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Between a Rock and a Hard Place

Recognizing
the Primacy of Politics
in UN Peacebuilding

by Andrea Warnecke

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Acronyms

ASG	Assistant Secretary-General
BCPR	Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Resolution (UNDP)
CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CHF	Common Humanitarian Fund
CPR	Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit
DDR	disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DFS	Department for Field Support
DHA	Department for Humanitarian Assistance
DPA	Department of Political Affairs
DPKO	Department for Peacekeeping Operations
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ERF	Emergency Response Fund
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
INGO	international non-governmental organization
IO	international organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITA	international transitory administration
NGO	non-governmental organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
OPS	Office of Project Services
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PBC	Peacebuilding Commission
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PBSO	Peacebuilding Support Office
PCF	Post-Conflict Fund
PRPS	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SPF	State and Peacebuilding Trust Fund
LICUS	Low-Income Countries Under-Stress
UN	United Nations
UNDAP	UN Development Assistance Plan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHABITAT	UN Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	UN International Children's Emergency Fund

This study asks whether the United Nations system is capable of conducting peacebuilding in contested intra-state settings. At the core is the dichotomy between the political and the non-political parts of the UN, and the question of the degree to which the non-political parts can conduct peacebuilding irrespective of Security Council backing. To explore this question, this study first reviews key peacebuilding actors and authority structures within the UN Secretariat and across the UN system. Secondly, it provides an in-depth assessment of the ongoing reform process of the UN peacebuilding architecture. The analysis traces the process by which the reasoning on peacebuilding best practices and related reforms have shifted from developmental and structural notions towards an engagement with political negotiation and mediation. The argument holds that the UN's perennial pre-occupation with improving peacebuilding coherence and coordination across its bodies and specialized agencies is bound up with the attempt to project greater political leverage vis-à-vis host state governments. In this regard, while the Peacebuilding Commission as an inter-governmental advisory body has so far failed to deliver on its promises in linking the political and non-political parts of the UN, it has helped bring about a re-politicized understanding of the role of UN peacebuilders across the organization. More recently, the discussion on peacebuilding reform appears to have come full circle by acknowledging the fundamental dilemma of conducting intra-state peacebuilding in 'non-cooperative' environments as a challenge to be addressed at the political level of intergovernmental cooperation rather than through the non-political parts of the UN system.

Introduction

International organizations (IOs) pursue a steadily expanding number of policy issues that touch on most areas of life – such as securing international peace and security, harmonizing legal or industrial standards, or facilitating the development of joint responses to transnational global challenges such as climate change. Among this long list of agenda items, supporting post-war peacebuilding processes within states arguably poses one of the most complex challenges for international organizations. On the one hand, it requires engaging with state and non-state actors in politically charged settings; on the other hand, these interactions crucially take place within states as opposed to between them. While international organizations have become pivotal agents in shaping global, i.e. international, policy agendas such as the *Responsibility to Protect*, the *Millennium Development Goals*, or, more recently, the *Sustainable Development Goals*, assisting peacebuilding efforts 'locally', i.e. within

states, is fraught with paradoxes and trade-offs. For many IOs, both intergovernmental and non-governmental, this problem is further exacerbated if their projects and programs are conducted outside the scope of a peace(keeping) operation mandated by the UN Security Council and the political legitimacy, guidance, and hence leverage ideally afforded by Security Council backing.

Since the end of the Cold War, peacebuilding has evolved as a multilateral project to help states and societies emerging from internal war transit to a more stable, or self-sustaining, peace after the conclusion of a peace agreement. Conducted under a variety of labels (Barnett et al. 2007), such as reconstruction, rehabilitation, post-war recovery, the overall peacebuilding endeavor comprises a broad spectrum of practices that seek to prevent the recurrence of violence after the termination of internal armed conflict and the conclusion of some kind of settlement. Peacebuilding is jointly conducted by the United Nations and its bodies, bilateral development agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in cooperation with local state and non-state parties. The peacebuilding task is distinct, yet closely related, to other approaches and instruments in the area of international intervention and peace support, such as military peacekeeping, diplomatic and/or judicial peacemaking, and peace enforcement.[1]

In contrast to the relatively well defined lines of political authority and accountability that underlie military peacekeeping operations and diplomatic peacemaking endeavors, a substantial share of international peacebuilding is conducted outside the scope of a peacekeeping or political mission and is neither centrally coordinated nor tied to an overarching political strategy or process. Unlike the Security Council and General Assembly, the non-political parts of the UN system are committed to upholding political neutrality and impartiality in executing their operational mandates (Warnecke 2016; Weller 1998). These principles are not only necessary prerequisites for any intergovernmental organization working on inter-state peace and security, but are equally indispensable to enabling the work of international peacebuilders *within* states.

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[1] *Peacekeeping* can be defined as the "active maintenance of a truce between nations or communities, especially by an international military force" (Oxford English Dictionary). It rests on three basic principles: consent of the parties, impartiality, and non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate. By contrast, in the UN context, *peacemaking* refers to diplomatic (and occasionally judicial) means of brokering an agreement between conflicting parties. In turn, *peace enforcement* is a more challenging concept, as it is sometimes seen as being independent of peacekeeping, or as an extension of it. It describes those actions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter – often in the context of an existing peacekeeping deployment – that are undertaken to enforce the parties' adherence to a truce or responses to breaches of international peace and security.

As noted, if a peace operation has been mandated by the UN Security Council, whether under Chapter VII of the UN Charter or solely based on the consent of respective governments, questions of political legitimacy and agency are – at least theoretically – addressed. However, to the extent that peacebuilders work outside the scope of such a mandate, their dependency on the goodwill of the host state government has important ramifications for the nature and scope of their assistance, particularly if the respective government has been a party to the conflict, if tensions persist, or both. Against this backdrop, and taking this dilemma as a starting point, the present study assesses the degree to which the present peacebuilding infrastructure[2] of the UN system is capable of conducting peacebuilding following internal war. In other words, how well is the UN as a fundamentally intergovernmental organization equipped to conduct peacebuilding within, as opposed to between, states?

Studies assessing the scope and track record of UN peacebuilding usually focus on the capacity as opposed to the capability of the organization. They have discussed factors such as inter-agency or intra-Secretariat competition (Weinlich 2014) or scrutinized the supply-driven development of the UN peacebuilding agenda (Wyeth 2011). By contrast, the present study addresses the capability of the UN vis-à-vis peacebuilding in post-war states at an arguably more basic level. It acknowledges that peacebuilding in contested settings is inadvertently a political undertaking with political effects. It takes the distinction between the political and non-political parts of the organization as a starting point to assess the degree to which the non-political parts of the system can conduct peacebuilding irrespective of Security Council-backing in contested post-war states. In so doing, the study also provides an introduction to the complex web of UN agencies and departments in peacebuilding and draws attention to the institutional mandates of those agencies most prominent in the peacebuilding field.

The following section reviews key peacebuilding actors and authority structures within the UN Secretariat and across the UN system before turning to an in-depth assessment of the establishment and ongoing reform process of the organization's peacebuilding architecture. The analysis will demonstrate the degree to which the quest for improving the coherence and coordination of peacebuilding policy across the organization continues to be bound up with the attempt to project greater political leverage vis-à-vis host state governments. As the study argues, these efforts substantially drove the creation of

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2   The pertinent literature usually employs the term 'UN peacebuilding architecture' as shorthand for the UN Peacebuilding Commission, Peacebuilding Support Office and Peacebuilding Fund created in 2005/06. While following this tradition, I also use the term 'infrastructure' to refer to all departments, offices, and agencies across the UN system that engage in peacebuilding.

the so-called UN peacebuilding architecture in 2005/06, including the Peace-building Commission as an intergovernmental advisory body to straddle the divide between the political and the non-political parts of the UN system. Drawing on an analysis of the recent UN review and reform process up until 2015/16, the study will discuss the extent to which such efforts have been successful and reflect on their implications for future UN peacebuilding endeavors in contested post-war settings.

1 Patterns of authority and leadership at headquarters and in the field

A multitude of agencies, offices, and departments across and beyond the UN are involved in developing and implementing peacebuilding policies and measures, either within the framework or independently of a peace operation. Acknowledging this complexity, the question of authority and agency in peacebuilding has to be considered from at least two angles. On the one hand, this entails the dimension of formal legal and political authority, such as legal provisions, competences, and decision-making powers at headquarter and field levels, and vis-à-vis member states, donors, and recipients. It also includes questions of financial and political resources and leverage (for instance, in the legislative councils of the different UN bodies). On the other hand, however, the question of agency and authority can also be seen in less tangible terms through the lens of expertise, knowledge, and reputation, all of which impact an international organization's capability to gain credibility and legitimacy. These factors are therefore just as indispensable to assuming an agenda-setting role on the global stage as they are to winning the consent and cooperation of conflict parties and affected stakeholders. While the success of the latter varies significantly across peace processes and stages, notable examples of the former include the United Nations Development Programme in regard to the global discourse on sustainable development or the World Bank and its research division in regard to analyzing the causes of civil war in the early 2000s (for a critical review, see Berdal 2005).

1.1 Legal and political authority

Peace operations can be conducted by the UN, regional organizations, *ad hoc* coalitions and individual states (usually under UN auspices) to pursue a set of distinct, yet related, mandates that range from special political missions, to peacebuilding and peacemaking offices, peacekeeping, or peace enforcement.

Peacekeeping operations are primarily mandated to monitor and safeguard an existing ceasefire or peace agreement. Traditionally, the Security Council has authorized peacekeeping operations invoking Chapter VI of the UN Charter on the "Pacific Settlement of Disputes" whose sections detail consent-based and cooperative forms of dispute resolution between (state) parties (UN 1945). However, if the Security Council determines the existence of a "threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression" (UN 1945, Ch. 7), it can authorize coercive measures such as sanctions or military interventions under its mandate for upholding collective security as detailed in Chapter VII of the UN Charter ('Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression'). In recent decades, this formerly clear-cut distinction between cooperative and coercive types of intervention has increasingly been blurred by the Security Council practice of equipping consent-based peacekeeping operations with enforcement mandates (Tsagourias 2007).

At the level of the so-called field, i.e. in a specific country or peace process, the overall decision-making power regarding a *peacekeeping* operation as a subsidiary organ of the Security Council lies with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (Guéhenno and Sherman 2009: 6). In the absence or aftermath of a peacekeeping operation, the UNDP Resident Coordinator (RC) takes on this role. Unless the UN Security Council equips a peacekeeping operation with an enforcement mandate under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, both variants depend on the consent of the government in *intra-state* peacebuilding.[3] In addition, several agencies within and beyond the UN system, for instance bilateral development agencies and INGOs, are often deployed independent of a particular operation and hence operate on the basis of bilateral agreements with the host state government.

1.2 Expertise and reputation

Most observers agree that the "nature and content of peace operations has always been dependent on the preferences of the most powerful states" (Richmond 2008: 12). State preferences are certainly central when it comes to decisions on which countries to deploy to and on defining main fields of activity and related funding (Gilligan & Stedman 2001; Ramsbotham et al. 2011: 207ff.). At the same time, the ways in which post-war peacebuilding has evolved as a practice has crucially depended on the ways in which mandated agencies, particularly the special agencies of the UN system, took on this rather

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3   In practice, however, international peace operations usually compromise or suspend the authority of the host state government: see the discussion of different types of *ad hoc* "semi-sovereign mechanisms" cited in Chesterman 2004: 56-7.

opaque task and have built specialist expertise over the past two and a half decades (Emmerij 2007; Weiss et al. 2009). In this regard, the lack of clear-cut institutional concepts and guidelines, of prior best practices and of guidance (Haynes 2008; Wyeth 2011) has consistently allowed for and required a high-er degree of agency for the specialized organizations in their peacebuilding agenda and practices. In the words of former UN Secretary-General Annan, in between the institutional provisions for immediate disaster relief and for long-term development, there was a "gaping hole in the United Nations insti-tutional machinery with respect to the challenge of helping countries with the transition from war to lasting peace" (UNSG 2005: §114, cited in Ramsbotham et al. 2011: 207; see also Chesterman 2004).

This planning gap was first addressed more systematically following the dras-tic failure of 'post-war' reconstruction in Iraq. Previously, however, the new peacebuilding task had been taken up and filled by a multitude of agencies and their practices. The nature of peacebuilding practice owes at least as much to contemporary interpretation, assumptions, and improvisation on the part of its key proponents within and beyond the UN system as to the inter-ests and formal decisions of leading donors. In summary, and as the following sections will show, several UN specialized agencies and offices command con-siderable formal or expert authority with regard to peacebuilding. However, the question remains as to how far such forms of authority are backed by conventional, i.e. legal and political, forms of authority when peacebuilders have to address persistent conflict and contestation.

2 UN peacebuilders

In the *Agenda for Peace* (1992), former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali adopted peacebuilding as a "critically related concept" to complement diplomatic peacemaking and military peacekeeping activities (UN 1992: §21). In Boutros-Ghali's portrayal, the term peacebuilding originally denoted a wide range of activities in the economic, social, political, and humanitarian fields to create a self-sustaining peaceful environment in the aftermath of a peace agreement. These efforts were to be assisted by the "various programmes, funds, offices and agencies of the United Nations system with responsibilities in the economic, social, humanitarian and human rights fields" (UN 1995: §53).

2.1 The UN Secretariat

Given the increasing incidence and importance of UN operations to the organization's activities in the realm of peace and security (Paris and Sisk 2009a: 5), the sixth UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali began restructuring the UN Secretariat in his first months of tenure. In December 1991, this process commenced with the establishment of the Department for Humanitarian Assistance (DHA), which later became the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), the Department for Political Affairs (DPA), and the Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). DPKO is the principal steering body of UN peace operations. Prior to the creation of the so-called UN peacebuilding architecture (see *infra* 2.3), DPA was in charge of peacebuilding policy, with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as its principal partner for peacebuilding assistance programs within the UN system (Barnett et al. 2007: 32). Additional secretariat entities involved in peace support activities are the Department for Field Support (DFS), the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) as well as the Office of Project Services (OPS), the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). In practice, however, these divisions, particularly between DPA and DPKO, have never been clear-cut. The majority of peace operations are coordinated by DPKO, while DPA tends to be in charge of (largely, but not exclusively, civilian) peacebuilding consultation or support missions (Franke and Warnecke 2009).[4] However, as mandates change in particular countries, these distinctions have at times been blurred.

As Wyeth (2011: 5) notes, despite attempts to link political, security, and development initiatives in the form of the joint UNDP-DPA Program and the deployment of so-called Peace and Development Advisors, "DPA's peacebuilding support offices were under-resourced and their record was mixed." There were (and likely are) duplications of efforts on the one hand and ongoing "turf battles" on the other, "particularly among DPA (which nominally was the lead agency for peacebuilding, but lacked capacity), DPKO, and the UNDP."[5] In addition to institutional competition, peacebuilding policies are, unsurprisingly, also shaped by departmental mandates. While DPKO approaches peacebuilding based on its lead role for peacekeeping, DESA approaches peacebuilding based on its lead role for UN development efforts. Curiously, the Department for Political Affairs (DPA), as the lead department for peacemaking and

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4   Updates on the strength of peace operations and the coordinating body within the UN Secretariat (or regional organizations) are available on the website of the Center for International Peace Operations at *http://www.zif-berlin.org/en.html* (06.06.2018).

5   Informal conversation with former UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Florence, May 2015.

preventive diplomacy including UN political and peacebuilding missions, has only recently begun publishing guidelines on peacebuilding and peacemaking, focusing almost exclusively on mediation.[6] Keeping in mind the political nature of peace processes and the manifold links between peacemaking and peacebuilding, the fact that no prior DPA peacebuilding publications could be uncovered is certainly surprising.

In 2005/06, the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) was established as an intergovernmental body to bring together all relevant actors to develop integrated approaches and ensure long-term attention and funding on the part of donors (A/Res/180 of 30.12.2005). Particularly in regard to countries that the PBC officially takes onto its agenda, the chair of the Commission is supposed to fulfill a diplomatic and political role, which appears to be a unique provision and likely owes to the intergovernmental nature of the Commission – a quality that sets it apart from almost all other peacebuilding actors. The PBC is supported by the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and, as part of the UN Secretariat, the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO). The Peacebuilding Support Office administers the Peacebuilding Fund, the largest recipient within the UN system being the United Nations Development Programme, and provides input to the PBC and the Secretary-General in coordinating peacebuilding. To this end, it consists of a PBC Support branch, a Policy, Planning and Application branch, and a Financing branch (PBSO 2013).

2.2 Peacebuilders across the UN system

As former UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali had already observed in 1995, "the responsibilities involved in multifunctional peace-keeping operations and in peace-building transcend the competence and expertise of any one department, programme, fund, office or agency of the UN" (UN 1995: §93). Particularly in regard to peacebuilding, the capacities and resources have remained spread out across the organization (Wyeth 2011: 5) as is evident from two major mapping exercises (UNDESA 1996; UN 2006). Both within and beyond the UN Secretariat, until the creation of the UN peacebuilding infrastructure, the development of peacebuilding practice has for the most part been tied up with the revision of peacekeeping doctrine and the partly related reforms regarding humanitarian aid and protection (Bellamy and Williams 2010: 92, 123; Kaldor 1999). By contrast, alongside bilateral development agencies, most UN operational agencies approached the new objective based on their

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6 Like other departments, DPA has, however, contributed information to peacebuilding inventories (UNDESA 1996; UN 2006) and commented on the reports of expert panels.

sectoral responsibilities in the fields of development (UNDP, World Bank), relief (UNHCR, UN International Children's Fund), or combinations thereof (Food and Agriculture Organization, UN Human Settlements Programme).

Amongst the specialized agencies of the UN system, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the key multilateral agency that often coordinates a range of sectoral UN bodies in post-war societies, with an established Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Resolution (BCPR) since 2001 (Murphy 2006). UNDP was created by the General Assembly in 1965 to "support and supplement the national efforts of developing countries at solving the most important problems of their economic development and to promote social progress".[7] It is officially commissioned by host governments and committed to the principles of neutrality and impartiality with regard to the domestic affairs of states (Murphy 2006). Up until 2000, the UNDP neither had a specific mandate nor an explicit strategy with regard to peace- and conflict-related activities. This gradually changed with the introduction of a stronger commitment to "strengthening … the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance" (DP/1997/CRP.6 of 23.12.1996), and the subsequent development of a targeted strategy and organizational changes to improve the role of UNDP in "Crisis and Post-Conflict Situations" (DP/2001/4) in November 2000. In particular, a number of resolutions by the General Assembly, reports by the UN Secretary-General, and decisions of the UNDP Executive Board defined a role for UNDP in regard to so-called "special development situations", initially with a particular focus on mine clearance, humanitarian aid, and the coordination of development in 'post-conflict' countries (UNDP 2000: §12-13). The Resident Coordinator (RC) of the UNDP usually coordinates UN activities and UN Country Teams in developing economies. In the aftermath of a peacekeeping operation, the responsibilities of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) are generally transferred onto the UNDP Resident Coordinator.

Beyond the UNDP, the specialized agencies and Secretariat have increasingly sought to improve inter-agency coordination to facilitate a so-called 'relief-rehabilitation-development continuum'; for instance, by ensuring that humanitarian assistance does not provide disincentives for relevant populations to participating in development projects (UN GA Res/46/182 of 19.12.1991: Annex I: 9; Gueli et al. 2005). Such efforts culminated in two major institutional reform processes: first, the reforms in response to General Assembly Resolution 46/182 of December 1991; and second, the Humanitarian Reform Approach of 2005 that re-organized several of the instruments developed after 1991 and introduced the Cluster Approach to UN humanitarian action (IASC 2006).

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7 *Agreement between the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the United Nations Development Programme,* 07.12.1995. Available at *http://www.undp.ba/upload/SC/BiH%20UNDP%20Agreement.pdf* (13.01.2013).

The General Assembly Resolution of December 1991 triggered a series of institutional changes. To begin with, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) was established as the main coordinating forum for UN and non-UN agencies in humanitarian assistance in June 1992. In addition to UN operational agencies such as the UNDP or UNICEF as permanent members, the IASC also comprises a list of 'standing invitees', such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Word Bank, and International Organization for Migration (IOM). Secondly, the General Assembly commissioned the creation of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund as a 'cash-flow mechanism' for operational agencies to access loans pending the disbursement of donor funding.[8] In 2006, this fund was replaced by the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). While the loan facility of the earlier fund was retained, the new CERF is in fact a grant-making mechanism that finances urgent activities by UN and affiliated organizations in cases where no other funding sources are available. In addition to this global fund, there is also a range of mechanisms to set up country-specific funds such as Emergency Response Funds (ERF, since 1997), and Common Humanitarian Funds (CHF, since 2006).[9] The third mechanism established by Resolution 46/182 (1991) is the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) as a means for humanitarian agencies to jointly approach donors to finance long-term development efforts. This process is administered by the UN OCHA Under Secretary-General in his/her capacity as Emergency Relief Coordinator. The Under Secretary-General simultaneously chairs the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and organizes joint inter-agency assessment missions in close coordination with the respective UNDP Resident Coordinator in target countries.

Neither CAP, CERF, PRSPs and related instruments, nor the cluster system alluded to above, are exclusive to or specifically designed to aid interventions in conflict-affected countries. Based on an assessment of needs and priorities in specific humanitarian crises, these mechanisms are an instrument for operational agencies to address the donor community and bridge funding gaps; additionally, they also provide an overall joint framework of reference for the actual work of these agencies. In the absence of a specifically dedicated peacebuilding fund or mechanism, donors increasingly set up dedicated country funds (usually under the auspices of the World Bank) to ensure continued funding beyond the time of the mandated peace operation, and to be able to quickly respond to arising needs and crises. Beyond these case-by-case funding mechanisms, the World Bank's Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit (CPR) set up a Post-Conflict Fund (PCF) in 1997. Following the shift

8 UNOCHA website on the Central Emergency Response Fund: *http://www.unocha.org/cerf/about-us/who-we-are/grant-and-loan-facilities* (10.02.2018).

9 UNOCHA (n.d.): Overview: *Common Humanitarian Funds*. Available at *http://www.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/CHF%20Overview%20Sept12%20final.pdf* (08.02.2018).

towards peacebuilding as state building, in 2008 the State and Peacebuilding Trust Fund (SPF) replaced the PCF and the Low-Income Countries Under Stress (LICUS) Funds (Ramsbotham et al. 2011: 228).[10] In addition to the harmonization of the donor appeals process, agencies tried to better coordinate their efforts by introducing a plethora of tools. To this end, UN operational agencies first began to conduct Common Country Assessments (CCA) to provide a common baseline for joint Country Action Plans or Country Assistance Frameworks. These were subsequently replaced first by UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs, now UN Development Assistance Plan, UNDAP) employed as harmonizing tools across UN Country Teams.

Within the UN system, a specialized institutional and financial mechanism to address the so-called peace-to-development gap was only created in 2005/06 with the UN Peacebuilding Commission, Fund, and Peacebuilding Support Office. In contrast to the World Bank SPF which funds individual projects by different actors in support of the Bank's country strategies, the UN Peacebuilding Fund provides funding at the country level following a prior assessment of country needs and strategy (World Bank 2010: 6). According to Ramsbotham et al. (2011: 207), the Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Fund were, inter alia, expected to "bridge the gap between the security focus of the UN Security Council and the economic focus of the World Bank", and to allow for greater inclusion of country-specific perspectives by including representatives of NGOs and of target countries, in addition to donors. Amid this long list of coordinating functions, however, the following analysis will argue that the key expectation in the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission was the provision of greater political leverage by providing a permanent institutional link between the UN's political and non-political components.

2.3   Political leverage and the Peacebuilding Commission

Prior to the creation of the so-called UN peacebuilding architecture, there have been numerous attempts at increasing and strengthening coordination, coherence, and integration across the system and affiliated actors. These efforts have undoubtedly been fueled by concerns with aid efficiency, best practices, and learning. However, as the following analysis of UN expert panels, reports by the Secretary-General, and decisions by the Security Council demonstrates, the need to generate a higher degree of unified political leverage vis-à-vis 'uncooperative' host state governments was a central driving force in creating a dedicated peacebuilding structure within the UN.

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10 The World Bank website on its State and Peacebuilding Trust Fund: *http://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/ state-and-peace-building-fund* (08.02.2018).

In preparation for the 2005 UN World Summit, the Secretary-General convened the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change to define a uniform view on the nature of threats and to consider the scope of 'collective action', i.e. inter-governmental cooperation (UN 2004). The Panel identified the "rise of internal wars" as the main conundrum in the area of violent conflict, seen to result from "crises of State capacity and legitimacy" (UN 2004: §5; 2-3). While threats were held to increasingly originate with non-state actors, the Panel underscored the centrality of sovereign states as "front-line actors in dealing with all the threats" (UN 2004: Synopsis: 11). Having thus reiterated the principle of sovereign authority, the High-Level Panel set out to tackle the conundrum between sovereignty and peace support *within* states by addressing the "reluctance of Member States to see their domestic affairs internationalized" (§100) up front: Rather than primarily focusing on inter-state conflict, the Panel acknowledged that "peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict-peacebuilding in *civil wars* have become the operational face of the UN in international peace and security" (84, emphasis added).

The Panel defined the "larger peacebuilding task" in rather conventional terms as facilitating "long-term recovery", with activities such as disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) and institution building as priorities and preconditions to attaining "other critical goals such as democratization, justice and development" (224, 227). However, it made a substantial innovative contribution to peacebuilding by recommending the establishment of a "single intergovernmental organ dedicated to peacebuilding" (225). This intergovernmental organ was to be "empowered to monitor and … ensure concerted action by donors, agencies, programmes and financial institutions" (225), both during prevention and in the transit phase from war to peace (262). The Panel also suggested the creation of a standing fund (228) and of a Peacebuilding Support Office in charge of strategy development (230). In essence then, in the view of the Panel, intra-state violent conflict can best be prevented through economic development and by improving state capacity. In the event of deteriorating internal tensions, the Peacebuilding Commission should assume a preventive role in co-operation with the national government. However, once a conflict has escalated, peace ought to be enforced by a multinational operation and subsequently kept by peacekeepers capable of projecting force.[11]

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11 The panel's analysis and recommendations blurred traditional UN distinctions between coercive and non-coercive measures. Unsurprisingly, the Secretary-General's follow-up report on the panel, *In Larger Freedom* (2005), sought to clarify and reinforce the traditional UN distinction, in particular regarding the use of force. Accordingly, measures aimed at "reducing the risk and the prevalence of war" (III D), such as 'good offices', sanctions, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and small arms and light weapons (SALW), are discussed separately from "The Use of Force" (III E). In between the two alternatives, sanctions "constitute a necessary middle ground between war and words" as they might both be applied to "produce agreements", but can also be "combined with military pressure to weaken and isolate rebel groups or States that are in flagrant violation of Security Council resolutions" (109).

The 2005 World Summit subsequently agreed on the establishment of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture, which was created by the Security Council, acting concurrently with the General Assembly (S/RES/1645 and GA Res 60/180 of 20.12.2005). This architecture consists of the UN Peacebuilding Commission as an inter-governmental advisory body, the UN Peacebuilding Fund, and the Peacebuilding Support Office within the UN Secretariat. The Security Council affirmed the central responsibility of national governments, on whose consent the involvement of the PBC depends. The Commission's three purposes are: firstly, to convene all actors, "marshal resources", and propose "integrated strategies"; secondly, to sharpen the focus on "institution building"; and thirdly, to recommend ways for increasing coordination within and beyond the UN, particularly with a view to ensuring the continuity of financing, learning, and policy attention (SC/RES/1645: 2). However, the fact that the Commission's membership is drawn from the main three intergovernmental bodies of the UN shows that the creation of a permanent high-level political body to help enforce the work of other ad hoc fora was a central driving force prompting this innovation. The Commission ought to meet in "various configurations", i.e. an Organizational Committee comprised of seven members each of the Security Council and of ECOSOC, five members each of the top providers of financial support and of (military and civilian) police personnel, and seven members to be elected by the General Assembly, favoring countries with post-conflict experience and country-specific fora (4, 7). Additionally, the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) was established as a department of the UN Secretariat, headed by an Assistant Secretary-General, to administer the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and coordinate or mainstream peacebuilding activities across the UN system.

As is evident from these provisions and the inclusion of the UN's three principal inter-governmental bodies, the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission reflects the belief that peacebuilding requires more intensified and permanent strategy development and coordination, backed by greater political clout. In this vein, one of the challenges identified by the authors of a 2006 internal inventory of UN capacities in peacebuilding is a "general lack of integration among UN entities involved in post-conflict reconstruction at each level: strategic planning, operational planning, and programmatic implementation" (UN 2006: 7) While there is a multitude of pertinent instruments, ranging from standing and *ad hoc* committees, UN Country Teams, Integrated Mission Task Forces, and Integrated Mission Structures to thematic Framework Teams and the IASC Cluster Network (UN 2006: 7, 8), the inventory argues that the new Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) ought to help the UN system improve its "capacity for integrated strategic planning, coherent and overarching policy and analysis, and best practice" and provide "guidelines that

can cut across existing political, peacekeeping, humanitarian, and development lines" (8). On the one hand, these calls for strategy and coordination clearly bespeak the view that the activities of interveners at all levels ought to be harmonized to avoid unintended side effects, duplication, and planning gaps. On the other hand, the entire discussion on strategy and coordination is also linked to the question of maintaining the Security Council's and member states' political will and a unified vision, not only in terms of ensuring the supply of material resources, but arguably also of political leverage in cases where some measure of persuasion or coercion is required to ensure the parties' 'compliance'.

Wyeth (2011: 6) argues that in "creating the PBC, there was an explicit recognition that many of the problems plaguing peacebuilding are political ones – challenges of political will, commitment, setting priorities and holding various actors accountable for their commitments – and they require a political body to address them". In view of earlier calls by previous Secretary-Generals regarding the role of member states and of the Security Council, the composition of the Commission to comprise member states with a stake in the literal sense also demonstrates the degree to which strategy is seen as linked with and necessitating political leverage, as does the close link envisioned between the Peacebuilding Commission, the Security Council (during the peacekeeping phase), and ECOSOC (in the transition phase). Bellamy and Williams (2010: 253) note "that its political character makes … [the PBC] better suited to acting as a catalyst for attracting government donations for the UN's civilian-led operations." Given its lack of executive functions, however, and as the following discussion will show, as an inter-governmental advisory body, the Peacebuilding Commission does not seem to have a significant role to play in terms of coordinating the different UN agencies and bodies (Paris 2009: 74).

3   Grappling with post-war conflict and the sovereignty dilemma at the UN

How well is the UN as a fundamentally intergovernmental organization equipped to conduct peacebuilding within, as opposed to between, states? To what extent has the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission and wider UN peacebuilding infrastructure helped the UN acknowledge and engage with political obstacles to peacebuilding, such as lacking political will or co-operation? Drawing on the initial two periodic reviews of the Peacebuilding Commission, it appears that the peacebuilding architecture has so far not fulfilled earlier expectations regarding the improvement of overall strategy,

coordination, and guidance (UN 2010, 2015). This assessment is due to the small number of countries on the Commission's agenda and the modest progress in linking the Commission's work to the political organs of the UN (UN 2010: 3, 4, 8). At the same time, there has been considerable progress not only in recognizing but also in institutionalizing the political dimension of peacebuilding across the organization. The following sections analyze the pertinent internal review and reform process as reflected in a set of studies, recommendations, and institutional decisions. The analysis includes the two *Reviews of the Peacebuilding Commission* (2010, 2015), but also covers broader developments, most of which originated with the UN Secretariat. The analysis shows that the UN reviews and reforms on peacebuilding have highlighted three principal avenues for improving peacebuilding, each of which acknowledge the centrality of politics in peacebuilding: (1) generating political leverage by connecting the non-political peacebuilding components of the UN to its political ones; (2) establishing agency-wide expertise on peacemaking (mediation, negotiation) beyond the elite level; and (3) encouraging the Security Council to assume a more proactive role in peacebuilding.

3.1 Coordinating political leverage

The degree to which the first periodic review of the UN peacebuilding architecture is premised on peacebuilding as a political process requiring political interaction is manifest in the key issues set down to frame the report. To begin with, peacebuilding is described as an inherently complex process that seeks to "rebuild ... fragile or shattered *relationships*" over an extended period of time (UN 2010: 9, emphasis added). The authors emphasize that while this complexity had often been acknowledged, it had "perhaps still not [been] fully internalised" (9). Second, the review repeats that "people must own their own peace: it has to begin, grow and become embedded in people's minds" (9). While the importance of 'national ownership' has been a common trope of most peacebuilding statements, the review pointedly observes that this is not "merely desirable or politically correct; it is an imperative, *an absolute essential*, if peacebuilding is to take root" (10, emphasis added). Within the peace process, the role of the international community is thus seen as assisting or facilitating a local process, likened to a "midwife to a national birthing process" (10). Ownership should not be treated "as a right wrested from the international community", but requires respective governments to "exercise the responsibilities conferred by ownership" (10). Thirdly, and following earlier statements such as the *Brahimi Report* (UN 2000), peace support measures should not be sequenced, but conducted in parallel and mutually coordinated. In particular, the reviewers criticize that peacebuilding "tends to

be viewed as an add-on during the lifetime of the peacekeeping operation, expected to come into its own in the aftermath" (10), which also points to "a more fundamental question [of] … the relative prioritization of peacekeeping and peacebuilding within the Organization as a whole" (28). Peacebuilding "requires a parallel focus on political, security and developmental needs" (28). In this regard, the Peacebuilding Commission is seen as tasked with supporting the "integration of political and developmental perspectives" (11) and should act as a "constant and active networker within the United Nations family", and vis-à-vis the World Bank (32, 31).

A key recommendation of the entire report concerns the expectation that the Peacebuilding Commission facilitate greater political weight for peacebuilding efforts, both with a view to international political attention and vis-à-vis the political process in target countries (12, 16). Given the large number of stakeholders in this "crowded field" (19), the authors urge "the Commission … [to] use its *political weight* to seek to align the various actors behind the same overarching objectives" (16, emphasis added). To this end, the review contains detailed suggestions towards increasing the cooperation between the Commission and other political organs of the UN. In regard to the so-called country-specific configurations (CSC), this "requirement for weight and solidity" implies that the CSC chair should be a "respected, knowledgeable" individual, "able to inspire the confidence of key actors" (22). This description of the CSC chairs resembles the ideal type of the UN Secretary-General as an eminent personality of integrity whose personal reputation enables him/her to be accepted as an honest, non-partisan broker (Kille 2007). This implies that the chairs of the country-specific configurations are at times expected to take on a diplomatic peacemaking role.

3.2 Mediation and negotiation beyond the settlement

The recognition that peacebuilding is (part of) a political process that is often characterized by persistent conflict also underlies the Secretary-General's 2009 report *Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict*. The report held that the "end of conflict does not necessarily mean the arrival of peace: a lack of political consensus and trust often remains and the root causes of the conflict may persist" (UN 2009: 5). The likelihood of consensus is seen to depend "heavily on the conditions under which violence ceases, the quality of the peace agreement, and the nature of the peace process" (10). It follows that "international support in such complex and rapidly evolving situations is therefore a fundamentally political and often high-risk undertaking" (12). The Secretary-General calls for UN intergovernmental bodies, member states, and the Security Council to "play … an essential role in signaling

strong international attention and support", for instance by authorizing "new peacekeeping operations, special political missions, [and] panels of experts" (14). With such strong political backing, the priorities of peacebuilders are redefined as "establishing security, building confidence in a political process, delivering initial peace dividends and expanding core national capacity" (15). The support to *political* processes comprises elections, promoting inclusive dialogue, and reconciliation and conflict-management capacity at all levels. This is crucially seen as a task that is distinct from the restoration of governance and 'core government functions' (17). What is interesting and indeed innovative in this depiction is the extent to which political tasks and in fact negotiation, i.e. peacemaking, are considered as part of a peacebuilding process that takes place *after* the conclusion of the peace agreement, in what was previously thought of as the 'implementation phase' (31). Rather than merely helping to implement the terms of an existing peace agreement, the UN is called upon to play a more pro-active role in generating the "fundamental political conditions" for cooperative peacebuilding, particularly the "political will and commitment on the part of national actors" (93).

Having previously and repeatedly acknowledged that this commitment is often insufficient, the attention to improving and extending the UN's negotiation and mediation, i.e. peacemaking capacities, was manifest in a number of innovations within the Secretariat. Notable examples of reforms to strengthen the Department of Political Affairs (UN 2013) include the establishment of the UN Peacemaker Database and the commencement of a series of the first ever peacemaking and mediation best practices reports and tools, which ended the curious absence of peacemaking from the organization's practical reasoning on 'post-conflict' peace support.[12] In sum, the Secretary-General sought a closer integration of peacebuilding into the political process. While the divergent and 'adverse' mandates of several peacebuilding agencies are not discussed in detail, the Secretary-General could be argued to address this problem by combining calls for greater integration with suggestions regarding a stronger post-war peacemaking role for the UN. In other words, what sets this report apart from earlier UN documents is the focus on mediation and negotiation as part of a peace operation in the so-called post-conflict phase.

Reflecting the emergence of peacemaking within the peacebuilding or wider UN peace support field, in 2013 the General Assembly commissioned the Secretary-General to report on the organization's political missions (UN 2013). Special political missions are defined as "UN civilian missions that are deployed

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12 For instance the 2012 *UN Guidance on Effective Mediation*: *https://peacemaker.un.org/guidance-effective-mediation*, 08.05.2018. A full list is available from the UN Peacemaker Database: *http://peacemaker.un.org/resources/mediation-guidance*, 27.04.2018.

for a limited duration to support member states in good offices, conflict prevention, peace making, and peacebuilding" and fall into one of three categories: special envoys; sanctions panels and monitoring groups; and field-based missions (UN 2013: 2). Somewhat unsurprisingly given the topic at hand, but nonetheless in stark contrast to all earlier UN documents discussed so far, this report starts from the premise that "at the heart of conflict, more often than not, are political issues" (2). According to the Secretary-General, if UN deployments seek to prevent and resolve conflict and help "member states and parties to a conflict to build a sustainable peace … this core function … defines these missions as 'political'" (7). Regardless of the blurry delineation between types of missions or terminology, i.e. peacebuilding deployments and special political missions, the Secretary-General's discussion clearly illustrates the increased attention to peacemaking activities in the aftermath of peace agreements. The report observes the "increased recognition that elections are not isolated, technical events but rather part of a continuum of political dynamics and processes", which ought to be interlinked with activities such as reconciliation, mediation, facilitation, maintaining political dialogues, and other good offices functions (14). Importantly, these are to be conducted beyond the peace agreement and beyond the national elite levels and capitals to "enable liaison with a broader spectrum of the population" (14). To this end, "specialized expertise" is being developed within departments such as the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (Office of the Rule of Law and Security Institutions), the Department of Political Affairs with regard to mediation, and within the United Nations Development Programme, all of which are defined as "key service providers" (13). This labeling is important as the Secretary-General evidently seeks to strike a balance in combining a higher emphasis on political processes with the maintenance of the implementer or 'service provider' role of institutions such as the UNDP, all of which continue to be premised on the role of agencies as working "in support of national peacebuilding priorities", and hence with a cooperative government.

As argued based on the 2010 review on the Peacebuilding Commission and the report on special political missions, while the practical reasoning on peacebuilding best practices had previously been dominated by largely developmental and structural notions on addressing violent conflict, the focus of the debate has gradually shifted towards political negotiation and mediation, i.e. peacemaking in the post-settlement phase. In recent years, this reasoning appears to have come full circle in regard to acknowledging the fundamental dilemma of intra-state peacebuilding in 'non-cooperative' environments and discussing it on the level of intergovernmental cooperation, as opposed to it being seen as a problem for implementing agencies.

3.3 The UN Security Council as peacebuilder?

In parallel with the 2015 review of UN peace operations (UN 2015a), the Secretary-General established an Advisory Group of Experts to conduct the second periodic review of the UN peacebuilding architecture (UN 2015). Many of the criticisms, observations, and recommendations reflect standard tropes, such as the need for coordination, the complexity of conflict, or challenges in regard to financing and timing (UN 2015: 7). However, this review takes the concern with integration and coordination further by moving the discussion on coordination to the intergovernmental level, thereby explicitly acknowledging a central conundrum to 'successful' peacebuilding. In other words, the review focuses on the fundamental structural dilemma that exists between the UN as a state-based organization and the delimitations this implies for the organization's scope of action in intra-state conflict. Accordingly, the calls for integration and coordination of development, human rights, and peace and security are less concerned with the agendas of various implementing agencies, but instead target the level of political leadership and coherence by criticizing the compartmentalization or "silos" that "divide … responsibility between the principal intergovernmental Organs" as the root of the problem (26).

The 2015 review acknowledges the renewed increase in the numbers of civil wars, instances of authoritarian governance, extremist movements, and violent ideologies, but in so doing particularly focuses on the problem of politics and governance in target states:

> "Not content to see their authority come to an end, some national leaders … have abetted the promulgation of self-serving legislation or controversial constitutional amendments … The politics of exclusion provides a related set of conflict drivers. One or another set of ethnic, religious or tribal interests dominates power to the exclusion of others. Minorities are oppressed." (UN 2015: 14)

The report links such abuses to economic, environmental, and other "structural drivers of conflict" (15), but holds that the root driver of all such problems are the power politics of "the same narrow political class that jockeyed for power during the violence" (19) and often retain their positions of power in the peacebuilding process. In highlighting the power politics of domestic political groups as 'root drivers' that also fuel economic and environmental issues, the review effectively *re-politicizes* the standard developmental tropes of 'environmental' or 'economic' factors – rather than actors, interests, and agendas – as driving conflict. The primary challenge for UN peacebuilders thus conceived derives from the clash between postulates of respecting national ownership, and the frequently problematic role of target state governments in "divided post-conflict societies" (21):

"The fracturing and loss of credibility in central authority in such contexts are increasingly leading to a profound dilemma. Independent sovereign nation states are the building blocks of the international order, and of the UN in particular. Member States therefore naturally incline towards a predominant international paradigm of re-creating strong, centralized authority. However, in a context of fragmentation, it is possible that an attempt to rebuild or extend central authority could lead not to peace but to deepening conflict. In such cases, new approaches need to be found, which understand peacebuilding at least in its early phases, as having more to do with strengthening local domains of governance than trying to re-establish strong central authority." (UN 2015: 16)

Within the practical reasoning on peacebuilding at the UN and the wider international community, this statement is the most straightforward acknowledgment of the fundamental dilemma encountered by UN peacebuilders in intra-state conflict. It also points to the contested role of the Security Council in peacebuilding. Notwithstanding a number of complex multidimensional operations that have been mandated by the Council in the past decade, "unfortunately, the Security Council is not always understood as a key peacebuilding actor" (27). The report calls for a stronger "collective resolve to deal with peacebuilding in a more comprehensive and determined way" (11) to overcome the fragmentation of the organization into separate silos that hinder "coherence at the intergovernmental level" (7, 8). The Peacebuilding Commission ought to serve as an "advisory bridge between the intergovernmental organs", tying the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to a "deepened commitment from the main *intergovernmental peacebuilding* actor, the Security Council" (8, emphasis added). Already in the context of the discussion of the *Agenda for Peace* and its *Supplement* in the early to mid-1990s, representatives of states from developing nations had warned of Security Council intrusion in the domestic affairs of states in the context of peacebuilding and peacekeeping reform (e.g. A/Res/47/120 of 18.12.1992). Against this backdrop, the authors allow "there are no easy solutions to this conundrum, since the UN is made up of the Governments representing member states" (21).

Accordingly, a central contribution of this review is the *acknowledgment* of the dilemma that arises for intergovernmental and other external actors with regard to building peace in intra-state conflict. At the operational level, the sovereignty dilemma and the call for a unified sense of purpose and intergovernmental)political leadership is mirrored by the call for greater "authority and capacities of UN leaders on the ground" (9), as peacebuilding must "first and foremost … be understood as an inherently political process" (13). Beyond

the bridge-building role that the Peacebuilding Commission ought to play between the Security Council, General Assembly, and ECOSOC, the review develops a number of practical peacebuilding recommendations. These combine mainstream reasoning on peacebuilding approaches, such as institutions, prevention, governance, and extended resources and time lines, with the attempt to transcend the inherent state-bias of the UN and most international actors, arguing that peace can neither be "imposed from outside, (nor)... by domestic elites or authoritarian governments on fractious populations" but needs to "emerge organically from within society" (19). In this vein, the increased focus on peacemaking in the post-settlement phase is coupled with a stronger emphasis on grassroots processes and dialogue that ought to be conducted independently of the timelines of UN operations and development agencies (18). In addition, while the review maintains the focus on institutions and governance, it acknowledges that the development of "legitimate institutions … takes a generation" (18) and recommends reviewing the kinds of institutions to be built in particular societies, quoting recent suggestions by the G7+ initiative of conflict-affected and post-war states that have "advocated for five key sectors of priority peacebuilding intervention: legitimate politics, security, justice, economic foundations, and revenues and services" (17).

It remains to be seen to what extent such suggestions will or can be adopted by the UN and its member states, particularly in view of bureaucratic practices that run counter to lengthy timelines, the organization's inherent state-bias, and the difficulty in attaining the hoped-for degree of cooperation between intergovernmental bodies in adopting a 'coordinated' role in peacebuilding. Nonetheless, the review's most significant contribution in the present context is its simple and clear acknowledgment of the tensions between external actors – be they of an intergovernmental or bilateral nature – and the challenges of addressing intra-state conflict in which the respective government is a party to the conflict. This acknowledgment allows the authors to not only repeat the call for greater political coherence or coordination, but to significantly remove this discussion from the level of the 'implementing' agencies of the UN to the level of its intergovernmental organs. Thus conceived, the problem is not simply one of improving coordination across the different operational units of the UN system in a given country (such as political missions, Resident Coordinators, UN Country Teams, and peacekeeping operations) through various strategies and steering groups (25), but of developing intergovernmental consensus as to "what situations meet the criterion of 'threats to international peace and security'" and hence of the respective roles of the Security Council and other intergovernmental bodies in peacebuilding (25).

Conclusion

As the present study has shown, UN peacebuilders have come a long way from the early days of understanding peacebuilding as technical assistance for the 'implementation' of an existing settlement in cooperation with host state governments and relevant parties. While it had always been acknowledged that peacebuilding is a political process, this was initially not seen to affect the role of the non-political parts of the UN system. However, as the different components of the UN system repeatedly encountered obstruction to their implementation efforts, i.e. so-called 'hostile environments', there has been a gradual recognition that peacebuilding requires a higher degree of political interaction and leverage, as well as dedicated expertise to conduct peacemaking beyond the conclusion of a peace agreement and beyond the elite level. Following a series of coordination attempts across the UN system at the Secretariat and inter-agency level, these efforts to project a legitimate and coherent front vis-à-vis 'non-cooperative' governments and parties led to the creation of the UN Peacebuilding Commission as an inter-governmental advisory body in 2005/06.

What all these mechanisms, i.e. the adoption of strategic frameworks, integrated operations, and subsequently of an inter-governmental body, have in common is that they seek to attain legitimacy by creating a universally accepted baseline, both in regard to overall peacebuilding norms and in regard to the strategic frameworks or country specific configurations of the Peacebuilding Commission for individual country settings. However, as the discussion of recent developments within the UN and particularly the Secretariat has shown, the 'peacebuilding machinery' has so far failed to deliver on its promises regarding an increased role of intergovernmental actors in peacebuilding. Given the ongoing deterioration of relationships among the Permanent Five members of the UN Security Council, it seems unlikely that the Council will be willing or even able to bestow political leverage or legitimacy to multilateral peacebuilding endeavors in the near future. Instead, in recent years the practical reasoning on peacebuilding has begun to turn to the contributions of peacemaking, i.e. mediation and negotiation, hence seeking to enable a sustained engagement with political issues and agents in post-war states both beyond the conclusion of a peace agreement and beyond the level of the political elite. While this is not to claim that limitations of inter-governmental and external non-political actors in intra-state peacebuilding have been resolved, or are indeed resolvable, it seems that the most recent reviews and reforms in particular have significantly contributed to clarifying the nature of this foundational dilemma.

Why is this recognition so important? More often than not, post-war peace-building is conducted in cases of continued conflict with varying degrees of consent and cooperation on the part of local state and non-state actors. Most authors and practitioners have recognized the need to continue peacemaking through negotiation, mediation, and other forms of political engagement throughout the peace process. A failure to do so and the de facto omission of the political aspects of peacebuilding invariably biases the engagement of the non-political parts of the UN system towards the host state government and towards maintaining the existing status quo in terms of patterns of authority and inequality. This dilemma is inherent in any attempt to address conflicts within states; but its recognition has become all the more pressing in any attempt to address conflict within states, be it post-war or other, given the renewed rise of forms of authoritarian governance and increased concerns regarding shrinking political spaces for opposition and change.

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On the author

Andrea Warnecke, PhD, is Associate Fellow at the Center for Applied Research in Partnership with the Orient (CARPO) and currently runs the project 'Academic Approaches to Peacebuilding and State Building in Yemen' at the University of Bonn. She holds an M.A. in History from the University of Bochum and a PhD in Social and Political Sciences from the European University Institute (EUI), Florence. Her research focuses on the practices and politics of governmental and non-governmental international organisations in crises areas and global governance.

Andrea has held positions as a Senior Researcher at Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) and at the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution (ASPR). She was a Visiting Researcher at the Asia-Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (University of Queensland) and has acquired and conducted several research projects in the fields of peacebuilding, development, involuntary migration, and diaspora politics. In fall 2018, she will take up a Marie-Sklodowska-Curie Fellowship at the Department of International Politics at Aberystwyth University.

warnecke@carpo-bonn.org

On CARPO –
Center for Applied Research in Partnership with the Orient

CARPO was founded in 2014 by Germany-based academics trained in the fields of Near and Middle Eastern Studies, Political Science and Social Anthropology. Its work is situated at the nexus of research, consultancy and exchange with a focus on implementing projects in close cooperation and partnership with stakeholders in the Orient. The researchers in CARPO's network believe that a prosperous and peaceful future for the region can best be achieved through inclusive policy making and economic investment that engages the creative and resourceful potential of all relevant actors. Therefore, CARPO opens enduring channels for interactive knowledge transfer between academics, citizens, entrepreneurs, and policy-makers and supports research relevant for the region and beyond.

On this project

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Project website: bonn-sanaa.de