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Adding citizenship to the analytical puzzle: bringing back the political to post-armed conflict statebuilding?

Currently, post-armed conflict statebuilding processes are under international scrutiny with a clear emphasis on institutions and assurances of state behavior. This focus on institutions has motivated several critical writings regarding this technical emphasis which depoliticizes the recipients of the liberal peace recipe. This paper aims to explore the concept of citizenship as an analytical perspective to post-armed conflict political relations. Which is the relevance of this concept to explore the political relations in statebuilding scenarios? How can we define citizenship without state institutions being in place? These questions will be addressed following an understanding of citizenship as a practice and by introducing some of the current debates around the conceptualization of citizenship. The paper argues thus that citizenship has undergone fundamental transformations that might allow us to perceive the local recipients of statebuilding policies as political subjects, hence bringing the political back to statebuilding scenarios.

Introduction

Post-armed conflict statebuilding has become a fundamental achievement in the long road towards sustainable peace. Throughout the last decades the emphasis on the role of the state and its institutions in broader processes of peacebuilding has evolved and currently the image of a viable state is not only desirable but has become a priority of international actors that intervene in post-armed conflict scenarios. State recovery came to be applied worldwide according to a model of intervention centered in viable political institutions guided by the principle of good governance. But this understanding of statebuilding as peacebuilding effort has been under growing international scrutiny ranging from proposals of adjustment in its application to criticisms of its ambitions and contours. The focus on institutions has motivated several critical writings regarding its technical emphasis which in fact tend to depoliticize the recipients of the liberal peace guidelines. Such depoliticization testifies an approach mostly centered in the international sphere and agents as promoters of peace and legitimate interveners of politics, obscuring local political dynamics and struggles and also neglecting the political agency of local agents and subjects.

This paper aims to contribute to this debate departing from a citizenship conceptual framing, traditionally used to map and define political relations between the state and its population and individual's political agency, but currently obscured by the primacy given to state institutions. Our purpose is to re-evaluate the possibilities of political agency by the local recipients of liberal peace through citizenship practices. Accordingly, this paper is structured in three parts. Firstly, we address the current practices and debates of post-armed conflict statebuilding, in order to consider its fundamental principles and assess its contribution to build a specific peace. Secondly, we evaluate the current place of citizenship in post-armed conflict statebuilding in order to bridge the two conceptual framings. And finally, we consider the different debates and contributions of citizenship to the recovery of local political agency, seeking to bring back the political to the debate surrounding post-armed conflict statebuilding.

Post-armed Conflict Statebuilding: current practices and debates

The role of democratic state institutions has been inscribed in the project of international peacebuilding since the term was inscribed by Boutros-Ghali in his *Agenda for Peace*, in 1992. According to Boutros-Ghali, there is an undeniable relation between building long-lasting and viable peace in societies devastated by violent conflict and the establishment of democratic state institutions (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). The idea of peacebuilding was then structured around a strategy of “pacification through economic and political liberalization” (Paris, 1997: 56) that envisioned a state engaged with the needs of economic globalization and the international demands for peace and stability. However, the relation between state and peace has not been as straightforward as the different Agendas¹ seemed to propose.

The 1990’s brought strong suspicions towards the existence of strong states. These suspicions expressed different concerns not only regarding the role of the state in the globalized liberal economy but also in the role played by some states in the eruption of violent conflicts and humanitarian catastrophes worldwide. Hence, and although the existence of democratic state institutions was considered as a fundamental part of peacebuilding strategies, the relation between state and peace suffered from some tensions throughout the decade, reinforced by the human security frame and the international advocacy for human rights.

The narrative/diagnosis of failed and weak states was a decisive contribution to solving any remaining issues in the relation between state and peace and the adoption of statebuilding as the new frame for intervention in post-armed conflict scenarios. The perception of these phenomena as the site and causes of violent conflict and wars and potential sources of insecurities became a threat to international peace and its premises (Brinkerhoff, 2005: 3; Milliken & Krause, 2002: 764). The perils of state failure were depicted beyond the devastation and violence that they were expected to create locally. In fact, the question of weak and failed states had a systemic impact. It came to be understood internationally, by

¹ The need for viable democratic institutions in the promotion of peace is further developed in the *Agenda for Democratization* (1996);

states and international organizations, and especially after 9/11, as a source of troubles and terrorist sanctuaries. The report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, *A More Secure World: our shared responsibility* (2004), confirmed this approach and proclaimed weak and collapsed states as a systemic threat to international peace and security. But beyond the security challenge that these states posed, the phenomena of state failure defied the modern project of a peaceful society guided by the state (Milliken & Krause, 2002: 763-764). Hence, the identification of state failure phenomena created an international understanding and intervention procedure that sought to safeguard the international peace and stressed the need to intervene at states' level through a doctrine focused on the "Responsibility to protect" (ICISS, 2001). The narrative/diagnosis of weak and failed states created a descendent movement of anarchy, from the international level towards the states' level in a process identified as "domestication of anarchy" that internalized the causes of violent conflict (Bickerton, 2007: 94).

The relation too often established between civil wars and weak or failed states, either as a cause or as consequence (Ottaway, 2002: 1001), bounded the task of peacebuilding to the mission of (re)building states: *"Peacebuilding is nothing less than an attempt to construct or reconstruct viable political institutions and relationships that are to form the basis for a sustainable post-war polity"* (Manning, 2003:29). The deployment of viable state institutions has been structured in three fundamental axis, security, political life and economic needs, which proved to be necessarily interlinked in a comprehensive process (Ottaway, 2002: 1006-1007).

The rehabilitation of states was guided according to market demands, democratic guidelines and the demands of the international community concerning human rights and human security. This apparently difficult juggling was mediated through the good governance clause that combines a technical definition of rules with the principle of openness, efficiency and accountability (Robinson, 2007: 11). Specifically, in post-armed conflict statebuilding, good governance is the assurance that state institutions work in the definition of a viable project of development, able to avoid the relapse into failure or/and violent conflict (World Bank, 2000: 1-

19; Boutros-Ghali, 1994; Boutros-Ghali, 1996²). Good governance assumed in practice the nature of conditionality due to the principle of accountability promoted: first, through the international community's supervision of progress in reforms and reporting from national governments and second, through social vigilance guided by democratic political mechanisms. The compromise established through good governance changed the emphasis from a strict logic of intervention to a discourse that emphasized state responsibility and international partnership: just as the failed states matched a descendent move from anarchy in the international realm, the emphasis on shared responsibilities took its place in the realm of international promotion of peace.

However, the assumptions and deployment of post-armed conflict statebuilding practices have neither been totally successful nor consensual. The reflections and critiques range from the dissonance between the ambitions defined and the changes achieved to a more serious questioning of prepositions and implications. Statebuilding's contribution to the promotion of peace has been constantly discussed and somehow adapted to the shortcomings of its implementation or the pitfalls of its premises. Necessarily, these debates are deeply entrenched in the notion of peace that statebuilding promotes and how international actors and agents are considered in these frames of action and intervention. Therefore, most of the criticisms faced by liberal peacebuilding can be traced in the recent history of post-armed conflict statebuilding. And these common traces can be found both in the international realm where they are defined as well as in the local level of application of such premises and programs. However they seem to converge in the current focus and discussion around the institutional nature of current practices in post-armed conflict statebuilding.

Roland Paris has developed an analysis of liberal peace and more recently of statebuilding that stresses the need to focus peacebuilding processes in what he calls "institutionalization before liberalization" strategies, that aim to build a minimum network of existing institutions before the challenging and, most of

² Boutros-Ghali wrote in the Agenda for Democratization "Democracy today is receiving widespread acknowledgement for its capacity to foster good governance, which is perhaps the single most important variable within the control of individual state".

times, tumultuous processes of marketization and democratization (Paris, 2004:7-8). Accordingly, statebuilding is considered as

“a particular approach to peacebuilding, premised on the recognition that achieving security and development in societies emerging from civil war partly depends on the existence of capable, autonomous and legitimate governmental institutions” (Paris and Sisk, 2009a: 1-2).

Paris and Sisk state that this focus on state institutions and their contribution to peace were strongly neglected by peacebuilding missions in the 1990's, which severely compromised the outcomes of war to peace transitions at that time. For Paris and Sisk it is fundamental that statebuilding is correctly defined in order to correctly assess the current dilemmas it faces: statebuilding is a sub-component of peacebuilding that must emphasize institutions legitimacy (domestically and internationally) in order to promote some core state functions, and must not be confused with nation-building (Paris and Sisk, 2009a: 14-15).

David Chandler has developed a critique to statebuilding that envisages this institutional primacy. He considers that the institutional argument of Paris reflects already existing policy practices of international institutions, states and non-governmental institutions engaged in statebuilding (Chandler, 2007: 75). For Chandler this institutional primacy asserts the assumption that states and citizens can be socially engineered by correct practices of external regulation entailed in the good governance clause (Chandler, 2007: 75-76). This recipe of intervention testifies a technical approach to war and peace made possible by the New Wars frame (Kaldor, 1999) that has removed politics from the understanding of violent conflict and consequentially developed a strategy for peace that also outcasts politics: “The assumption is that the problems of politics can be resolved outside the realm of the political, in the realms of law, social policy or administration.” (Chandler, 2005a: 311).

This “peace without politics” fits what Chandler has identified as the ethical turn in international theorizing that has reframed the concept of sovereignty into a responsibility instead of a right to self-government and the concept of intervention

into a principle of partnership (Chandler, 2008: 346; Chandler, 2005b: 84). These assumptions have guided what Chandler believes to be an empire in denial (Chandler, 2005b): international actors and states have refuted the accountability of their actions by emphasizing the responsibility of states in the process through the establishment of partnerships that they in fact guide and direct under the auspices of a technical plan of recovery and control. But what needs further discussion is the creation of phantom states by this empire: institutions put in place with legal international sovereignty are deprived of self-government, which in fact prevents them from defining the political articulations needed for recognition and legitimacy and also from becoming expressions of their societies (Chandler, 2005b: 43-44).

This engagement of the international community in the complex task of post-armed conflict statebuilding has been recently qualified as “power without responsibility” by Cunliffe, (2007). Cunliffe states that this notion of power without responsibility is what defines post-Cold War international relations and what bridges the apparent tension between the interventionism model of the 1990’s based on human rights and humanitarian emergencies and the current statebuilding projects (Cunliffe, 2007: 52). Some elements must be considered in order to fully grasp this statement. First, human rights and the new interventionism departed from the need to answer to crisis and openly reinforced the power of the “protectors” over the “protected”. Notwithstanding this growing capacity of intervention, states safeguarded their actions in a sense of moral responsibility to act that prevailed over political responsibility and accountability. Statebuilding came to reinforce this international exercise of power and hence, to reproduce the unaccountable way in which power is exercised in statebuilding interventions (Cunliffe, 2007: 62-63).

The discussion over externally driven institutions echoes larger concerns on the political nature and impacts of these processes. The ability of international actors to define such structural definitions on how a society should relate is appointed by Bickerton as a fundamental contradiction with the principle of self-determination (Bickerton, 2007: 98). In fact, and although statebuilding promotes sovereign

states, the technical nature of its internationally driven projects isolates sovereignty from its social bases and meanings. For Bickerton this contradiction leads to the recreation of politically dependent administrations and the reproduction failure (Bickerton, 2007: 98-100). This contradiction is also identified by Paris and Sisk as some of the unchanging and unchangeable dilemmas of statebuilding (2010b: 305).

The need for sustainability of the reforms has made the question of local involvement in the process a central discussion. The concept of local ownership, originally used in development circles and projects, framed the discussion on how the promotion of local ownership could be more efficient in terms of sustainability through the promotion of participation. The promotion of sustainability through local ownership and participation has become for some a “rescue package” of the orthodoxy of peace interventions (MacGinty, 2010: 353). But concerning statebuilding the use of such concepts is strongly tied to the procedural international approach. Chesterman states that in order to not jeopardize the goals of the intervention, ownership must be understood as the end purpose of such operations and not the means used (Chesterman, 2007: 7). Paris and Sisk affirm that, as contradictory it might sound, international control is required to establish local ownership despite the problems it might pose to the legitimacy and sustainability of ownership arrangements (Paris and Sisk, 2009b: 305). Statebuilding assumes sustainability, local ownership and participation as a consequential achievement of successful missions and not fundamental to the process.

Therefore, the political sphere appears to have moved upwards, to the international level, where “statebuilders” prevail: politics seem to be located in the relation between international actors and the entrusted stakeholders or civil society actors. Even when we consider the efforts of some international and non-governmental organizations to promote local practices of peacebuilding, these attempts are strongly tied to international purposes. The use of good governance and accountability in post-armed conflict statebuilding seem to have changed the generative capability of legitimacy from society to international actors.

Considering the international projection of political relations in statebuilding scenarios, it is fundamental to understand how citizenship, the traditional frame for legitimate political relations, has co-existed with internationalized practices of post-armed conflict statebuilding.

Citizenship and Statebuilding: what relation?

Assuming the international character of post-armed conflict statebuilding and the dislocation of legitimacy of political relations to international agents, one is faced with the question of what is left locally. Citizenship has traditionally expressed the basis for politics at the national level. Contractualist or more utilitarian theories of the concept have framed the legitimacy of state's action in citizenry. For liberalism, the moral reference of statebuilding intervention, citizenship is a fundamental piece of political life. One must keep in mind that citizenship has not simply vanished from these scenarios: it is in fact expected to develop a key role in the long-term political life of the state. Therefore it is fundamental to assess how has citizenship been understood and promoted in scenarios of international statebuilding practices and the function it is expected to develop in democratic politics.

In a publication of the World Bank Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP), Kaltenborn-Stachau identifies the national dialogue as a pre-requisite for the success of statebuilding (2008: 31). National dialogue must be understood here as the exchange of ideas, perspectives, information and opinion that are responsible for the kind of relation that citizens establish with their state. According to this study, the need for strengthening this relation has been the missing link between recent interventions and their long-term success: even though national dialogue and citizens' rights are mentioned in the existing literature and programs their dynamics and requirements have been, overall, neglected (Kaltenborn-Stachau, 2008: 8). Defining a successful relation between citizens and states necessarily required the definition of a public sphere, able to promote communication and participation of citizens in the political life of

the state. States, media and civil society are considered the poles of interaction in the definition of a viable and successful public sphere.

This study stated what Pouligny had already pointed out. State and society relations were neglected in the process of statebuilding and in the redefinition of new societies (Pouligny, 2005: 496). International statebuilders have focused on the promotion of civil society, considered a key component of the liberal civil peace project and fundamental to the support of international intervention and the institutions they promote (Richmond, 2009: 150). Addressing the democratic transitions in Latin America, Hagopian stresses the way in which civil society acts as an antidote to the fragility of democracies through its capability to socialize and politicize citizens in order to guarantee a supervision of eventual state deviant behaviors (Hagopian, 2007: 17). In transitions from war to peace and in the context of statebuilding, civil society is expected to assume a similar role, shaping citizenship practices. Hence, internationally supported civil society is expected to act as mediator of international actions to foster peace through statebuilding measures. There are of course important implications that are inferred from these expectations. It has been expected that civil society is united in the promotion of peace, leaving the violent conflict's heritages aside and not considering the diversity of actors involved (Berdal, 2008: 360; Pouligny, 2005; MacGinty, 2006: 52-53). This vision is not only detached from local realities but implies foremost that these dynamics are neither properly considered or perceived as relevant for the definition of the future political relations.

The citizenship promoted, through the mediation of civil society, focuses in the status and rights promotion *after* international intervention in local politics. Since, as we have previously stated, the legitimacy of politics is internationally created, the state seems to be a pre-existing political reality to citizenship formation in war to peace transitions. Much like the question of ownership, it is assumed that the definition of citizenship comes after the institutions can be held internationally accountable and capable to provide and protect the rights of individuals.

This approach departs from important considerations regarding the capability and possibility of individuals to exercise political agency that is strongly connected

with the understanding of state failure, causes of violent armed conflicts and their implications. The new wars frame, coined by Mary Kaldor, presented violent conflicts as the result of a convergence between power-related issues and identity politics (Kaldor, 1999: 110). Private violence and the proliferation of sub-state groups, the fragility of states or the establishment of highly profitable economies resumed and connected different places worldwide. More importantly, the new wars identified civilians as the primary target of violence in these places: war strategies involved control of populations through the deployment of constant violence against civilians (Kaldor, 1999: 90-99).

The massive abuse of human rights defined the victims of these new wars. In fact, the visibility of this violence and the failure to prevent it in places like Bosnia and Rwanda had a major impact in the redefinition of interventions policies (ICISS, 2001: 1). Furthermore, the fact that states had something to do with it (ICISS, 2001: 4) reinforced the need for the deployment of humanitarian interventions able to effectively protect individuals where states were not able or willing to perform or engage with the responsibility of sovereignty:

The emerging principle in question is that intervention for human protection purposes, including military intervention in extreme cases, is supportable when major harm to civilians is occurring or imminently apprehended, and the state in question is unable or unwilling to end the harm, or is itself the perpetrator. (ICISS, 2001: 16)

The responsibility to protect is necessarily scaled: although the primary locus of responsibility lies within the state itself, the international community must accept this responsibility when the state, for any possible reason, fails to do it. Therefore, responsibility to protect is tantamount with the complex task of creating the conditions for states' compliance in accordance with human rights and human security frame.

Hence, individuals located in these sites of human rights abuse became firstly perceived as victims, and secondly in need for protection. Both these images are attached to deprivation of rights as the inhibiting factor for action and tend to present individuals as deprived subjects of political agency. The international

responsibility to protect seems to suspend the local political agency of citizenship until this responsibility is scaled-back to the state. Consequentially, it appears as if the international actors have been defining a humanitarian social contract of exception that substitutes the state and recognizes citizenship in its legal expression but delays citizenship potential political agency. Citizenship apparently has a relation of dependence with post-armed conflict statebuilding rather than a mutual constitutive one³. This dependence is reinforced in the larger expectations towards citizenship as a state pacification tool that seeks to rescue individuals from other loyalties (Badie, 2000: 60; Brown et al, 2010: 108). “The universal contractual nature of the liberal peace ideal – as a system derived from citizenship – has been lost” (Richmond and Franks, 2009: 190)⁴.

Reinterpreting Citizenship in Statebuilding: bringing the political back-in?

The concept, rights and practices of citizenship have undergone important challenges and changes. Accordingly, one must consider how they have affected the question of citizenship worldwide in order to propose a reinterpretation of citizenship in these spaces. Notwithstanding these broader developments, reinterpreting citizenship must include an effort to understand the variables that affect its constant redefinition in post-armed conflict statebuilding, including not only a consideration of dynamics and issues inherited from violent armed conflict but also the consequences of peace, namely the interactions established between local features and liberal values that differently affect the possible outcomes.

Brown et al (2010) have stated that the analysis of citizenship would benefit from the analytical framework of hybrid political orders (HPO). This approach questions the conceptual tag of failed states and its appropriateness to describe the political realities in statebuilding scenarios: “[the] view of a pathology of fragile states is not only misleading, it is also unhelpful since it focuses on what is lacking – Western statehood – instead of what is actually there” (Kraushaar and Lambach, 2009: 5).

³ Ghani et al (2005) have identified the crucial features of statehood that must be accomplished and the creation of citizenship rights and duties are pointed;

⁴ This statement is part of the chapter that analyzes the Cambodian transition but we believe it captures a global feature of international post-armed conflict statebuilding.

HPO departs from the recognition of existing “customary, non-state institutions of governance” that shape “everyday social reality” (Boege et al, 2008: 7) and moves from the general dichotomy between formal and informal, and the connotations usually attached to it (formal institutions as synonymous of modernity and rationality and informal as equivalent to tradition and community): it promotes “a connection, an intermingling and an interpenetration of the norms and institutions of the formal state on the one hand and the norms and institutions of the informal sphere on the other” (Kraushaar and Lambach, 2009: 5). HPO stands for a process of positive mutual accommodation between the project of state and local specificities and also between them and the international actors engaged in peacebuilding and statebuilding (Brown et al, 2010: 109-110). Thus, accepting the HPO frame enables the possibility of a citizenship engaged with the multiple nature of peoples’ identity and with the community expressions of governance (Brown et al, 2010: 108-109).

Richmond has also focused his discussion of peace and of peacebuilding policies regarding the everyday life and the possibilities of agency (Richmond, 2008; Richmond, 2009; Richmond 2010). He has emphasized a local-liberal hybridity that appears to mark the fourth generation of peace. According to Richmond, the technical and institutional reality of state must be bridged with a real existing social contract and must also be open to “cultural, customary dynamics of the local environment concerned and to have a beneficial impact on the everyday lives and needs of the post-conflict individual” (Richmond, 2010: 31). Thus, in order to achieve these premises, it is fundamental to rethink statebuilding and the relation it has with local contexts and representative capacities. It is crucial that individuals’ agency is recognized (Richmond and Franks, 2009: 190).

Recovering the social contract through the engagement with hybridity poses a great challenge to more conservative notions of citizenship that exclusively tie the concept with the State. Hence, it is fruitful to consider recent changes and challenges faced by citizenship in order to grasp the potential connection with citizenship political agency and a truly inclusive peace. A profound assessment of these debates is, of course, beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is

fundamental to mention some acquired features currently assumed in citizenship practices in order to rethink local political agency in statebuilding scenarios.

The debates surrounding the new status of citizenship mostly targeted the demand of exclusivity from nation-state in face of the transformations brought by a globalized world. The alternatives to this exclusive location developed in four fundamental and interrelated axes: first the issue of political community conception; second the range and type of rights; third the agents of protection; and finally the possibilities of representation and participation. These broad concerns and debates propose and unfold different political spaces where citizenship is being built and is being practiced.

The relation between citizenship and space has been depicted in terms of scale, moving upwards and downwards the national level (Kofman, 2003: 397). Notwithstanding the fact that the national scale remains valid, rethinking space in citizenship necessarily pushes us to consider other scales where citizenship is formed and where its practices are unfold. In fact, the current distinctive spatial feature of citizenship is the overlapping of its scales. The global city of Sassen (2002) or the assemblages described by Ong (2005) are strong images of this fusion of scales, where the local sphere is connected to global dynamics and movements that ultimately change the national domain. The cosmopolitanism defended by Linklater (1995), with the emphasis on systems of overlapping authorities, also echoes this fusion. Also, the prominence of processes of empowerment and struggles at the local level and the action of social movements across scales also testify how citizenship has been considered across spatial scales and how scale is central to the production and maintenance of citizenship formations: discourses and practices of citizenship can be forged at one specific scale and be effective at another (Marston e Mitchell, 2004: 110; Kofman, 2003: 397).

The overlap of scales in citizenship is deeply connected with the ability to engage and make claims at different spaces, either echoing local struggles at the global level or bringing universal claims to the local domain. This is not only a geographic delimitation but it is also a process of identification, recognition and/or solidarity

at different levels that testify the complexity of citizenship construction at different scales. It is a process where the question of belonging or the demand of rights and participation interact with emerging actors at different levels of political life.

These different and plural latitudes of citizenship present cross cutting elements that must be considered in order to comprehensively grasp the way space defines citizenship and its practices. The question of power and its relation with space and the social-cultural meanings this relation produces are fundamental to consider and recognize the spaces where citizenship is being shaped and practiced. Space unveils the power relations, the mechanisms of governance of differences, but it also shapes individuals' ability to act. Hence, the type of space depends on how power relations are structured, the positioning of different actors within them and how individuals interact and act amidst that specific scenario.

This readjustment of citizenship to different locations has contributed to analyze political spaces based on the existing political institutions (formal versus informal political spaces) or according to their purpose (spaces of participation, for example) pointing to multiple types of spaces. This multiplicity is defined through the relation between existing institutions or actors and the challenges of recognition, protection and participation. Addressing the relation of political spaces and citizenship allows us to focus on the way agency is affected by the different political spaces, where the issues of belonging, rights, agents and possibilities of representation and participation unfold.

Recognizing the political spaces where citizenship unfolds in post-armed conflict scenarios seems crucial not only to consider the variables that interact at the definition of its rights and practices but also to reinforce the need to re-address the local place of politics in terms of its possible agency. This recognition, centered in the political agency promoted by citizenship, must consider the heritages of violent armed conflict and the specific marks it leaves in the actors and individuals that interact at the local level. This must not be perceived as the fragmentation of political agency through the overlapping scales in citizenship. The outcomes of these possible configurations are not pre-determined or envisage the denial of the

state or liberal politics. They represent a relation of mutual impact that recovers the constitutive relation between society and state.

Concluding remarks

This paper has sought to contribute to debate the politics of statebuilding and in post-armed conflict statebuilding scenarios. We have focused in citizenship and its political agency as an alternative to institutional centered critics. Of course, the potential of this approach might be contested in different terms. Some may argue that citizenship has been a traditional source of exclusion according to the rights, relations and assumption it has promoted. But it is important to keep in mind that citizenship has also been a powerful impulse for important struggles for empowerment, recognition and rights. It is this potential to promote change that this paper has tried to emphasize.

Therefore, reinterpreting citizenship might help us to bring politics back to post-armed conflict scenarios in different ways. It not only brings legitimacy of politics to the local level, as the possibility to engage at different scales opens space for demanding accountability to international actors engaged in peacebuilding. It does not only nurture the recognition of the potential of political agency, but also promotes an engagement with it in the creation of peace.

The contribution hereby expressed constitutes only an initial step of a demanding and complex analysis and discussion. The current spatial dimensions of citizenship emphasize the need to consider political spaces beyond the idea of the state. However, important clues for further research emerge out of this reflection. Understanding the different processes, dynamics and agents that interact in the definition of citizenship rights and practices in post-armed conflict scenarios is crucial to develop the perspective introduced.

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