly to shape a different political order, they return to neopatrimonialism.

The Peacebuilding Pathway

Peacebuilding is “a matter of political crafting,” with elites playing a crucial role in the unfolding of the pathway, especially through the strategies they use to gain and reinforce power through institutions.⁸² This chapter has distilled a series of stylized expectations from other types of major transformative events and the political economy of the contemporary developing world to suggest what we should expect to see as elites in post-conflict states and international interventions interact with competing visions of political order. Transformative peacebuilding efforts represent the international community’s attempt to transpose the rule-bound, effective, and legitimate governance of the modern state in post-conflict countries. Peacebuilding through transitional governance tries to move post-conflict elites toward this modern political order by constraining their behavior through a process of institutional choice that represents the norms of international statehood. International interventions thus guide post-conflict states through the negotiated elite settlement that marks the initiation of a peace operation; through a deliberately managed transitional governance process of shared domestic and international authority that simultaneously pursues statebuilding and democratization; and through the electoral, constitution-writing, and legislative rule-making process that marks the end of a transitional governance experience.

Yet post-conflict elites are adept at maneuvering within the parameters of this internationally engineered, sequenced competition over political space and thereby shaping interventions and the resulting institutions to their advantage. They aim to assuage the international

⁸² DiPalma 1990: 8 uses the notion of political crafting to describe democratization.

community's concerns about modern forms of governance, while trying simultaneously to ensure their own political survival and enrichment. As a result, their actions over the phases of the peacebuilding pathway are geared toward establishing and bolstering a neopatrimonial political order that embeds the instrumental logic of patron–client exchange within the institutional trappings of the modern state. A peace agreement becomes, in this light, not the final resolution to civil conflict but the new impetus for continued internecine political struggle. The impact of the *de facto* power recalibration that takes place during this phase becomes apparent quite quickly as the initial victors act to assert their first-mover advantages. In turn, the transitional governance approach and the formal institutional engineering process it emphasizes become the new arena for political conflict between elite factions. The truncated timeframe of transitional governance forces upon the post-conflict elites in question a specific series of institutional choices and outcomes, setting in motion one particular pathway and foreclosing other potential pathways. Moreover, through the transitional governance model of shared governance, even as they attempt to impose particular constraints on domestic actors, peacebuilding interventions are simultaneously giving specific elites new and unmatched resources in the form of funding, legitimacy, and authority. In turn, elites are adept at manipulating the outcomes of the intervention to mobilize and reward supporters, attract new support, and more firmly establish their grips on power.

In the aftermath of intervention, finally, a crucial insight of temporal analysis becomes apparent: because of the dynamics of sequencing, alternatives forgone due to the exigencies of transitional governance become increasingly difficult to reach as time passes and countries continue to move along the peacebuilding pathway. Post-intervention, when external support for compliance has waned, those domestic elites who have been given the responsibility to implement and enforce new rules of governance find it more beneficial to subvert those institutions. Thus we see outcomes making it clear that elites might honor the letter of the new governance rules but violate their spirit such that they are obviously being exploited.⁸³ They govern, within the formal institutional constraints, in ways that attempt to eliminate competing political forces from authority. In the neopatrimonial order that is

⁸³ Mahoney and Thelen 2010: 13.

established, the formal institutions of the modern state, so deliberately unveiled at the end of the transitional governance period, are undermined in the service of systematic patronage distribution that cements the grip on power of specific elite factions. Savvy elites know that they will acquire an aura of legitimacy by cooperating with the UN's rules – and that they will in time be able to reassert their power based on their underlying resources. In each of the cases examined here, powerful elites cooperated with the transitional governance process only to make a bid for hegemonic power once the UN presence had ended. Thus, the vision of political order acted upon by domestic elites outlasts and outmaneuvers that of international peacebuilders.

This causal narrative serves as the logic underpinning the analysis presented in the rest of the book, which focuses on the international community's model of peacebuilding through transitional governance as a transformative experiment. The empirical chapters that follow bear out the expectations derived in this chapter, through the post-conflict peacebuilding experiences of Cambodia, East Timor, and Afghanistan. Much has been written about these cases, so much so that there is little new to be gleaned on the details of the interventions themselves. Yet I aim to make a twofold contribution through my presentation of the case material and additional evidence collected through interviews. First, as this chapter has articulated, the historical institutionalist approach to examining these interventions and the consequent emphasis on neopatrimonial political order offers a new comparative take on the particular details of the cases that are worth emphasizing and thereby streamlines their presentation. Second, the temporal dimension of the analysis connects familiar historical details in new ways, especially by highlighting specific elements of the cases in light of the phases along the peacebuilding pathway.

For these analytical purposes, the empirical narrative in this book is structured through the sequence of critical peacebuilding phases: moving post-conflict countries from conflict to settlement; implementing transitional governance measures of statebuilding and democratization; and post-intervention governance outcomes. At each phase, I emphasize how domestic elites interpret and interact with international interventions in patterns that condition the possibility and quality of a stable and lasting peace in the longer term. The next chapter delivers a comparative assessment of the politics behind the elite peace settlements that mark the first critical juncture in the process of

transformative peacebuilding. These settlements are the hinge between the country's past political trajectory, including the conflict itself, and the post-conflict future that the international community aspires to help shape. They offer a crucible through which to examine competing domestic and international conceptions of appropriate strategies to build political order.