Internal and external dilemmas of peacebuilding in Africa

INTRODUCTION

Peacebuilding, as a distinct area of international engagement, developed in the early 1990s within the context of the reform of the conflict prevention and peacekeeping capacity of the United Nations (UN). In the 1992 *Agenda for peace,* then UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali called on the UN to become a central instrument in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and to stand ready to assist in peacebuilding, 'rebuilding the institutions and infrastructures of nations torn by civil war and strife; and building bonds of peaceful mutual benefit among nations formerly at war'.[1] It was a time of optimism following the end of the Cold War and building on a period of global economic stability and growth. Globalisation and economic and political liberalisation were bringing people across the world closer with a focus on the positive benefits of democracy, trade and prosperity.

Fast forward to 2013, and one finds that the global context has changed rather significantly in the past two decades: asymmetrical warfare imbued with religious identities has replaced interstate governance-defined conflict; free market capitalism has proven unsustainable; and the global economic crisis has changed perceptions of resilience. Democracy and economic liberalisation have not brought the promised peace dividends, but rather continue to drive global and local inequalities. Indeed, perceptions of power in 20th century definitions of military capacity as well as economic/trade and political/diplomatic terms are undergoing massive changes to remain relevant in an inter-connected world order defined not by production or capital accumulation but by ensuring access to essential consumables within increasingly diverse centres of power.

Systemic changes at the global level have also been met with changes at national and local levels in Africa: for South Sudan a new state was born; civil uprisings led to changed governments in Tunisia and Egypt; the fall of Muammar Gaddafi has changed the shape of politics from local markets in Benghazi to who's in power in Bamako and the cost of fuel in Kampala; and local dissatisfaction and grievances link with national power contestations and international security priorities from the Gulf of Guinea to the shores of Somalia. In the midst of this complexity, it seems that the state has re-emerged in our narrative as the bulwark of international stability; the bastion of law and order holding together populations competing for a political voice and economic power in a globalised world.

It is within this tableau of networked interactions that peacebuilding interventions are undertaken to assist people recovering from conflict to create an agreeable level order internally to make a positive contribution to global stability and economic growth. A dynamic tension exists as the state is expected to mediate pressures from the external and internal environment and act as the mediator, interlocutor and regulator, while still being a primary area of contestation. As Maroya wrote of post-colonial frontier states, the state is a mediating agent between a variety of sub-state and transnational social forces.[2] Africa today still exists on the frontiers of global power, and the organisation of authority within the state still struggles to mediate powerful transnational global forces while continuing to undergo dramatic and often violent state formation processes. This paper will explore the dilemmas that peacebuilding, as a framework for organising and prioritising interventions, faces in trying to mediate these tensions.

LAUREN HUTTON

A FEW FRAMING PARAMETERS

As peacebuilding has expanded through practice and a proliferation of research interests, there is a variety of lenses through which one can frame peacebuilding trends and challenges. The focus of this paper is on the relationship between peacebuilding and statebuilding, as the state is the primary vehicle through which domestic and international peace is sought. This approach draws from a range of literature on peacebuilding as stabilisation, avoiding discourses about liberal peacebuilding and peacebuilding as social justice.[3] There are three important reasons for this interpretation of peacebuilding:

- Among competing values, the maintenance of order and predictability tends to trump other values. Order is, of course, a subjective value and the security of elite compacts drives both interventionist logic and internal post-conflict recovery priorities.
- There is a certain inevitability to violence, and stability involves regulating the expression of violence. As such the expression of violence cannot be removed altogether, but a combination of local and global forces determines what is an acceptable expression of violence. Peacebuilding involves the engineering of societies to reflect nationally and internationally acceptable controls on the expression of violence.
- Peacebuilding benefits do not accrue equally across or within societies.

The contention presented here is that current peacebuilding practice prioritises the state and, in particular, order as the key focus of interventions because of a combination of internal and external factors. This approach is similar to other research that emphasises how peacebuilding practices legitimise and help reproduce social structures[4] and research into peacebuilding as a site of political and social contestation and interaction.[5] The view presented here is that peacebuilding has become too aligned with statebuilding and that there is almost no practical, substantive separation of the two. This view is based on interpretations of global and national dynamics within which hierarchies of power, legitimacy and knowledge manifest. This is also based on a worldview that offers no alternative to statehood and in which there is no conception of how peace can exist without states.[6] This is not to say that there is no other peacebuilding programming except that which focuses on the state, but rather that building states is the dominant approach even to peacebuilding, which has consequences for the potential for stability.

Some readers may contend that statebuilding is an important part of peacebuilding and that there are no inherent contradictions and tensions of instilling order within complexity. Some may not agree that there should

not be an assumed positive relationship between order and peace and that our definitions and assumptions of the normative content of 'order' and 'peace' bear such close resemblances to each other that we are consistently seeking causality and linear explanations that in actuality fail to capture complexity and the diffusion of ideas and impacts throughout complex systems. This paper seeks to outline some of these dilemmas as a starting point for re-examining the diffusion of values and choices within complex systems.

RE-EMERGENCE OF THE STATE

The definition of peacebuilding in 1992 as action to identify and support structures to solidify peace and avoid a relapse into conflict[7] remains the core of peacebuilding interventions today. Peacebuilding is most commonly used in reference to external efforts to support processes to address the causes of conflict and much peacebuilding literature is focused on helping international actors make their interventions more effective.[8] Some critiques of peacebuilding highlight this liberal interventionism as imperialism seeking social engineering through external support,[9] thereby too closely reflecting colonialism and the intrusive development practices of the 1970s and 1980s. Local processes without international support are seldom, if ever, captured, recorded and called peacebuilding.

Peacebuilding gained ground as a concept following the collapse of security in African and Eastern European states in the mid-1990s when it became clear that UN peacekeeping was only temporarily able to maintain an unstable status quo.[10] Within the neo-conservative security paradigm of the post-9/11 world, peacebuilding has taken on a renewed relevance due to the fear of what can emerge from fragile and conflict-affected areas as threats to international security. The demand for peacebuilding will continue to increase as the concern about ending civil wars has been joined by the fear that weak states pose a threat to international security.[11] This is part of a shift from the ideology and poverty-driven interventions of the 1960s–1980s to the short-lived humanitarian interventions of the 1990s and the system-maintaining or -changing interventions of the 21st century.

Decisions of where and how to intervene are now mostly justified based on more purist definitions of national interest (such as licit and illicit trade and access to resources; migration and counter-terrorism) and the extension or maintenance of a specific global order (as evidenced by the linkages between sectarian divides and patronage networks across the Islamic world). The question has become not whether to intervene, but to what extent international actors will intervene to re-establish order within a society.[12] The extent of intervention has also become increasingly intrusive with international agencies

intervening in all aspects of state function – security, economic development, political participation, social welfare, service delivery, local government development, state-society relations, rule of law, etc.

The re-emergence of the state as the central component of world order is an interesting characteristic of the 21st century in which seemingly polarised forces of globalisation and state sovereignty are creating mutually reinforcing ideological positions pushing for centralised control within the framework and parameters of government and state. Whereas multilateralism was the hope for the 1990s and the early 2000s, the state has now firmly reclaimed its central position in political thought and action as the means to control an unpredictable world.

The global economic crisis has pushed for increased state involvement in national economies and has changed the relationship between capital and public spending. The climate change, global warming and carbon quota agendas are pushing from liberal activist positions for more government control of, access to and consumption of energy. Within the global geopolitical and security context, neo-conservatism has permeated the international system, enabling increased restriction of individual rights; the justification of pre-emptive violence; the declining relevance of multilateral institutions; and the confidence that external action can initiate and sustain social change.

In Africa, at both multilateral and national levels, leaders are increasingly using the sovereignty of the state as a defence against international intrusion – indeed, the entire 'African solutions' rhetoric and the resurgence of pan-Africanism is part of Africans' defence against international intervention. There is a renewed defence of national sovereignty as African leaders are hunkering down together to protect elite interests. Nowhere is this trend more evident than in the current debates about the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The resurgence in recognising the centrality of the state has included an increased focus on the state within peacebuilding. International processes, such as the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, speak of peacebuilding and statebuilding. This implies a complementary relationship between containing violence and building state structures. According to mainstream international relations theory, peace requires a state sufficiently competent and legitimate to authorise, recognise and regulate the functioning of institutions both below and above it.[13]

A global emphasis on failed states,[14] such as in the 2011 *World development report* and *The responsibility to protect,* has created an overwhelming focus on building states as a source of internal and international security. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), between 2000 and 2010, per

capita official development assistance to fragile states grew by over 10 per cent a year.[15] Just as structural adjustment programmes in the 1980s subscribed economies to a particular economic regime, so too do peacebuilding and statebuilding provide a particular governance regime for controlling violence, thereby extending to states on the peripheries of international power the means to contribute to international security.

Jean-Francois Bayart in *The state in Africa* argues that African states are not just victims of external interventions but actively engage in and pursue external interventions as a way to reinforce internal elite dynamics.[16] He argues that leading actors in sub-Saharan societies tend to compensate for their difficulties in the autonomisation of their power by deliberate recourse to strategies of extraversion and mobilising resources from relationships with the external environment.[17] External legitimacy provides the state with a fictionalised sovereignty on which ruling elites can draw to shore up their contested internal sovereignty.[18] The dependency of the Somali central authority on external support is an interesting example of this dynamic. So too is the case of South Sudan, in which the existence of the state is in and of itself the result of immense international support.

Within a globalised world pushing people to seek alliances on the peripheries, the increase in the diversity of transnational actors has created a wider array of sources of external legitimacy (and in some instances capacity) to bridge critical internal shortages. This applies as much to the state as it does to sub-state social forces able to exploit their positions on the frontiers of global power contestations. The increased involvement of Turkey and Qatar, among others, as donors and bilateral partners in Sudan, Somalia and other parts of the Horn of Africa is an interesting case to be followed further.

Bayart argues that the state in Africa exists in extraversion. This implies that external legitimacy and the recognition of sovereignty are the key features of African states due to what Chabal and Daloz refer to as the lack of consolidation of the state, leading to internal legitimacy and capacity gaps.[19] Jeffrey Herbst has argued that as sovereignty for African states is underwritten by the sanctity of imposed boundaries, the threat of secession has been removed and there is little incentive for leaders to reach accommodation with disaffected populations.[20] Within post-colonial debates, the tension between the state as a legitimate partner for external actors and the state as the central authority over a territory is often highlighted as an explanation for the deterioration of political stability. As the focus of peacebuilding is on overcoming state incapacity and failure, focused particularly on former colonies,[21] exploring the dynamics of statehood in Africa has regained significance as a field of study.

Interestingly, this approach to peacebuilding and statebuilding is somewhat inconsistent with international interventions in the 1980s and 1990s, which were based more on overcoming poverty through *reducing* the influence of the state. The state as a usurper of public funds needed to be curtailed, controlled and restricted through, among others, structural adjustment, stringent public financial management and increased transparency and accountability for spending external funds. At that time, African calls for more focus on the type of state came a distant second to the picture of Africa as starving populations beset by the ravages of famine and insecurity. There is an increased alignment between the international rhetoric of the importance of the state and interests in Africa to shore up the role and strength of the state. This is evidenced, for example, in the search for the democratic developmental state as in the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063.

The state as the primary forum to regulate competing interests internally and to regulate the relationship with the external environment remains the central battleground through which both political and economic domination is achieved.[22] Capturing the state – or at least being favourably linked to those within the state – is essential for self-enrichment and is an intrinsic part of the class power distribution.[23] Political instability in Africa is in many ways rooted in the extreme politicisation of the state as an organ to be monopolised for power and economic advancement.[24]

There is an assumption that if peacebuilding can contribute towards building the right kind of state, it will contribute towards stability. But this ignores the fundamental problems with statehood in Africa that would need to be overcome. In practice, peacebuilding largely fails to deal with the politics of power because of a perceived sense of the importance of neutrality to do good. Because peacebuilding at some point has to relate to the state and power relationships, it cannot in and of itself be a neutral activity.

Peacebuilding, through the processes of engagement and the mobilisation and allocation of resources, privileges certain groups over others and privileges certain ideological and institutional arrangements. As a value-laden term, peacebuilding privileges order over other values.[25] As state weakness has become synonymous with international insecurity, so has the peacebuilding agenda been driven to focus even more explicitly on building institutions and processes that can instil order – i.e. the security sector. The state matters because it provides a useful function for domestic and international order, but these are not necessarily mutually reinforcing processes nor are they processes that inevitably lead to the development of accountable, responsive states.

Additionally, as state functions for service delivery remain in many cases dependent on external, non–state actors, the focus on statebuilding within peacebuilding is reinforcing certain elite practices already prone to more predatory behaviour. Yet, as noted by Barnett et al 'the desire to make sure that the post-conflict state is strong enough to contend with uncivil forces might easily undermine the desire to build a liberal state that is accountable to society and fastened by the rule of law.'[26] All too often the focus of post-conflict interventions is on addressing the 'root causes' of conflict, which avoids looking at the violence and conflicts caused and sustained by interactions between political systems.

TENSIONS BETWEEN PEACEBUILDING AND STATEBUILDING

At national and local levels there exist numerous tensions between building a state (focusing on capacity) through institutions and processes, and consolidating peace and security (focusing on legitimacy). Call and Wyeth highlight tensions between peacebuilding and statebuilding that need to be addressed to ensure that national-level initiatives contribute towards the longer-term consolidation of peace. This includes the linkages between:[27]

- Negotiated deals and their consequences for a sustainable state
- Urgent short-term measures and long-term sustainability
- International interests and recognition, and national interests and legitimacy
- The interests of elites, especially combatants, and of the population at large

In trying to manage these tensions, two main types of peacebuilding programmes can be observed: (1) those aimed at building the state, and (2) those aimed at supporting communities because of weaknesses in the state. This translates to a focus of programming on either the legitimacy/authority side of the state, which is elitist focused and serves particular geopolitical and geostrategic interests, or on the capacity/responsibility side, wherein local political and economic power dynamics are manipulated towards service delivery in the absence of an effective central state. In general terms, there are two outcomes of this approach: on the one side, communities begin to function as commercial units able to gain funding and services primarily through relationships with external actors and, on the other, the state is relieved of its service delivery responsibilities towards citizens and can focus on the consolidation of an elite pact through security.

There is an additional dimension to peacebuilding that warrants further attention: reconciliation and dialogue. The same pattern as above is witnessed in many conflict-affected states where local-level community reconciliation

projects proliferate at grassroots level in peace caravans, dialogue, sports events and a range of peacebuilding-through-development type programming (for example, joint vegetable gardens, 'water for peace' and community-driven development projects). These projects often aim to be rooted in the 'traditional' social hierarchies and structures, drawing on local civil societies and building social cohesion. Then there is a range of mediation-style support for elite political negotiations. Although working on the same issues from multiple levels, there is often in practice little to no relationship between the two. Inter-communal reconciliation seldom builds sustainable national-level political accommodation and is all too easily disrupted by tensions existing far away. Internal conflict systems in South Sudan and Sudan bear interesting lessons for the building-peace-from-the-bottom way of working.

As conflicts in Africa regularly involve the government as a party to the conflict, the nature of national politics is intricately concerned with different groups finding their expression in the state or deciding, as Michaela Wrong puts it, when it is 'our turn to eat'. In such conflicts, especially those involving a crisis of national identity such as in South Africa, Sudan and Egypt, citizens on all sides are deprived of the protection expected from the state, living oppressed by sovereignty and without any sovereignty of their own.[28] Much of the tension between peacebuilding and statebuilding in Africa comes from the tensions in nation-building and state formation. There is a certain dichotomy between needing strong central authorities to navigate the tensions of state formation while at the same time requesting states recovering from conflict to be open and inclusive. Overcoming the entrenched systems of exclusion over which most internal violence is waged requires a far more fundamental transformation of the state itself; something which is difficult to achieve with restrictions on territory, ideology and organisation. This is even further complicated by the unfair advantages of those holding the purse strings and able to define programming priorities regardless of the well-intentioned lip service being paid to local ownership and national leadership.

What we end up with is a programming balancing act that sees the state as a necessary part of but perpetual obstacle to peace. Because post-conflict legitimacy often comes at the cost of efficiency, international programming too often focuses on extending capacity through parallel systems of service delivery, which in the longer term undermines the ability of the state to shore up internal legitimacy. The continued problem of the state that exists in extraversion, with sovereignty and legitimacy based too largely on external recognition, is that internal legitimacy is not linked with capacity but more often with history, geography or identity. In the absence of nation-building and a common identity, statebuilding (and much of

peacebuilding) ends up focusing on building institutions without the reinforcing elements on which the sustainability and effectiveness of institutionalised practices reside.

Although we tend to assume that there is a certain prioritisation of intervention support, there is no one overarching logic of desired impacts but rather a series of trade-offs within marketplaces of influence diffused across local, national and international systems. There is an ambition to have peacebuilding provide a framework for considering trade-offs between extending legitimacy and increasing capacity. In *Peacebuilding as politics,* Elizabeth Cousens explains that 'effective peacebuilding requires establishing a strategic framework of objectives for international assistance; a privileging within this framework of conflict resolution over other goals; and in relationship to that objective, setting priorities among international efforts.' De Coning argues for peacebuilding to be the 'common strategic framework' and a 'multidimensional system-wide undertaking' that keeps the primary focus of interventions on preventing a relapse into conflict.[29] I would contend that this is overly ambitious and is actually still part of the ontological fracture seeking linear cause and effect and predictable relationships of hierarchy not entirely suitable to complex systems, while never sufficiently engaging in the diffusion of interests and influences within complex systems.

The following sections will unpack some of the tensions and dilemmas of peacebuilding in addressing political stabilisation, security, and economic growth and service delivery.[30] The argument presented below seeks to outline linkages and trade-offs between these core areas and highlights the complexity of seeking mutually reinforcing systemic changes.

Peacebuilding as political stabilisation

Political stability is the foundation of order within a society. There has been a noticeable shift in the past decade towards a renewed focus on states as the building blocks of international security and an implicit acknowledgement that the type of state (democratic/autocratic) is less of a threat to global order than a lack of state capacity (fragile/strong). This shift in focus from type of state to degree of state is evidenced by Call and Cook in their 2003 paper on democratisation and peacebuilding. The authors note that of the 18 countries that experienced UN peacekeeping missions with political institution-building mandates between 1988 and 2002, 13 (or 72 per cent) were classified in 2002 as having some form of authoritarian regime.[31] By 2010, according to the Economist Intelligence Unit, of those 13 countries – Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia, Cambodia, Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), East Timor, Haiti, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Tajikistan – only East

Timor was classified as a flawed democracy, with five states falling into the hybrid systems category and six remaining classified as authoritarian.[32]

These statistics seem to disprove the liberal interventionism critique of peacebuilding and the ideological slant towards democratisation. They also point to a disconnect between theory and practice and to the limitations of external interventions unable to sufficiently engage with pre-existing local institutions, structures and processes.[33] Perhaps even more so, they point to how deeply the processes of exclusion and violence are embedded within societies and how little the linkages between exclusion, violent patronage networks and the exercise of authority are addressed through external programming.

The Crisis States Research Centre has identified 'the central role played by elite bargains embedded in wider political settlements in determining trajectories of violence and change in developing countries'.[34] Putzel and Di John emphasise that political settlements determine political and developmental outcomes and that the processes of inclusion and exclusion are central to the stability and resilience of political settlements.[35] The complexity of elite compacts and their relationship to the state is highlighted in the case of Libya, where the Gaddafi regime as a consolidated autocracy was able to exist based on patronage networks traversing the state, security sector, families and clans, ethnicity and religion, 'holding elites together but also dividing them and linking them to wider political alliances beyond the state, which often descended to grass roots'.[36] The collapse of the elite compact (driven by a combination of internal and external pressures) was accompanied by the fragmentation of the political and security spaces as these centres of elite power began competing among each other to re-establish social order.

Understanding networks and coalitions that enable political stability is essential, as is trying to decipher the trade-offs that will occur as power shifts take place and order is established, particularly in areas where there are entrenched political economies of disorder.[37] Writing about the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), Wilfred Gray-Johnson, then director of the Liberia Peacebuilding Office, noted that UNMIL peacebuilding operations had undertaken a standard set of activities that were presumed to lead to peace – but without fully appreciating the structures, institutions, dynamics and attitudes that constitute a peaceful society.[38]

A similar example can be drawn from the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). The PBC configuration chair for Guinea-Bissau briefed the UN Security Council not two weeks before the April 2012 coup, noting 'Guinea-Bissau has made important strides towards sustainable peace'.[39] The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General

(SRSG) and Head of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, reporting to the same meeting, noted that 78 per cent of the indicators for the overall UN effort were either on track or likely to be achieved within the time frame.[40] During this briefing the SRSG highlighted some of the challenges being faced within Guinea-Bissau, but there was no anticipation of increasing or changing efforts to adapt to the unstable political and security environment following the death of the country's president at the end of 2011.

A lesson from Sierra Leone points to how limited space within the UN system can be when it comes to having realistic conversations about state authority. In February 2012, the SRSG and head of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), Michael von der Schulenburg, was removed from his post following a breakdown in his relationship with President Ernest Bai Koroma in the lead-up to critical elections in November 2012. The controversy revolved around what an acceptable level of involvement in local politics was within the peacebuilding mandate, with Schulenburg accused of favouring the opposition.[41] Throughout 2011, efforts from within Sierra Leone to have Schulenburg removed intensified as he pushed for more transparency in the extractive industries and more respect for human rights, and questioned the need for a heavily armed paramilitary police unit.[42]

These examples highlight the complexity of dealing with political stability as part of peacebuilding. On the one hand, if peacebuilding programming fails to address political stability and the stability of elite compacts, there can be no transformation of the conflict systems as elite interests will continue to define and drive how violence is expressed. On the other hand, engaging in the politics of stabilisation requires favouring certain interests and groups over others, which is far more risky and requires incredibly politically astute interaction. With an increasingly risk-adverse, bunkered and fragmented international community operating in post-conflict contexts, actually engaging in the politics of stabilisation is becoming less likely and peacebuilding interventions remain largely ad hoc, piecemeal and of insufficient scale to address sustainable political change.

Peacebuilding as security

Economist Milton Friedman wrote that only a crisis could produce real change.[43] The task of theorists becomes to prepare alternatives to existing policies that can be available when the politically impossible becomes politically inevitable.[44] Some views of conflict and state formation situate widespread violence as a crisis that creates change and enables the evolution of political systems. But a focus on crisis as the start of change falls into the trap of ignoring

the evolutionary and entrenched behaviours that promote either resilience or change.

Civil wars and internal insecurity are the outcomes of long-developing processes of change in the socio-cultural practices and institutional mechanisms that normally place limits on the use of violence. In cases like Somalia, the CAR, Chad, the DRC, Sudan, South Sudan, Zimbabwe and Equatorial Guinea, the resilience of societies and political entities to shocks exists in a quiet dichotomy from our approach to violent conflict as having a watershed effect on society. In very few instances is the type of violent conflict that we see in Africa of sufficient scale and scope to create the fundamental type of shock that Friedman required to make the politically impossible politically inevitable. There are some watershed historical moments, such as in South Africa and Rwanda in 1994 and Egypt in 2011, but in general African states and regimes in crisis have shown an incredible resilience to change – a reality borne out in the above three cases as well.

Additionally, in most of the deeply entrenched conflict systems insecurity exists as part of a protracted emergency. Patterns of violence and exclusion exist alongside coping strategies that involve the further stripping of assets,[45] creating a cyclical reinforcement of uneven power relations. This is even more extreme in circumstances where environmental conditions, livelihoods and access to natural resources reinforce patterns of competition and power, such as in pastoral economies and geographies across the Sahel. Referring to the Horn of Africa, Mark Duffield wrote in 1993 that:

> A shrinking resource base and decline in formal economic opportunity has seen an increasing transfer of assets from the weak to the politically strong. This local transfer is integrated with a regional parallel economy. In the case of Sudan, different aspects of this economy come together in the state where they are controlled and contested by sectarian political interests. It is an inherently authoritarian, *violent and disaster producing structure.*[46]

This remains as true an observation today as it was then. It is in these circumstances, where local and regional political, economic and social systems are being co-opted into violence-producing and -sustaining structures, that addressing insecurity is most complex. If we consider security as a process of political and social ordering, established and maintained through authoritative discourses and practices of power,[47] then we have to accept that security is intimately concerned with power, mirroring inequalities within societies and elite preferences. Talking about change within the security-providing system to be relevant to peacebuilding needs to consider not only the provision of service (capacity) but also who gets to access those services and how (legitimacy).

In a 2012 UN Peacebuilding Support Office review on security sector reform (SSR) and peacebuilding, it was found that 19 per cent of total Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) allocations had gone to SSR. 'Of this total, approximately 72 per cent of this funding has gone towards "hardware" issues, that is, infrastructure, and operations support and equipment. Twenty-one per cent has gone towards training and discipline related issues, while only 7 per cent to "security-wide" initiatives, including in the area of governance.'[48] This clearly slanted investment raises questions of whether PBF contributions and approaches that favour train-and-equip programming have, in fact, any link to peacebuilding goals. Somalia, again, provides an interesting example where the push to create a Somali National Armed Force (SNAF) has focused on training and deploying soldiers in the absence of even rudimentary systems for accountability.

There is significant evidence that the building of national armies involves difficult trade-offs between 'taming violence' and establishing state control over coercive force.[49] The challenge in places like South Sudan, Somalia, Mali and Libya is that in these instances the state, with foreign backing, has prioritised security, but there is limited success in creating a monopoly on coercive force because of the lack of political accommodation and rule of law. The state is building an army to tame violence without the necessary political framework for it to legitimately exercise a monopoly on the use of coercive force. In each example, the association of the state security forces with discriminatory practices and human rights abuses even further undermines the ability of the state to provide space for inclusion.

In the DRC, failure to create a professional national army and to find some form of political and socio-economic agreement with non-state armed groups has resulted in the UN bearing the responsibility for increasingly offensive security operations under the gambit of peacekeeping and the protection of civilians. In South Sudan, the government has been particularly adept at using the resources of the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) to advance its own internal security agenda. UNMISS has been severely criticised for its failure to prioritise the protection of civilians, but it is bound by a mandate that calls for both statebuilding and the protection of civilians.[50]

There is no neutral ground and external actors risk underestimating how security arrangements stabilise existing inequalities.[51] Some authors argue that the benefits of security provision tend to accrue disproportionally towards wealthy and powerful individuals, institutions and states, with the costs of that security (in financial and other terms) borne by the poor, vulnerable and excluded.[52]

In many modern conflict systems in Africa the hybridisation of power has resulted in a diverse array of sources of security, and these dynamics of access and exclusion are being played out at multiple levels. Areas where armed violence is prevalent and entrenched tend to exist in a peripheral relationship with formal systems of political and economic power, but this does not necessarily mean that these zones of formal and informal power are far apart or even physically separated.[53] In cases like Mali and Guinea Bissau, hybrid politico-criminal elites can be present in formal political entities while playing an essential role in supporting and extending the shadow state.[54]

Armed groups exist as a result of flaws and fault lines in existing political economies.[55] Violence is symptomatic of societies that are structurally insecure and unaccountable; a result not only of present national and global inequalities but informed also by geographic and historical legacies of bias. Therefore, in some cases, it is not the centre-periphery divide (urban/rural or state/non-state) that is most important but the *relations between centres of power,* each with its own and competing social orders, security structures and revenue streams. Building a central authority able to exercise a monopoly on the use of force means co-opting or defeating alternative centres of power. Even with significant political capital and a stable enough elite compact, this will be a disruptive process filled with inefficiencies associated with inclusion and/or a violent process based on conquest.

After centuries of state sovereignty the dominant form of organised violence in Africa still reflects pre-state conflicts for state coherence, waiting for the myth of common identity to be forged on the battlefield.[56] This creation of state coherence is further challenged by the liberation roots of many current governments in Africa. Writing about Eritrea, Christopher Clapham explains:

> The central problem is that the legacy of the struggle defines the character and rationale of the state that the victorious liberators take over and seek to rule. The people who led the struggle take over and run the state, by right, and almost inevitably apply the methods essential to running a guerrilla war … Central to these methods is an intense commitment to the discipline needed to win the war, and the instant stigmatisation of any kind of opposition or dissent – especially if this involves compromise, bargaining, or the need to take into account the views of any group outside the central leadership – as treason … And with the legacy of liberation war, too, goes a tendency to resort to violence, even war, as the solution to all problems.[57]

This analysis applies as much to Zimbabwe, South Sudan, Uganda, Angola and Ethiopia as it does to Eritrea. The

evolution of the state is violence driven, but this violence in Africa is directed internally with the state already in existence and directing attention to the conquest of its citizens and territory. Coming from a liberation history means that for some leaders, the right to rule trumps all other societal values and staying in power becomes an end in and of itself. This example underlines that what peacebuilders purport to support as social order is the subjective weighing of some values above others.

Peacebuilding as economic growth and service delivery

There is an assumed positive correlation between security and development, and we know instinctively that insecurity hampers development. Economists such as Paul Collier have proven that poor countries are dangerous: countries with low levels of income and low rates of growth are more prone to violent conflict.[58] Supporting better macro-economic planning, tax collection and public spending has become part and parcel of international post-conflict interventions in Africa – partly to increase the transparency of government systems to enable more direct aid and partly to restore the capacity of the government to fulfil its service delivery obligations.

Africa is currently enjoying unprecedented levels of economic growth. However, the relationship between economic growth and peace is tenuous at best. Michael Ignatieff has emphasised that 'many failed and failing states are poor and have suffered from the steadily more adverse terms of trade in a globalised economy'.[59] For the economies dependent on natural resources, such as Angola and Nigeria, crippling domestic inequalities continue to drive local politics and the politically and economically predatory states are kept afloat by elite compacts of an increasingly fragile nature. Nigeria has the added problem of struggling to tie an ethnically and religiously fragmented society into an organised state.[60] The inevitable biases, held in check by brutal security crackdowns[61] and violent corrupt patronage networks, create a myriad of spaces for violent opposition. Networks founded upon inequality are themselves producers of inequality.[62]

Out of the top 12 fastest-growing economies in Africa, eight are non-oil producing countries. A recent International Monetary Fund (IMF) report attempting to understand what is driving sustained economic growth in some of these countries focused on Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.[63] One of the major findings was that 'purposeful policy-making helped'.[64] In Tanzania, a focus on increased taxation since the late 1990s has resulted in an increase in government revenue, allowing higher public spending and keeping inflation in check. Rigorous anti-corruption measures and increased

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL DILEMMAS OF PEACEBUILDING IN AFRICA

transparency of public financial management systems have also meant that these six countries have received more aid and foreign direct investment than their peers.[65] Stable politics, effective public servants and central engagement all seem to be key ingredients.

In all of these cases there were also close alliances between the military forces and the government, and the state was able to exercise its monopoly over coercive force.[66] There were economic costs to these decisions at the time: Rwanda and Uganda maintained large armed forces while Tanzania and Mozambique had generous retirement packages and state appointments for officers. These trade-offs, however, have secured political stability and enabled economic growth in the longer term.

But can such growth be sustained and does such growth sustain or contribute to violence reduction? A by-product of economic growth in Uganda and Rwanda has been sizeable labour relocations from agricultural production to the services sector.[67] This shift is accompanied by physical relocations from rural to urban centres and demographic shifts towards a more influential middle class. This translates into changed political pressures, as was seen in the lead-up to the Ugandan election and the civic mobilisation strategies employed by the opposition.[68] Maintaining political stability through repression, however benign dictatorial regimes may seem, is inherently risky; where President Paul Kagame's Rwanda may still be occupying some form of grey zone and the extent of violence unleashed in Rwanda in 1994 continues to pressure the population to accept certain civil liberty restrictions, the political stability of Uganda is being seriously challenged by shifting elite groups and interests.

Similarly in Tanzania, natural gas finds are expected to increase current economic growth tremendously. However, these gas finds have also accelerated political tensions in the lead-up to the 2015 election (set to be the most contested election in the usually peaceful state's history). The rather surprising resurgence of Renamo in Mozambique comes at a time when large coal, oil and gas deposits are being prepared for extraction. Some estimates of Mozambican natural gas export potential point to a $30 billion per year industry.[69] Renamo leader Afonso Dhlakama said in November 2012 that he was willing to 'destroy Mozambique' if Renamo did not get a bigger slice of the country's growing wealth.[70]

In a September 2013 Policy Brief for NOREF, David Sogge explores linkages between horizontal inequalities and organised violence, outlining that inequalities can trigger social tension and violence in at least three sets of circumstances:[71]

- If there are sudden widening disparities in wealth and income (e.g. Mozambique in 2013)[72]

- If there is increasing uncertainty about livelihoods and assets of dominant or sub-ordinate groups to the extent that it generates collective insecurity (e.g. the Misseriya in Abyei)
- If state capacity to provide goods and services in a way seen to be fair, is weakened (e.g. Egypt in 2011)

Sogge also highlights a series of risk multipliers: trade policies, investment and ownership policies, foreign aid and financial policies.[73] It has been found that civil wars generally worsen income distributions, with polarisation commonly peaking about five years *after* a conflict ends and pre-conflict patterns of income distribution re-established about ten years after conflict ends.[74] As cases like South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Angola are showing, overcoming conflict is one step but the structural transformation of the economy and spreading the locus of capital within the economy is extremely difficult within a highly unequal capitalist world order.

As growth dynamics further diverge across the international system, overcoming inequalities as a source of stability and security within the global financial-security complex is going to be a more explicit interventionist goal, economically driven by the growth of China and India and the collapse of Western capital and geo-strategically driven by access to energy (especially as natural gas competes with the global oil cartels), water and land. Whether there will be shifts in only the loci of inequalities or also in the substance thereof will depend largely on the normative content of such economic growth.

CONCLUSION

This paper has sought to map out some of the key trends and challenges of peacebuilding in Africa. It has by the nature of this task adopted a macro-approach pointing to high-level dynamics and general trends. There are, I am sure, many exceptions and circumstances in which peacebuilding and statebuilding agendas have aligned and created mutually reinforcing programming that is able to mediate internal and external pressures. South Africa, Rwanda, Liberia and Sierra Leone all provide interesting examples. However, in each instance sacrifices were made: in South Africa political legitimacy came at a capacity and efficiency cost and the political ideology of the anti-apartheid struggle has been unable to shake the foundations of an export-driven commodities economy within a capitalist global economy. For Rwanda and Burundi, maintaining internal stability has meant keeping a tight lid on ethnically divisive tensions to the detriment of civil liberties.

Generating an increased awareness of these trade-offs and interactions needs to be inculcated in a more nuanced – and yes, context-specific – peacebuilding endeavour that

starts from the recognition of violence as a social construct aimed at changing the arrangement of force, polities or norms and behaviours. In among the complexity, there are a multitude of reasons that can motivate violence and the task of peacebuilders should be to create systems biased against the exercise of violence. However, the tool that we too often turn to is the state; a tool designed to control complexity through the imposition – even with the use of force – of order within a territory.

The focus on statebuilding has in many ways overtaken parts of the peacebuilding agenda, resulting in the most transformational of peacebuilding work being conducted at grassroots levels focusing on inter-personal and inter-communal security, without challenging the national and global systems that enable and regulate violence. There is an increasing gap between the transformational community-based processes of peacebuilding and the formalised technical processes of statebuilding, and there are few efforts to synthesise knowledge about local-level conflict transformation with elite-level research on peacebuilding.

On the one hand, peacebuilding has been conflated with statebuilding, but on the other, programmatically peacebuilding has probably not engaged enough in the politics of change, political stabilisation and the nature of elite compacts to be critically relevant to the state formation project. Bridging the divides between the internal and external dilemmas of peacebuilding is essential to creating sustainable positive change in local violence reduction. Without more critical reflection on the trade-offs between interests and diffusion of influence, the goal that peacebuilding can provide an over-arching framework, while worthy and ambitious, remains somewhat unrealistic.

NOTES

1   Report of the UN Secretary-General, *An agenda for peace: preventative diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping*, 17 June 1992, A/47/277 – S/24111, http://www.unrol.org/files/A_47_277.pdf (accessed 6 November 2013).

2   Alex Maroya, Rethinking the nation-state from the frontier, *Journal of International Studies* 32(2) (June 2003), 267–292; 283.

3   See for more on these peacebuilding typologies: Devon Curtis and Gwinyayi Dzinesa (eds), *Peacebuilding, power and politics in Africa*, Ohio University Press, 2012.

4   See Constanze Schellhaas and Anette Seegers, Peacebuilding: imperialism's new design, *African Security Review* 18(2) (2009), 2–15.

5   Devon Curtis, *Peacebuilding, power and politics in Africa*, 1–28.

6   Ibid., 19.

7   *An agenda for peace.*

8   Charles T Call and Susan E Cook, On democratization and peacebuilding, *Global Governance* 9 (2003), 233–246, 238.

9   See Schellhaas and Seegers, Peacebuilding: imperialism's new design, 2009.

10   Wilfred Gray-Johnson, *Assessing the United Nations approach to post-conflict peacebuilding in Africa: the mission in Liberia,* Conflict Trends, 2009, 13.

11   Michael Barnett, Hunjoon Kim, Madalene O'Donnell and Laura Sitea, Peacebuilding: what is in a name?, *Global Governance* 13 (2007), 35–58; p35–36.

12   Call and Cook, On democratization and peacebuilding, 238.

13   Charles T Call and Vanessa Wyeth, *Building states to build peace,* International Peace Institute, 2008, 371.

14   Many donors and multilateral institutions have developed policies and approaches specifically to guide engagement in fragile states, including the European Union, United Kingdom, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands.

15   See http://www.oecd.org/dac/incaf/FragileStates2013.pdf (accessed 26 November 2011).

16   Jean-François Bayart, *The state in Africa: the politics of the belly,* 2nd ed, London: Longman, 2009, xii.

17   Ibid., xii.

18   Graham Harrison, *Neoliberal Africa: the impact of global social engineering*, London: Zed Books, 2010, 192–3.

19   Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa works: disorder as political instrument,* Oxford: James Currey, 1999, 14.

20   Jeffrey Herbst, Responding to state failure in Africa, *International Security* 21(3) (1996), 120–144.

21   Simon Chesterman, Michael Ignatieff and Ramesh Thakur, The future of statebuilding, in Chesterman, Ignatieff and Thakur (eds), *Making states work: state failure and the crisis of governance*, 2005, 359–387, 360.

22   Ian Taylor, What fit for the liberal peace in Africa? in Roger MacGinty and Oliver Richmond (eds), *The liberal peace and post-war reconstruction*, London: Routledge, 2009, 63–76, 69.

23   Ibid., 69.

24   Robert Fatton, Bringing the ruling class back in: class, state and hegemony in Africa, *Comparative Politics* 20(3) (1998), 34.

25   Call and Wyeth, *Building states to build peace*, 6.

26   Barnett et al, Peacebuilding: what is in a name?, 52.

27   Call and Wyeth, *Building states to build peace*, 3.

28   Francis M Deng, Anatomy of conflicts in Africa in Luc van de Goor, Kumar Rupesinghe and Paul Sciarone (eds), *Between development and destruction: an enquiry into the causes of conflict in post-colonial states*, New York: St Martin's Press, 1996, 227.

29   Cedric De Coning, Understanding peacebuilding: consolidating the peace process, *Conflict Trends* 4 (2008), 45 –51, 46. De Coning calls for post-conflict peacebuilding to be 'about the overall or systemic effect, and the integrated strategic frameworks that direct the individual programmes towards common goals and objectives', 51.

30   These three dimensions of peacebuilding are increasingly recognised as the core of peacebuilding. The New Deal framework, which seeks to provide a strategic prioritisation for national and international interventions,

has five peacebuilding and statebuilding goals – legitimate politics, security, justice, economic development and revenues and services. The UN's *No exit without strategy* argues for a focus on consolidating security, strengthening political institutions and promoting economic and social reconstruction. Barnett et al, in Peacebuilding: what is in a name?, refer to stability creation, restoration of state institutions and socio-economic recovery.

31 Call and Cook, On democratization and peacebuilding, 234.

32 The Economist Intelligence Unit, *Democracy index*, 2010, http://graphics.eiu.com/PDF/Democracy_Index_2010_web.pdf (accessed 6 November 2013).

33 Call and Cook, On democratization and peacebuilding, 234.

34 James Putzel and Jonathan Di John, *Meeting the challenges of crisis states,* London School of Economic and Political Science, 2012, iii.

35 Ibid., iv.

36 Robin Luckham and Tom Kirk, The two faces of security in hybrid political orders: a framework for analysis and research, *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 2(2) (2013), 1–30, 19.

37 Robert E Wagner wrote a paper entitled Boom and bust: the political economy of economic disorder, *The Journal of Libertarian Studies* IV(1) (1980), 1–37. He focused on how macroeconomic policies can be manipulated for electoral gains.

38 Wilfred Gray-Johnson, Assessing the United Nations approach to post-conflict peacebuilding in Africa: the mission in Liberia, *Conflict Trends* 3 (2009), 11–18, 17.

39 United Nations Security Council 6743rd Meeting, 28 March 2012, S/PV.6743, http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/GB%20SPV%206743.pdf (accessed 6 November 2013).

40 Ibid.

41 See Early exit for UN envoy, *Africa Confidential*, 17 February 2012.

42 See Michael von Schulenburg, *Statement to the UN Security Council*, 22 March 2012.

43 Quoted in Naomi Klein, *The shock doctrine: the rise of disaster capitalism,* London: Penguin Books/Allen Lane, 2007, 6.

44 Ibid.

45 See Mark Duffield, NGOs, disaster relief and asset transfer in the Horn: political survival in a permanent emergency, *Development and Change* 24 (1993), 131–157.

46 Ibid., 140. Emphasis added by author.

47 Luckham and Kirk, The two faces of security in hybrid political orders, 5.

48 Ann Fitz-Gerald, *SSR and peacebuilding: thematic review of security sector reform to peacebuilding and the role of the Peacebuilding Fund*, New York: United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office, 2012, 5.

49 See, for example, Antonio Giustozzi, Double-edged swords: armies, elite bargaining and state-building, *Crisis States Working Paper (Series 2),* London School of Economics and Political Science, 2011.

50 See, for example, Jort Hemmer, *'We are laying the groundwork for our own failure ' – The UN Mission in South Sudan and its civilian protection strategy: an early assessment,* Clingendael and Noref, 2012, http://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/20130100_cru_policybrief_no_25_unmiss.pdf (accessed 28 November 2011).

51 Robin Luckham and Tom Kirk, The two faces of security in hybrid political orders: a framework for analysis and research, *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development* 2(2:44) (2013), 1–30, 3.

52 Ibid., 6.

53 Ivan Briscoe, *Non-conventional armed violence and non-state actors: challenges for mediation and humanitarian action,* Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre, 2013, 3.

54 Ibid., 3.

55 Ibid., 5.

56 Collier wrote that one of the consequences of interstate war in Europe is nationalism, and that the myths of common identity only emerged as a by-product of interstate warfare driven by the sense of a common enemy and a myth of shared ancestral origins (*Wars, Guns and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places* 2009, 175). When faced with a common enemy this sense of nationalism emerges – for example, Sudan versus South Sudan; Ethiopia and Eritrea; Egypt against any neighbours infringing on the Nile. But when the external unifier is no longer the dominant political or security lens, internal fractions take over.

57 Christopher Clapham, *Why is the Horn different?,* The Rift Valley Institute online commentary, 2013, http://riftvalley.net/news/why-horn-different#.Upb3MsQW2ts (accessed 28 November 2013).

58 Paul Collier, *Wars, Guns and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places*, New York: Harper, 2009, 125.

59 Michael Ignatieff, Intervention and state failure, *Dissent* 49(1) (2002), 114–123, 118.

60 According to Collier, diversity increases the risk of violence and ethnic and religious diversity tend to compound each other (*Wars, Guns and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places*, 130).

61 See, for example, United States of America State Department 2011 report on human rights violations in Nigeria, http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/186441.pdf (accessed 6 November 2013).

62 Bayart, *The state in Africa*, 228.

63 International Monetary Fund, *Regional economic outlook: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 2013, http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/reo/2013/afr/eng/sreo1013.pdf (accessed 6 November 2013).

64 No need to dig, *The Economist*, 2 November 2013, http://www.economist.com/news/finance-and-economics/21588849-many-africas-fastest-growing-economies-have-not-relied-oil-or-mining-no-need (accessed 6 November 2013).

65 Ibid.

66 Putzel and Di John, *Meeting the challenges of crisis states*, 11.

67 IMF, *Regional economic outlook: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 37.

68   See Deadly crackdown on Uganda's walk-to-work protests, *Time Magazine*, 23 April 2011, http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2067136,00.html (accessed 6 November 2013)

69   See Bigger battle awaits Mozambique, Tanzania in East Africa gas race, *Financial Post*, 10 October 2013, http://business.financialpost.com/2013/10/10/bigger-battle-awaits-mozambique-tanzania-in-east-africa-gas-race/?__lsa=c693-0016 (accessed 6 November 2013)

70   Quoted in Mozambique's Renamo: a short history, *Mail & Guardian*, 23 October 2013, http://mg.co.za/article/2013-10-23-mozambiques-renamo-a-history (accessed 6 November 2013)

71   David Sogge, *Inequalities and organised violence,* Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre, 2013, 2.

72   Examples provided by author.

73   Sogge, *Inequalities and organised violence*, 3.

74   Ibid.

ABOUT THIS PAPER

Since 1992, the United Nations has included a focus on peacebuilding as part of the international effort to assist states recovering from conflict. This paper argues that peacebuilding programming has prioritised order above other social values, which has resulted in an emphasis on building robust state structures as the way to instil stability within a society. This trend exposes the concept and practice of peacebuilding to a range of dilemmas, particularly around the role of violence in state formation and the problematics of statehood in Africa. Due to the inherent contradictions between peacebuilding and statebuilding, the former conceptually fails to provide a framework for prioritising interventions. This creates blindness to the conflicts that are caused by prioritising the control of complexity through the tools of the state.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lauren Hutton is a Research Fellow at the Conflict Research Unit of the Netherlands Institute of International Relations – Clingendael. She has worked on peace and security in sub-Saharan Africa for the past ten years with think tanks as well as development and humanitarian organisations including for the Institute for Security Studies, Saferworld and Danish Refugee Council. Lauren holds a Master's Degree in political studies from the University of the Western Cape, South Africa.

Clingendael
Netherlands Institute of International Relations