Sub-project 1. Concepts

The conceptual studies will investigate the ethical underpinnings of current research and policy discourse. The aim is to develop a discursive basis for case studies and thematic analyses of the ethics of peacebuilding. This is done by combining analyses of normative claims in research literature and policy documents with investigations of the regulative idea of liberal peace that often remains implicit in this literature. The findings of these studies will be related to general concepts and positions on the ethics of global politics.

The subproject will comprise five main tasks:

1. State-of-the-art. The project will provide comprehensive review of the state-of-the-art literature on peace-building, providing an overview of the ethical presuppositions and questions of culture, power and gender in scholarly literature on peacebuilding that can serve as a point of reference for the other studies and provide them with a complete list of the most relevant literature (Principal researchers: J. Peter Burgess, Kristoffer Lidén, & Research Assistant III, PRIO).

2. Ethics in peacebuilding policies. The project will analyze the ethical principles of peacebuilding in the policies of the United Nations, the European Union, the African Union and the U.S.A and Norway. This will result in a synthesis of normative assumptions and positions in current peacebuilding policy, highlighting the differences between the policies of the organizations and countries under study. Through discourse analysis, literature review, case-studies, interviews with policy-makers the project will demonstrate how these variations are reflected in concrete missions (Principal researcher: Lars Christie, PRIO).

3. Ethical analysis the concept of ‘liberal peace’. Through discourse analysis of case-studies, field-work, interviews with policy-makers and practitioners, and archival research the project will reveal the meanings and manifestations of ‘the liberal peace’ in current discourses and practices of peacebuilding, with an emphasis on their normative presumptions (Principal researcher: Oliver Richmond, St. Andrews).

4. Analysis of the relation between liberal peace and ‘human security’. Through a philosophical analysis the project will develop the concept of human security as a rights-based foundation for peacebuilding. It will explore the degree to which the concept can provide a theoretical framework for ethical reflection on the ends and means of liberal peacebuilding on the individual (micro) level (Principal researcher: J. Peter Burgess & Research Assistant III, PRIO).

5. Peace-building and post-colonialism. Through comparative case-studies, literature review and philosophical methods the project will conceptualize liberal peacebuilding in terms of political cosmopolitanism, and, against this background, relating peacebuilding to relevant positions on the ethics of global politics: liberal cosmopolitanism, critical international theory and communitarianism. It will thus produce an overview of ethical puzzles concerning the problem of the benevolent, transplanting the liberal peace into non-Western contexts (Principal researcher: Kristoffer Lidén, PRIO).