

development during deployment? How do we account for the fact that institutions, by their nature, develop slowly in relation to the peacekeeping activities that are meant to support their development? Adding to the complexity, how can we assess PKO performance in the maintenance and consolidation of institutions well after the point at which those PKOs have been withdrawn?

These are difficult questions. While first-order conflict management mechanisms are insufficient for improving our understanding of these second-order processes, theorizing on first- and second-order objectives would benefit from a common starting point. Future work on second-order peace efforts should recall the central elements of UN peacekeeping referenced from Howard (2019) that make UN efforts unique in pursuit of peacekeeping goals: UN operations are (a) impartial, (b) seek the consent of the belligerents, and (c) tend to avoid using force short of self-defense. With this as the starting point, theorizing on peace- and institution-building efforts is likely to distinguish UN operations from other third-party efforts. With a common starting point to research on first- and second-order peace goals, scholarly cumulation is more likely even as the mechanisms employed for their achievement will necessarily differ.

## Unintended Consequences: Reconsidering the Effects of UN Peacekeeping on State-sponsored Violence

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### Introduction

The ongoing civil war in Mali (2012-2021) began as a separatist conflict in the northern part of the country. MINUSMA, the UN peacekeeping operation in the country, deployed explicitly in response to this conflict. Yet, in recent years violence has spread to central Mali, drawing in members of the Peulh ethnic group. What accounts for the spread of violence in Mali and the salience of a new ethnic cleavage despite the support of robust peacebuilding operations? Likewise, why does violence persist, evolve, or emerge in other contexts featuring UN peacekeepers?

We suggest that United Nations peacebuilding operations may inadvertently incentivize local-level violence. UN peacebuilding operations materially support domestic governments' efforts to maintain order following conflict. However, domestic governments and their armed forces often use their power to settle local scores rather than keep the peace. The governmental abuse of power may thus instigate a new local-level cycle of violence divorced from the original conflict.

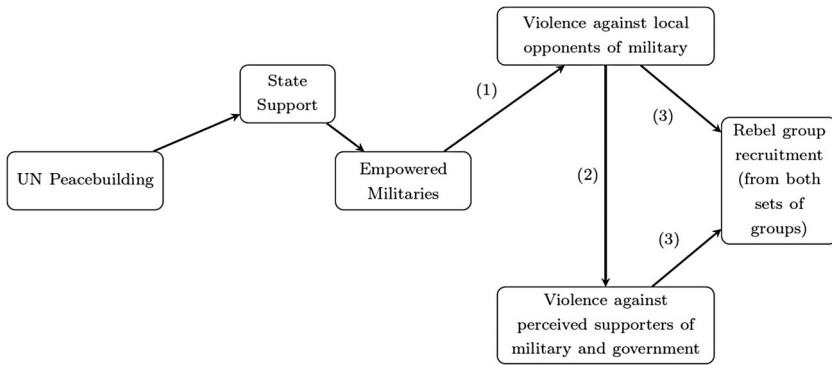
This essay makes three contributions relevant to debates about peacekeeping in academia and the policy-world. First, it highlights the wide range of actors that peacekeepers interact with, encouraging scholars to understand a broader range of peacekeeper-armed actor dynamics. Second, we explain how UN support of formal state institutions can unintentionally contribute to local-level conflicts in peacebuilding operations. Third, the essay highlights alternative peacebuilding strategies for analysts and practitioners of peacebuilding operations alike. Ultimately, our essay complements the contribution by Newton et al. in this forum to further unpack the nature of the ‘peace’ that UN peacekeepers maintain in post-conflict settings.

### How the UN Promotes Peace

How does peacebuilding work? Existing cross-national research on peacekeeping is largely optimistic about operations’ likelihood of success. Scholars have emphasized how international peacebuilders can help belligerents overcome commitment problems (Walter 2002; Fortna 2008). As Newton et al. discuss in their essay in this forum, UN peacekeeping is an especially effective tool for crafting *negative* peace, understood as the absence of violence. Subsequent expansions have applied these theories to local-level outcomes (Ruggeri, Dorussen, and Gizelis 2016) as well as to civilian protection, both in wartime and after conflict (Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon 2013; Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon 2014). These studies have shown that UN peacekeepers prevent violence from breaking out both nationally as well as sub-nationally.

Yet moving from a negative peace to a *positive* peace, understood as addressing the structural conditions for conflict, has proven more elusive, as Newton et al. also show in their contribution to this forum. Much of the existing work assumes that statebuilding is the most effective means to promote the rule of law. Statebuilding refers to international efforts to support a post-conflict state’s capacity to resolve future conflicts peacefully. Statebuilding can bolster institutional legitimacy, improving long-term prospects for peace (Blair 2017). International actors can lend legitimacy to post-conflict states, as well as support public goods provision (Lake 2010).

However, existing research suggests international actors lack the capacity (Beardsley 2008), legitimacy (Lake 2016), or local know-how (Autesserre 2010; Autesserre 2014) to help consolidate gains from peace into successful statebuilding at the end of which local populations view the state as legitimate. Others have pointed out that UN peacebuilding features a liberal concept of state-society relations. Scholars criticize universal peacebuilding models as fundamentally unsuited to many post-conflict contexts (Lynch 2013) or failing to account for local-level failures (Autesserre 2014). Thus,



**Figure 3.1.** Diagram of argument, how UN peacekeeping inadvertently creates new salient conflicts.

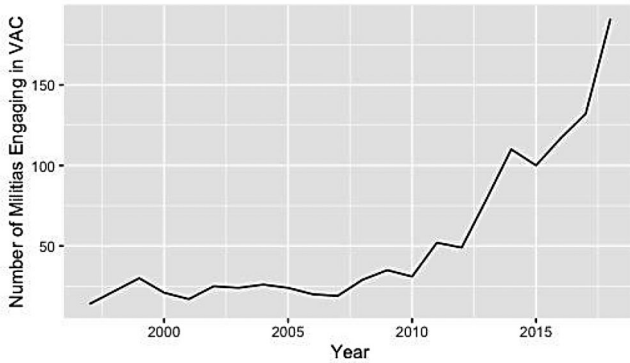
a key tension is the discrepancy between the optimistic cross-national evaluations of peacebuilding and recent critical approaches; we directly address this tension. We show that UN peacebuilders effectively stop existing conflicts but may also increase the prospects of new types of conflict breaking out.

### Moving Away from the State

We suggest that UN peacebuilding efforts can create incentives for new conflict in a post-conflict state. In particular, we identify a pathway by which statebuilding can create new conflict in unintended ways. UN operations are fundamentally state-centric. Many peacebuilding operations are tasked with extending the authority of the state<sup>9</sup> and provide benefits to increase state capacity (Di Salvatore and Ruggeri 2020). Likewise, peacekeepers in civil wars deploy where their military benefits can best support host governments (Villa 2021). Strong states can better maintain the monopoly on the use of violence and thus reduce violence against civilians (Zimmerman 2020).

However, UN peacebuilding operations may in this way also unintentionally incentivize local-level conflict through their support of central government and their militaries (Duursma 2021). The UN prioritizes the creation of order and security in post-conflict zones, often delegating this task to domestic states and their armed forces. Governments use UN-provided support, resources, and legitimization to create and maintain order. However, in most developing states, governments rely on non-

<sup>9</sup>Missions such as those in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the DRC (MONUSCO) have been mandated to re-establish, extend, or consolidate the authority of the state.



**Figure 3.2.** The Number of Militias Engaging in Violence Against Civilians in African Countries Hosting a Peacekeeping Operation, 1997-2018.

professionalized militaries, warlords, and paramilitary forces to keep the peace. These groups create conflict and perpetuate grievances that lead to further local-level violence.

Violence against civilians can motivate and prompt new cycles of conflict. A new violent conflict cycle can occur through three sequential processes, as diagrammed in [Figure 3.1](#). First, non-professionalized armed groups commit violent acts against civilians. Although the UN empowers these armed groups to keep the peace and prevent rebel groups from attacking civilians, they often use their newfound power to settle local scores. For example, members of the Malian military (Forces Armées Maliennes or FAMA), predominantly members of Mali's dominant ethnic groups, have frequently victimized civilians from ethnic group competitors since the deployment of the UN.

Second, local populations retaliate against supporters of the armed groups and vice versa. Retaliation cycles are common and easily triggered following civil war violence ([Bateson 2013](#)). Victims of armed group violence do not feel like they can rely on the government or the UN, since these actors supported the perpetrators. As a result, they resort to attacking perceived supporters of the armed group, the government, or the UN. The victims of this violence retaliate, perpetuating an all-new cycle of local-level conflict. Returning to the example of the Malian military, victims of military violence have retaliated against civilians that they believe support the government.

Third, new armed groups emerge to meet the demand for new violence, recruiting from ethnic groups attacked by state-supported militaries or from ethnic groups facing retaliatory attacks. As a result, UN support of a central government can inadvertently create new fronts of violence that can threaten the entire state's stability. The groups carrying out this violence

are ubiquitous in conflict, are highly violent, and contribute to overall disorder (Carey and Mitchell 2017). Figure 3.2 demonstrates the rise of militias engaging in violence against civilians in the African countries hosting peacekeepers between 1997-2018.<sup>10</sup>

Our contention is not that this cycle of violence always occurs, that UN peacekeeping operations inevitably incentivize new conflicts, or that when it does occur the vicious cycle outweighs the positive elements of UN peacekeeping entirely. Along the lines of the Newton et al. essay in this forum, we merely wish to identify a possible and important challenge to positive peacebuilding.

### Alternative Approach

We do not argue that the United Nations should entirely abandon programmes that support the state or that attempt to build the state-security apparatus. Rather, policymakers should consider shifting peacekeeping resources away from post-conflict governments. In particular, three non-state centric peacebuilding strategies hold great promise moving forward: (1) local-level peace enforcement by United Nations police forces and peacekeepers; (2) training of local police forces and security brigades independently of the state; (3) cooperation with traditional and religious authorities.

First, instead of empowering governments and their non-professionalized militaries to enforce local-level peace in post-conflict states, UN peacekeepers and UN police can directly enforce local-level peace. Peacekeepers use a strategic posture in order to stop current violence and deter future violence. From the perspective of the local population, the practical implication is that violence is no longer considered a feasible strategy for solving a local-level dispute. This is because of the high likelihood that the UN will stop or punish the violence later, which citizens assume the military would not do. Recent evaluations at the micro- and sub-national levels suggest that direct UN enforcement can effectively increase interethnic cooperation and reduce violence (Nomikos 2021; Ruggeri, Dorussen, and Gizelis 2016).<sup>11</sup> Direct UN enforcement of local-level peace can alleviate the need for central governments to rely on their non-professionalized security forces. It can also provide the UN time to help governments professionalize and reform the security sector (Karim and Gorman 2016).

Second, the UN should continue to embrace non-state centric peacebuilding operations. In particular, the UN should cooperate with non-state authorities that carry a great deal of legitimacy in developing country settings.

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<sup>10</sup>Burundi, CAR, Chad, Cote D'Ivoire, DRC, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Liberia, Mali, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and South Sudan. These data come from Raleigh et al. 2010.

<sup>11</sup>See Autesserre, *The Trouble with the Congo* for a critique of UN operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo because they de-emphasized local-level security.

Traditional authorities typically play a central role in resolving disputes in these contexts, particularly in small rural communities. These leaders can facilitate aid provision and peacebuilding in post-conflict societies (Baldwin 2015; Blattman, Hartman, and Blair 2014). Similarly, recent research suggests that religious leaders can mobilize collective action in post-conflict settings, especially when embracing Qur'anic scripture (Condra, Isaqzadeh and Linardi 2017; Masoud, Jamal, and Nugent 2016; Grossman, Nomikos, and Siddiqui 2021).

Finally, in conflict settings that necessitate some degree of local order-building, the UN should shift resources away from formal institutions such as militaries to local security institutions comprised of local volunteers trained by UN experts. The United States has achieved above-average peacebuilding outcomes with such programmes—the Sons of Iraq and Afghan Local Police (ALP) programmes in Iraq and Afghanistan. The effectiveness of these local security institutions derives from those community members who volunteer to serve in the police force and the community leadership that helps international peacebuilders recruit volunteers. This is no easy task. The peacebuilder—in this case the UN—must identify and monitor potential local leaders that can serve as agents that can help recruit volunteers. These leaders must be competent, carry a great deal of legitimacy and community-level trust, and must be interested in community-level peace. Once American peacebuilders selected training sites for the ALP programme, local police would be trained by American advisors but governed by local councils (shuras) and tasked strictly with keeping local-level peace. The shuras would designate leaders that would oversee the ALP. The shuras, which are viewed as legitimate actors by the local populace, would bestow legitimacy on the security personnel. The ALP-leadership would be vetted by government officials, who would impose their own preferences on selecting leaders. Thus, American leaders had to have enough information to select suitable training sites, shuras, and government officials to vet police leaders and volunteers. While such programmes do not entirely eliminate the state, they incorporate local, non-governmental stakeholders that can minimize the involvement of non-professionalized militaries.

In this essay, we have suggested that UN peacebuilding operations may unintentionally create incentives for new conflict. Our essay thus complements the essay by Newton et al. (this forum) to highlight potential challenges in crafting a positive peace in post-conflict settings. In her contribution to this issue, Hultman (this forum) discusses how the UN has over the past 75 years moved away in its doctrine from a focus on state security to a focus on human security. We have outlined a key challenge that UN peacekeeping practice may still face in implement this doctrinal shift. At the same time, we also make the case that the incentivization process that may be triggered by UN peacekeeping operations is avoidable. With some shifting of

resources and strategic prioritization, the UN can help prevent the unintentional creation of new local-level cycles of violence.

## The UN and the Development of Friendly Relations based on Equal Rights: The United Nations and Great Power Politics

Martin Binder

### Introduction

The dominant view among scholars and observers of the United Nations (UN) has been that the organization's actions and decisions are largely determined by its great powers China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These powers enjoy permanent membership on the United Nations Security Council, and they have a veto right that allows them to block any action that goes against their interests. Both the permanence of their membership and the veto right were a 'sine qua non' at the creation of the UN after World War II – 'the smaller states understood that they had to choose between an organization with great power privilege, or no organization at all' (Krisch 2008, 136). In this short essay, I will argue that the five permanent Council members (P5) exert significant influence over UN actions and decisions, but that their power is constrained by the Council's decision-making procedures and its need for legitimacy. To support this argument, I first identify the P5's formal and informal sources of influence in the Council and examine how permanent member interests affect the UN's response to conflicts and crises. I then discuss how the P5's interests are constrained by the UN's normative and organizational principles and by the interests of the Council's ten non-elected members (E10). I conclude by identifying some avenues for future research.

### The Sources of Great Power Influence

Given their vast military and economic power and their institutionalized privileges in the UN, the five permanent Security Council members and their various interests have dominated research on the UN. Some scholars have argued that the P5 form an 'elite club' (Voeten 2005) or a modern-day 'concert' (Bosco 2014) that – when acting together – has unparalleled power and influence over the UN while also preventing potentially dangerous tensions among them. As Chapman argues in this forum, it is precisely the military and economic dominance of the P5 that also allows them to collectively inform other states about (the limits of) appropriate behaviour in