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STATEBUILDING

# Statebuilding and State-Formation

The political sociology of intervention

Edited by  
Berit Bliesemann de Guevara



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# Statebuilding and State-Formation

This book examines the ways in which long-term processes of state-formation shape the possibilities for short-term political projects of statebuilding.

Using process-oriented approaches, the contributing authors explore what happens when conscious efforts at statebuilding 'meet' social contexts, and are transformed into daily routines. In order to explain their findings, they also analyse the temporally and spatially broader structures of world society which shape the possibilities of statebuilding.

*Statebuilding and State-Formation* includes a variety of case studies from post-conflict societies in Africa, Asia and Europe, as well as the headquarters and branch offices of international agencies. Drawing on various theoretical approaches from sociology and anthropology, the contributors discuss external interventions as well as self-led statebuilding projects. This edited volume is divided into three parts:

- Part I: State-formation, violence and political economy
- Part II: Governance, legitimacy and practice in statebuilding and state-formation
- Part III: The international self – statebuilders' institutional logics, social backgrounds and subjectivities

The book will be of great interest to students of statebuilding and intervention, war and conflict studies, international security and international relations.

**Berit Bliesemann de Guevara** is a researcher and lecturer in international relations at Helmut Schmidt University Hamburg. She co-authored *Illusion Statebuilding* (Hamburg 2010) and is assistant editor of the *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*.

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# Abbreviations

ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission (Sierra Leone)
ANA	Afghan National Army
APC	All People's Congress (Sierra Leone)
APODETI	Associação Popular Democrática Timorense
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CIVPOL	United Nations Civilian Police
CNRT	Conselho Nacional da Resistencia Timorense
DDR	Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAR	European Agency for Reconstruction
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EGSC	Economic Governance Steering Committee (Liberia)
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EUPM	EU Police Mission
EUPOL Proxima	EU Police Mission in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
EUSEC RD	EU Advisory and Assistance Mission for Security Reform in the Democratic Republic of Congo
EUSR	EU Special Representative
FALINTIL	Forças Armadas da Libertação Nacional de Timor Leste
FARDC	Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo
FARK	Armed Forces of the Republic of Kosovo
FDLR	Forces Démocratiques de la Libération du Rwanda
FDTL	Forças de Defesa de Timor Leste
F-FDTL	FALINTIL-FDTL
FNI	Front des Nationalistes et Intégrationnistes
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique
FRETILIN	Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente
FRPI	Force des Résistance Patriotique d'Ituri
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
GEMAP	Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme (Liberia)

ICG	International Crisis Group
ICITAP	International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (US)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
IO	International organisation
IPTF	International Police Task Force
ISA	International Studies Association
JCC	Joint Control Commission
JNA	Yugoslav People's Army
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
KVM	Kosovo Verification Mission (OSCE)
LDK	Democratic League of Kosova
LKCK	National Movement for Liberation of Kosovo
LPK	Popular Movement of Kosovo
LPRK	Popular Movement for the Republic of Kosovo
MAPE	Multinational Advisory Police Element
MONUC	United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo
MONUSCO	United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo
MSF	Médecins sans Frontières
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NLA	National Liberation Army (Macedonia)
NPA	National Port Authority (Liberia)
NTGL	National Transitional Government of Liberia
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PAMECA	Police Assistance Mission of the European Community to Albania
PNTL	National Police Force of East Timor
PPK	Parliamentary Party of Kosovo
RCD-G	Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie – Goma
RUF	Revolutionary United Front (Sierra Leone)
SELDI	South-East European Legal Development Initiative
SHKB	Shërbimit të Kontrollit të Brendshëm (Internal Control Service)
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
SNM	Somali National Movement
TRC	Sierra Leonean Truth and Reconciliation Commission
TT	Technical Team

<b>UDT</b>	<b>União Democrática Timorense</b>
<b>UN</b>	<b>United Nations</b>
<b>UNAMA</b>	<b>UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan</b>
<b>UNDP</b>	<b>UN Development Programme</b>
<b>UNHCR</b>	<b>UN High Commissioner for Refugees</b>
<b>UNICEF</b>	<b>UN Children's Fund</b>
<b>UNITA</b>	<b>União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola</b>
<b>UNMIK</b>	<b>UN Mission in Kosovo</b>
<b>UNMIL</b>	<b>UN Mission to Liberia</b>
<b>UNODC</b>	<b>UN Office on Drugs and Crime</b>
<b>UNSC</b>	<b>UN Security Council</b>
<b>UNTAET</b>	<b>UN Transitional Administration in East Timor</b>
<b>USAID</b>	<b>United States Agency for International Development</b>
<b>USIP</b>	<b>United States Institute for Peace</b>
<b>WHO</b>	<b>World Health Organization</b>

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# Introduction

## Statebuilding and state-formation

*Berit Bliesemann de Guevara*

### **Bob the Builder and the *longue durée***

In 1999, 'Bob the Builder', a new British animation series, conquered children's TV. The show was a great success and soon spread to other countries, while in the UK its theme song 'Can we fix it?' even became a million-selling number one hit, which made the programme and its message known to a wider audience. Bob, the main character, is a building contractor who, with a team of animate machines, enthusiastically helps neighbours and friends with constructions and repairs. In tackling their varying tasks, the series' characters epitomise a strong 'can do' attitude. The simple message is that there is no problem that cannot be solved on the basis of cooperation, dedication and positivity.

Bob the Builder's world represents a burlesque of the ideology that underpins today's international politics of statebuilding. In their public self-image, powerful (mainly western) states and their team of governmental and non-governmental organisations (INGOs) – often referred to as 'the international community' (Bliesemann de Guevara and Kühn 2011) – are ready to tackle any project in the course of an intervention. The guiding idea is that the job of transferring western-type institutions to states, which are perceived as failing, is not a matter of whether but only of how. The narrative suggests that statebuilding and society transformation can be achieved (positive thinking), are a matter of resolving clearly identifiable, local problems such as 'bad governance' (problem-solving), and depend mainly on an improvement of statebuilders' coordination and cooperation (teamwork) as well as on the commitment and perseverance of the international community (follow-through). This mindset resembles Bob's motto of 'Can we fix it? Yes we can!'

Obviously, however, international statebuilders' and Bob's social realities differ fundamentally. Bob the Builder lives in a world where only here and now matter, where patterns of power and domination, conflicting interests and identities, or competition among the members of the Can-Do Crew are unheard of. His building projects have a clear trajectory and a happy ending. In the world of international statebuilders, by contrast,



there seem to be no happy endings at all when results are measured against the ambitious goals of the 'liberal peace'. International statebuilding neither takes place in a historical void nor constitutes a consistent technical project.

The aim of this book is to explore the conditions of, and limits to, statebuilding from a political sociology perspective that takes into account the *longue durée* (Braudel 1984), i.e. the long-term processes of state-formation and the ways in which these shape short-term political projects. Authors explore what happens when conscious efforts at statebuilding 'meet' social contexts and are transformed into daily routines – on the recipients' as well as the statebuilders' side – and relate these dynamics to the long-term and global structures into which they are embedded. The case studies vary: they are set in (post-)conflict societies in Africa, Asia and Europe, but also focus on international agencies' headquarters and branch offices; they discuss external interventions as well as self-led statebuilding projects; and they draw on a variety of theoretical approaches from sociology and anthropology. Despite all differences, however, the chapters' findings point at limits to statebuilding projects characteristic to all cases, suggesting that a structural dimension of contemporary 'global governance' exists which sets the social reality of statebuilding apart from its 'Bob the Builder'-type ideology.

This introduction sketches a comprehensive narrative of statebuilding and state-formation into which the chapters can be embedded. After a brief overview of the three main strands of statebuilding-related literature, it introduces the concept of statebuilding and state-formation, which constitutes the book's common thread. Then contemporary processes of state-formation in non-western states under the internationalised conditions of world society and external intervention are discussed, referring to findings of Parts I and II of the book. This is followed by a focus on international statebuilders' own social constitution and how it influences, and is influenced by, statebuilding discourse and practices, referring to findings of Part III. I conclude by summarising why juxtaposing statebuilding and state-formation significantly adds to the study of contemporary world politics.

### **Analytical perspectives on statebuilding**

Scholarly literature offers three broad perspectives on how the international politics of statebuilding influences the non-western state. Most studies share the basic consensus of western, liberal-democratic policy circles that external statebuilding is necessary to stabilise the international system and to protect the people of weakly institutionalised non-western states from fear and want (e.g. UN 2004; UN Millennium Project 2005). Such 'problem-solving' approaches (Cox 1981: 128) assume that statebuilding will eventually contribute to the formation of states which