

### Book Review

**Review of** Nasia Hadjigeorgiou, *Protecting Human Rights and Building Peace in Post-Violence Societies* (Human Rights Law in Perspective), Hart Publishing (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020). 248pp. £49 (ebook). ISBN 9781509923427.

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This book is a concise compilation of how human rights relates to peace building in post-violence societies and peace education. Hadjigeorgiou brings an analytical robustness using the cases of Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, and South Africa to unpack post-violence societies. Furthermore, as an expert in Intra-State Conflict Settlement and Constitutional Law, Hadjigeorgiou offers an unparalleled perspective from these three interrelated fields of study. Lawyers, sociologists, and peacebuilders will be able to draw a wealth of knowledge from her book.

Hadjigeorgiou's contribution to the body of knowledge has been to engage human rights and peacebuilding in post-violence societies in an interdisciplinary analysis exploring the potential and limitations of human rights. Following the introduction which lays the anatomy of the relationship between human rights and peace, chapter two introduces the reader to a workable definition for peace in

Chapter 2-Clarifying the End: A Workable Definition of Peace, followed by Chapter 3-The Means and the End Connected: A Framework for the Relationship between Human Rights and Peace. In Chapter 4-Promoting Objective Peace through Human Rights Adjudication, Chapter 5-Promoting Objective Peace through Human Rights Implementation, and Chapter 6-Protecting Human Rights and Promoting Subjective Peace, the author explores objective and subjective concepts of peace. In the end Hadjigeorgiou makes a significant contribution to the liberal peacebuilding critique. The book's main focus is peace and the protection of legal rights. Her main tenet being that moral rights are not as intellectually disciplined in their content as much as their legal counterpart (50). Hadjigeorgiou posits, the pursuit of peacebuilding and attaining a subjective peace should move beyond legal tools and expand to social values.

In relating the book's content to a case with relation to the elements of peace: security, justice, and reconciliation—South Africa is in a precarious position because it had reconciliation without justice, some South Africans like myself would argue. The popular opinion is the masses were forced to move on without a 'formalistic' apology from the state, which was further exacerbated by the Truth and Reconciliation Committee's inadequate remedies resulting in a temporary peace (173). A regime was instilled without adequate restorative justice. Any process that undermines the subjective feeling of peace broadly, has negative implications for future attainable peace. One major revelation of the book has been for social and psychological changes within the post-violence societies. For this to occur there needs to be symbolic change, and institutional and legal amendments. Hadjigeorgiou references Kenneth Boulding (34), he is correct in theorizing that the sense of injustice in the aforementioned subjectively theorized condition would untimely erode the legitimacy of the current system. In my opinion, it is not clear if the South African system will collapse, but the country is definitely in the cusp of change and there is a foreboding public sentiment.

Hadjigeorgiou delves deep into terminology, unpacking the terms that are misunderstood rendering them valuable for her arguments pertaining to peace and post-conflict societies. The author does well to reject mutually incompatible ideas such as 'the promotion of human rights promotes reconciliation' (42). The pursuit of moral rights and legal rights hold different facets and the outcomes are different.

Hadjigeorgiou argues, 'The use of human rights as a conflict resolution strategy results in a virtuous cycle, whereby subjective feelings of peace make it more likely that both objective and subjective security, justice, and reconciliation are further promoted' (73). Yet, how does one promote subjective peace? In the book Hadjigeorgiou includes the notion of human rights aiding peacebuilding

efforts by helping victims articulate their grievances, followed by a process of restorative justice facilitated by the state through adjudication (248). Furthermore, in the conflict resolution process, local or country experts provide more relevant knowledge as compared to thematic or technical expertise, this according to Severine Autesserre in the book *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention*. At times the peacebuilding strategies fail due to two reasons: 1) superficial knowledge of the context on the ground, or 2) their decisions to reform the law instead of inducing social change through other mediums (196,198).

Against this backdrop, Hadjigeorgiou is forced to confront the limitations of liberal peacebuilding. She argues the protection of human rights can induce socio-economic and psychological change but she does not describe how or why these changes take place (205). My assumption is perhaps there are existing differences and nuances in psychosocial ways of being subjectively peaceful in each case study.

Because *Protecting Human Rights and Building Peace in Post-Violence Societies* is largely a book on linkages and relationships between the protection of human rights and the building of peace, she offers no concrete applicable method in securing an outcome for her suggested reforms. My largest critique being the case studies do not relate to inter-state conflict rendering the theories limited to only intra-state post-violence societies, this is also a stated limitation of the book. She does well to note that bad legislative drafting impedes the protection of human rights but does not address how this can be overcome. In legal institutions and amongst the plethora of declarations that have been articulated, it is interesting that the author notes that the right to peace has been underexplored (49). In highlighting this realization, readers are left questioning the best combination of multidisciplinary practices to remedy this. Bad legislative drafting and limited institutional capacity also play a role in resolution outcomes, Hadjigeorgiou writes (123, 127-135,151). From a legal perspective the book would have done well to explore detailed ways in building legal institutional capacity.

The book makes bold calls for reform leaving learning points to ponder about at the end of each chapter. She sufficiently explores the relationship between human rights and peace from a multidisciplinary lens: namely Peace Studies (Chapter 2), Constitutional and International Law (Chapter 4), Political Science (Chapter 5), Sociology (Chapter 6), and a combination of these (Chapter 3). The largest acknowledgement and aspiration being for post-violence societies to move towards 'eiriniism', a term coined by Oliver P. Richmond in his work *The End of the Liberal Peace? Post-Liberal Peace vs. Post-Liberal States*; defined as, "a

hybridized, localized, and internationalized practice that is more locally sustainable, resilient and legitimate.” The term is also widely used in *A Post-Liberal Peace: Eirínism and the Everyday* by the same author, which Hadjigeorgiou references several times in her book. Without giving a comprehensive framework for this, readers will be left wanting a sequel to see this concept fully developed and explored with another post-violence society case study. The book piques the interest of the reader. What Hadjigeorgiou should be commended on doing is developing a nascent framework for post-violence societies to avoid a resurgence of violence. Academics and practitioners alike will find the book a valuable resource.