

UN ENGAGEMENT WITH ARMED NON-STATE ACTORS: AN ARGUMENT FOR ANALYTIC ECLECTICISM¹

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Abstract: How is the United Nations adapting peacebuilding operations to engage with armed non-state actors?² The international system is primarily composed of states and international organizations (IOs), and traditionally, peace efforts have been between states (Collier & Sambanis 2005). With the realization that most conflicts today take place within states, the problem of armed non-state groups and actors is of central concern in the literature on armed conflict and peacebuilding (Berdal and Malone 2000, Kaldor 2001). In this context peacebuilding comprises armed groups and actors who are interested in maximization of their objectives, while the UN is formed of states who wish to solve collective action problems. In existing literature, IO behavior has been theorized as a consequence of the interest of powerful states (Koremenos et al., 2001, see e.g. Krasner, 2009), or with concepts borrowed from organizational sociology related to bureaucratic dysfunction such as ‘dysfunctional behavior’, ‘pathologies’ (Barnett and Finnemore, 1999, 2004) , or ‘organized hypocrisy’ (Weaver, 2008, Lipson, 2007). The paper will argue for a pragmatic or analytically eclectic approach to analyzing anomalous behavior of IOs (see e.g. Sil, 2000, Kratochwil, 2007, Katzenstein and Sil, 2010, Katzenstein and Okawara, 2001), and aim to start to fill the gap in the literature on how the UN engages with armed non-state groups and actors, both on regional, national and local levels, using practice theory and the sociology of professions to analyze practices of UN peace operations in Chad, Afghanistan and Haiti. The paper will argue that the UN’s engagement of armed non-state actors can tell us about changing norms within the UN and the relationship between normative macro-level changes and micro-level peacebuilding implementation. The evolving concepts of modern-day peacekeeping and peacebuilding have a significant impact on how the UN is operating in post-conflict states, and on the core principle of sovereignty in the international system. The paper

¹ The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.

² In this paper, peace operations will be used as a general term encompassing all UN missions in the area of peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Peacekeeping will cover UN missions which have been established to implement a UN Security Council mandate after a peace agreement has been agreed upon. Protection missions may be deployed without the existence of a peace agreement or consent from non-state actors to improve security and extend state authority, as in Chad or in Haiti. Peacebuilding will, when used to describe actual operations, denote missions covering the period at the intersection of the downscaling of a peacekeeping operation and the early recovery phase. In 2004, the United Nations High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change clarified that peacebuilding should focus on state building, usually but not exclusively in post-conflict countries (UN 2004). However, a wide interpretation of the concept has also been frequently used, covering “a broad range of measures implemented in the context of emerging, current or post-conflict situations and which are explicitly guided and motivated by a primary commitment to the prevention of violent conflict and the promotion of a lasting and sustainable peace” (Boutros-Ghali 1992). See also OECD DAC (2008) for more on these various definitions. When looking at peacebuilding as a profession, this wider definition will be used.

will show how key donor states and think tanks have, together with the UN, and through practices in the field, successfully formed policy locations and implemented new concepts such as, 'peacebuilding', 'integrated missions', 'responsibility to protect' and 'protection', effectively constituting and driving normative change in the international system.

1. Introduction

IOs' behavior can be explained through the influence of powerful member states using rational theory (Waltz, 1979, 2000, Koremenos et al., 2001, Krasner, 2009), or it can be explained with concepts borrowed from organizational sociology related to bureaucratic dysfunction within public bodies, showing that bureaucratic practices develop and guide autonomous action in IOs which can be in contradiction to the dictates of powerful member states (Barnett and Finnemore, 1999, 2004, Weaver, 2008). Still using constructivism as a methodological foundation, the paper will argue for a more nuanced approach and hold that the UN, in the area of peacebuilding, cannot be seen as one unitary actor, but as an organization with several sources of agenda and agency (Lipson, 2007). The Security Council, the General Assembly, the UN Secretariat and the peace operations in the field are all sources of agency, and oftentimes contradictions and anomalies arise. Taking this as an ontological starting point, the paper will argue for using theory of practices as a method to map the everyday actions on the ground and see whether diverging practices is creating the foundation for new norms and change in the area of peacekeeping. Looking at practices in the field can help explaining not only how existing norms and rules, but background knowledge influence decision-making and practices (see e.g. Sending, 2002, Pouliot, 2008, Adler and Pouliot, 2010, Sending and Neumann, 2010, Reckwitz, 2002). The paper will look at how norms are internalized, put into practice, and codified. Using practice theory as a method to strengthen the methodological framework of constructivism, the paper will hold that there is a significant lag between the reality that the UN and its senior leaders in the field are operating in today and the doctrines that guide those operations. The paper will investigate whether practices on the ground may precede and impact on the codification of norms in the area of peace operations, thus acting as norm entrepreneurs (Chwieroth, 2008a, Jones et al., 2010, 2008b).

However, the paper will further argue that looking at practices alone does not fully capture how new norms evolve in the area of peacekeeping. The actors involved rely on their experience, which often times is from other institutional settings such diplomacy, think tanks and academia, and these environments also play a crucial role in the development of new norms. The paper will use the theoretical framework of the sociology of professions to theorize this cooperation between the UN, donor governments and think tanks to look at how the development of peacekeeping and peacebuilding as a profession impacts on normative change and practices in the field since the Cold War (Abbott, 1988, Abbott, 1995). This harkens back to the origins of constructivism where sociology played a central role, and the use of sociology of professions theory greatly strengthens the explanatory power of constructivism in this particular setting. In the analysis of the development of peacekeeping and peacebuilding as a profession, the paper will show how professionals frequently spend time actors in different sectors, such as donor governments, academia, and think-tanks, constituting a 'revolving door' phenomenon (Seabrooke and Tsingou, 2009, Fourcade, 2006, Abbott, 2005). This will enable a better understanding of how the concepts, rules and norms of peacekeeping develop through an interaction between these sectors.

This paper will proceed in three sections. First I will establish the theoretical framework, drawing upon constructivism, sociology of professions and practice theory. I will then proceed to give a narrative of the development of peacebuilding since the Cold War until today, outlining how key

concepts have been developed and the profession has evolved. Finally, in my conclusion, I will argue for a bottom-up perspective on normative formation. The normative formation is not going from the top and down to the field, but is just as much influenced by practices in the field, generating new norms, as well as by the involvement of other actors – adding a horizontal dimension to the normative formation as well. Finally, I will hold that there is a drive to conceptualize and codify peacekeeping experience which at times can be counterproductive. The UN special representatives and envoys, using his local and background knowledge, can utilize the *generative ambiguity* of mandates and guidelines which have not spelled out the rules for all forms of behavior.

2. Theorizing normative change in IOs

Behavior and practices of IOs are only seen as a functional consequence of structural dynamics by neorealism (e.g. Waltz, 1979). Rational institutionalism is interested in how states can minimize transaction costs through the functional design of IOs, but do not accord agency to the IO or their constituent parts. As these theories do not ascribe agency to IOs, they cannot explain instances where IOs act in contradiction to the intention of member states and even powerful member states. As Barnett and Finnemore have observed, drawing upon the work of Weber, the problem with these theories is that they pay “little attention to how IOs actually behave after they are created” (Barnett and Finnemore, 1999: 699).

2.1. Explaining anomalous behaviour - constructivist theorizing of IOs

Contrary to neorealism and neoliberalism, constructivism argues that not only material, but ideational forces shape international relations and organizations (Wendt, 1992). Norms and rules shape IO behavior, and IOs shape norms. Constructivism emphasizes the importance of non-material structures on interests, and “the role of practices in maintaining and transforming those structures” (Reus-Smit, 2001: 212). Structuration theory is often invoked as the ontological background of constructivism (Sending, 2002, Wendt, 1987). Structures and agency are mutually constitutive, and where agents can reproduce, but also alter the structures of society (Giddens, 1984). This also goes for constructivism: “For constructivists, agents (states) and structures (global norms) are interacting; they are mutually constituted” (Checkel, 1998: 328).

Norms are generally defined as “a standard of appropriate behaviour for actors with a given identity” (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998). Norms can be formal or informal and structure and regularize behavior. Shared norms about appropriate behavior give institutional stability in IOs. According to Finnemore and Sikkink, new norms in the international system are formed through the persuasion of member states by norm entrepreneurs (1998). Norm entrepreneurs call attention to and ‘frame’ issues through the application of new terms, reinterpreting issues and putting them into new contexts. Henri Dunant, the founder of the International Committee of the Red Cross, is one of the norm entrepreneurs they give as an example. The establishment of new norms will necessarily break with existing ones. Using the logic of appropriateness terminology, Finnemore and Sikkink asserts that “[t]o challenge existing logics of appropriateness, activists may need to be explicitly “inappropriate”” (1998: 897). Explaining behavior using the logic of appropriateness as a theoretical framework thus also has some difficulties, something I will return to further down. Finnemore and Sikkink argue that norm entrepreneurs use their organizational platform, as well as their expertise knowledge to advance the norm vis-à-vis member states, IOs and networks of professionals.³ If accepted as a new

³ The development of professional expertise and control of the area of peacebuilding could also be theorized through the use of Haas’ concept of ‘epistemic communities’ (Haas, 1992). Epistemic communities are

norm, the norm will eventually be institutionalized and codified through establishment of best practices, rules, soft or hard law (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998).

Sending (2002) has argued that sociological constructivism has relied too heavily on a logic of appropriateness (LoA), a concept developed by March and Olson (1998). According to them, individual behavior in organizations is structured by the norms, rules and routines of the organization. Routines play a central role in their theoretical framework, and applying this to political activity they argue that a political community is 'created by its rules, not by its intentions'. The primacy of rules over intentions brings us back to the work of Barnett and Finnemore which can be useful for an analysis of the usefulness of this theoretical approach, as Finnemore have invoked the LoA as a theoretical framework. In *Rules for the World*, they demonstrated how IOs at times acted in contradiction to the intentions of the organization, secured in an interpretation of the rules guiding action of the particular issue. However, while Barnett and Finnemore argues that these actions are based on a narrow reading of the rules of the organization, they also argue that other interpretations and other rules could be available to tweak the interpretation in a quite opposite direction (2004).

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In sociological constructivism, the LoA provides the normative rationality of action (Risse, 2000). Sending criticizes the lack of discussion over the rationality over individual action as it is presented in constructivist theory. According to Sending, "most constructivists in this debate have accepted the validity of the LoA as their action-theoretical foundation without an in-depth exploration of its core theoretical building blocks." (2002: 444). He goes on to demonstrate how "LoA has a structural bias both regarding the understanding and the explanation of individual action" (2002: 445).

Two critiques of the LoA as a theoretical framework can be launched. First, it could be argued that using the logic of appropriateness as a theoretical framework "robs actors of their actorness" (Seabrooke and Tsingou, 2009: 7), by reducing the space for decision-making of the actor to the available rules of the organization he or she is part of: "Institutions are in this sense the prime supplier of and partly constitutive for the very frames of understanding through which individuals come to interpret and understand the world" (Sending, 2002: 451). As the LoA takes the formal and informal rules of the organization as a point of departure, it cannot account for inappropriate behavior. Individual action that breaks with established norms and induces change falls outside of the theoretical grasp of LoA. Andersen argues that Barnett and Finnemore assume that norms is a contextual variable in their analysis of IOs:

In short, how norms are formed, used, adapted, changing, constituting, influencing both IOs and other interacting partners, is not central to the analysis. Norms, in short, are not problematized, but assumed to manifest as another contextual variable, and to be used and spread. IOs, they argue, "often act as conveyor belts for the transmission of norms and models (Andersen, 2010a: 9).

In sum, it seems like much of the existing constructivist literature has lost the central part of Giddens' structuration theory when transferring it from an analysis of individual choice and action to analyze states and IOs (1984). This has led to a Pavlovian understanding of socialization and individual action

characterized by expert groups who through establishing knowledge and norms are able to shape and change state interests. However, the theory took expert groups or epistemic communities as ontologically given, focusing instead on how these groups can have influence on states through establishing knowledge claims over a particular issue-area. Sending shows that the epistemic communities approach has difficulty in explaining why particular groups are able to assume control of a particular issue-area – "defining an epistemic community as *already* recognized as being authoritative and policy relevant" (Sending, 2010).

in IOs, with little explanatory power on individual and mid-level analyses of normative transgression and change in IOs.

2.2. Using theory of practices as method to analyze IO behaviour

To sum up, constructivism, as employed by Barnett and Finnemore, does not sufficiently explain individual practices that breaks with existing norms and rules and has difficulty in explaining new practices and normative change in IOs. One reason for this shortcoming is that the focus is on representational knowledge: Conscious representations are emphasized to the detriment of background knowledge—the inarticulate know-how from which reflexive and intentional deliberation becomes possible (Pouliot, 2008: 258).

But if a person has not yet got the *concepts*, I shall teach him to use the words by means of *examples* and by *practice*.—And when I do this I do not communicate less to him than I know myself. (Wittgenstein and Anscombe, 1997: 83)

Quoting Bourdieu, Pouliot argues that “social scientists put themselves “in a state of social weightlessness”” (2008: 260, translation by Pouliot). By virtue of their professions, social scientists are distanced from their object of study and focus on representational knowledge which is readily available and can be theorized. However, social and individual action may not necessarily be premediated, or informed, either consciously or unconsciously of formal and informal norms and rules. Adler and Pouliot (2010) define practices as competent performances:

More precisely, practices are socially meaningful patterns of action which, in being performed more or less competently, simultaneously embody, reify and act out background knowledge and discourse in and on the material world (Adler and Pouliot, 2010: 6).

Practices rest on *background knowledge* which is distinct from norms and ideas. Describing actions that are generated on the basis of background knowledge, Pouliot uses the words ‘self-evident’ and ‘commonsense’ (2008). To this list one could add terms like ‘political acumen’ and ‘*savoir-faire*’, describing qualities of actors using background knowledge to perform practices. These descriptions and qualities all attempt to describe how an actor draws upon prior experience, practical knowledge, his or her reading of the political landscape and actors, when making decisions on how to navigate the political landscape.

Background knowledge is practical and oriented towards action. Background knowledge also carries legitimacy – the UN special representative can diverge from his orders from headquarters due to his practical knowledge on the ground. Looking at divergent or ‘undesired behavior’, such as the engagement with armed non-state groups, can be a possible avenue to access some of these practices and gauge their implications – practices involve “the observable ‘doings’ of physical bodies and entities” (Andersen, 2010b: 16).

While the UN Security Council has a dedicated counter-terrorism unit tracking members of Al Qaida and the Taliban, Kai Eide, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) in Afghanistan admits regular meetings with the same persons:

Of course I met Taliban leaders during the time I was in Afghanistan. Anything else for me would have been *unthinkable*, given the emphasis I was placing on it *myself*, and the *mandate* that we have (Borger, 2010).⁴

Individual action can form the foundation for normative change, as the example with SRSR Kai Eide demonstrated. Reinterpreting his mandate in view of his understanding of the situation on the ground, he felt an obligation to engage with the Taliban even when the persons he met were listed as terrorists by the UN Security Council. This may signify a normative shift in how the UN engages with groups labeled as terrorist, if part of a larger trend.

SRSR Eide underscores his personal interpretation of the mandate – he is given a *political* mandate to work for the long-term peace and stability of Afghanistan, and for him not talking with the Taliban is not an option, as they represent a large part of the population, and thus a part of a sustainable and long-term solution.

Looking at other peace operations, this is turning into a pattern. Engagement with armed non-state actors is a persistent feature of modern-day peace operations. The actors are not always as unequivocally characterized as terrorists, as the saying goes – one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter. However, there is hardly any literature or guidance within the UN that looks at this engagement *per se*, although the *de facto* daily engagement with these actors are putting UN special representatives and envoys in a situation where they almost daily must rely on their own interpretation and experience to make a decision on how to relate to these actors.

Background knowledge and practices have a geographical or locational aspect as well; they are formed and grounded in the local context of the actor. The fact that different practices might occur between centre and periphery is not only a lesson from the UN and international relations. A number of studies have shown how different norms and practices evolve between HQ and subsidiaries in multinational corporations, calling into question a traditional hierarchical understanding of how practices and action are based on following rules and norms of a central authority (e.g. Kristensen and Zeitlin, 2005).

Applying a practice approach in the social sciences amounts to

a loose, but nevertheless definable movement of thought that is unified around the idea that the field of practices is the place to investigate such phenomena as agency, knowledge, language, ethics, power and science (Schatzki 2001, 13-4).

Schatzki argues that in social theory, “practice approaches promulgate a distinct social ontology” (Schatzki et al., 2001: 3). Social phenomena can be investigated as “a field of embodied, materially interwoven practices centrally organized around shared practical understandings” (Schatzki et al., 2001: 3). Andersen distinguishes practice approaches from individualistic and structural theories, “as it locates its “smallest theoretical unit” not in minds, discourses, interactions, structures or systems, but in practices that, however, can function as instantiations of all of the above” (Andersen, 2010a).

As mentioned above, the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Secretary-General’s Secretariat and the field presences and operations are four locations of agenda and agency that immediately

⁴ For more information on the UNSC Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee, see <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/>.

comes to mind with regards to peacebuilding and the engagement with armed non-state actors.⁵ Actors can choose between several sets of norms and rules. This can result in variation of action and practices. The engagement with armed non-state actors is an area where conflicting norms and rules within the UN as an organization and peacebuilding as a profession comes out particularly clearly.

The section on the evolution of peacebuilding will bear out in more detail how actors are situated in an ambiguous environment where they must make difficult choices based on judgment, practical knowledge, and commonsense. The paper will give some practical examples of choices made were formal norms and rules have been broken, shaping new norms and practices, and how this process is anchored in a combination of representational and non-representational knowledge, constituting the ontological foundation for change in IOs (see Pouliot, 2008).⁶

3. Peacebuilding, revolving doors and linked ecologies

A second problem of constructivism, as employed by Barnett and Finnemore, is that it relies on an isolated view of IOs, not paying enough attention to what role other actors such as donor states, think-tanks and academic circles have in explaining normative change. There is a tendency to look at how IOs as bureaucracies establish 'jurisdictional competency' or rational-legal authority in their areas of expertise (Barnett and Finnemore, 1999), excluding from their analysis how bureaucratic control of a policy area tend to be created in close cooperation with think-tanks, donor governments and other actors who have similar interest in the area of discussion. The paper will use the sociology of professions developed by Abbott as a theoretical framework to better understand how peacebuilding has developed as a profession, and what role the relationship with other actors has played in the development, as well as in constituting the foundation for the background knowledge that individual actors draw upon in their practices. It will argue that a study of the development of peacebuilding as a profession is absolutely necessary to see how norms and rules evolve, and a constitutive part of the normative change in UN peace operations.

3.1. Revolving doors – doctrine development in the area of UN peacebuilding⁷

In the area of peacebuilding the UN has been reliant upon funding and support from donor governments to develop doctrine and best practices since the end of the Cold War. Staff has been moving through 'revolving doors' as practitioners in IOs, policymakers at think-tanks and officials in government institutions. Middle powers and donor governments like the UK, Canada, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden have pushed the development of doctrine for peacebuilding, with

⁵ In *Supplement for an Agenda for Peace*, UNSG Boutros-Ghali distinguishes between three levels of authority: "(a) Overall political direction, which belongs to the Security Council; (b) Executive direction and command, for which the Secretary-General is responsible; (c) Command in the field, which is entrusted by the Secretary-General to the chief of mission (special representative or force commander/chief military observer). The distinctions between these three levels must be kept constantly in mind in order to avoid any confusion of functions and responsibilities. It is as inappropriate for a chief of mission to take upon himself the formulation of his/her mission's overall political objectives as it is for the Security Council or the Secretary-General in New York to decide on matters that require a detailed understanding of operational conditions in the field." (1995, para 38).

⁶ Pouliot (2008) focuses exclusively on non-representational or background knowledge and to differentiate himself from Bourdieu he coins his approach 'logic of practicality', see footnote 14, p. 259. However, while acknowledging that background knowledge is important for understanding individual action, I will argue that excluding representational knowledge from the analysis would be throwing the baby out with the bathtub.

⁷ In this section the paper will employ the wide definition of peacebuilding, as outlined in footnote 1.

dedicated government offices having peacebuilding on the agenda and funding the development of policy reports; discussions around new concepts and recommendations; and even best practices positions on peacebuilding at UN Headquarters (Benner et al., 2007, Benner and Rotmann, 2008).

A closer look at how this dynamic has evolved and what consequences it has for the development of doctrine and evolving practice within the UN is thus called for – in general with regards to peacebuilding and particularly with regards to the engagement with armed non-state actors. Building on the sociology of professions, it is possible to argue that jurisdictional competency of the UN peacebuilding bureaucracy is being dictated by the development of a profession of peacebuilding and the staff that makes up this new profession (Abbott, 1988, 2005b, Fourcade, 2006). According to Abbott, “professions are exclusive occupational groups applying somewhat abstract knowledge to particular cases” (Abbott, 1988: 8). Control of the occupation relies on control of the abstractions which generate practical technique and implementation – in other words control of the profession-specific practices and concepts. In similar terms to Weber, Abbott identifies jurisdiction as the central connecting element between a profession and its work (1988: 20).

Building on Abbott, Fourcade, studying the transnationalization of economics, has identified how professions achieve jurisdictional competency and claims on a global level. Fourcade identifies transnational connectedness as one of the dimensions underlying the globalization professionalization in economics (2006: 168), and it is also a constitutive dimension of conceptual formation within the area of peacebuilding. Increased movement of staff between the various government institutions, think-tanks and UN offices working has also been a characteristic trait in the area of peacebuilding since the end of the Cold War.

Applying Abbott on the development of peacebuilding as a profession, we see the importance of developing the concepts, diagnosis and prescripts – in essence the doctrines that guides peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations – to establish jurisdictional claims on the area of peacebuilding. As already mentioned, external actors from different institutional contexts such as think-tanks, donor officials and academics have been essential in this process. According to the conceptual framework of Abbott, these different institutional contexts can be called ecologies.

One of the weaknesses of the theoretical approach of Barnett and Finnemore has been their focus on IOs, not paying enough attention to how norms, rules and practices have been generated in cooperation with other institutional contexts such as government, think-tanks and academia. Abbott, read through the lenses of Fourcade, Seabrooke and Tsingou (2009), yields a more promising theoretical framework. According to Abbott, professions use abstract knowledge to attach subjective qualities and meaning of tasks through diagnosis, inference and treatment (1988). Through this process the profession is able to take hold of a policy problem and canonize the treatment of the problem. Fourcade, building on Abbott, has shown how actors within different ecologies form coalitions or ‘hinges’ with like-minded actors to influence practices and gain control over a policy ‘location’ (Fourcade, 2006, Seabrooke and Tsingou, 2009). The alliance of actors will then be “able to influence how certain policy problems are understood and inform broader norms on how policy problems should be legitimately addressed” (Seabrooke and Tsingou, 2009).

Combined with the practice-oriented approach theorizing individual action in IOs sketched out above, the concept of professions and intraprofessional competition is better suited to explain the existence of parallel sets of norms, rules and practices than Barnett and Finnemore’s concepts of dysfunctional behavior and pathologies.

3.2. Peacebuilding as a hybrid profession?

Modifying Abbott's concept, I will call peacebuilding a *hybrid profession* – a field where different ecologies and professions meet and compete for control (2005b). Economists, sociologists, anthropologists, IR theorists and practitioners, think-tank experts, government officials, diplomats and practitioners with an extreme variance of educational background and experience are engaging in practices that is driving the debate of what peacebuilding is and for what purpose.

As the UN's role been redefined to mediate internal conflicts, and take increased responsibility for war-torn states, including the provision of security, rebuilding of state institutions and supporting long-term development, peacebuilding as a concept and profession has gained considerable ground. The field of peacebuilding has achieved conceptual refinement and depth, making jurisdictional claims on its area of work. It now includes a range of different sub-fields (and acronyms), such as security sector reform (SSR); disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants; mediation and negotiation; constitutional and governance reform and so on. Some of these are of mostly a substantive nature, while others are more process-orientated such as peacebuilding coordination, and integrated missions. The paper will call all these tasks and issues 'policy locations' that have been successfully established within the general policy problem 'peacebuilding' (Abbott, 2005b). They are ample evidence of the growing professionalization and institutionalization of the field of peacebuilding.

Alongside with the focus on peacebuilding during the last twenty years, ecologies of all areas have developed 'peacebuilding' offshoots. In the academic world there are pure peacebuilding courses drawing upon a range of different schools and theories, as well as courses hosted within traditionally relevant academic departments such as international relations.

4. UN and the changing nature of conflicts after the Cold War

With the end of the Cold War, the UN experienced a surge of the number of conflicts it was seized of, particularly in the first half of the 90s. The end of the Cold War enabled the deployment of peace operations to a range of new theatres, previously beyond access because of the standoff between the US and the Soviet Union in the Security Council and the vetoes they would put down to prevent intervention in proxy wars. After the Cold War UN operations were frequently authorized to intervene in internal conflicts and given more expansive mandates giving varying degrees of civilian authority in addition to supervising elections, starting with Namibia in 1989 and Cambodia in 1993 (Chesterman, 2004). In 1992, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali was tasked by the UN Security Council to reflect on the role of the UN with regards to preventive diplomacy, peace-making and peacekeeping (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). To this he also added 'peacebuilding' – which he defined as "a broad range of measures implemented in the context of emerging, current or post-conflict situations and which are explicitly guided and motivated by a primary commitment to the prevention of violent conflict and the promotion of a lasting and sustainable peace" (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). The inability of the UN to perform according to expectations in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda halted the expansive rhetoric of UNSG Boutros-Ghali, and he issued a "conservative supplement" to his programme for peacebuilding in 1995 (Chesterman, 2004: 1), acknowledging the failures of Somalia and Srebrenica in Bosnia and Hercegovina; and warning against resource constraints because of the rapid expansion of missions and tasks and lack of coordination between various UN entities taking on the longer term tasks of rebuilding war torn societies (Boutros-Ghali, 1995).

Since the end of the Cold War, the nature of the conflicts that the UN was engaged in had thus changed significantly. The international system is primarily composed of states and international organizations (IOs), and *traditionally*, mediation and peace efforts had been between states (Collier and Sambanis, 2005). While the UN is a statist organization that originally was set up to deal with peace and security between states, after the Cold War it almost exclusively dealt with internal conflicts and *de facto* engaged armed non-state actors and groups on an everyday basis.

Secondly, not only had the UN been tasked to operate in a number of new crises, but the mandates of the peace operations had been significantly expanded, something Boutros-Ghali coined 'multifunctional peace-keeping operations', now known as 'multi-dimensional' peacekeeping operations:

[T]he United Nations found itself asked to undertake an unprecedented variety of functions: the supervision of cease-fires, the regroupment and demobilization of forces, their reintegration into civilian life and the destruction of their weapons; the design and implementation of de-mining programmes; the return of refugees and displaced persons; the provision of humanitarian assistance; the supervision of existing administrative structures; the establishment of new police forces; the verification of respect for human rights; the design and supervision of constitutional, judicial and electoral reforms; the observation, supervision and even organization and conduct of elections; and the coordination of support for economic rehabilitation and reconstruction (Boutros-Ghali, 1995).

In 1993, Ruggie warned that the UN had entered "... a vaguely defined no-man's land lying somewhere between traditional peacekeeping and enforcement – for which it lacks any traditional guiding operational concept." (p. 26). There was an urgent need to match the changing environment for that peacekeeping and peacebuilding was facing with appropriate and applicable normative guidance. The exponential increase and conceptual refocusing of peacekeeping missions after the Cold War was however not paralleled by an increase in the requisite resources. Only in 1995 was the first Lessons Learned Unit of Department of Peacekeeping Operations established, and it had only two positions – Head of Unit and Research Assistant (Benner and Rotmann, 2008). The situation improved only slowly, and the UN peacekeeping doctrine (Capstone Doctrine) was only finalized in 2008 (UN).

4.1. Changing practices and norms guiding peace operations

In terms of norms guiding these operations, Boutros-Ghali highlighted three important principles of peacekeeping: "the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence" (1995: para 33). However, all of these principles were established for inter-state conflicts, so the UN was faced with major challenges when deploying to intra-state conflicts, particularly in 'humanitarian interventions' where one or more of the parties would come in direct conflict with the peacekeeping forces, something the failures of Somalia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) had amply demonstrated. The UN mission in BiH, UNPROFOR, had extra tasks added under a Chapter VII mandate – the mission should protect civilian populations in designated safe areas, but without being given the commensurate military capabilities to execute the task, the consequences were catastrophic. It became clear that the expansion of mandated tasks and the deployment of forces to internal conflicts put the UN between a rock and a hard place: "existing peace-keeping operations were given additional mandates that required the use of force and therefore could not be combined with existing mandates requiring the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force" (Boutros-Ghali, 1992: para 35).

The normative dilemma that was posed by applying traditional principles of '1st generation' peacekeeping to peace operations dealing with internal conflicts, actively engaging armed non-state actors has continued to trouble UN peace operations. While advisory and UN reform documents on peacebuilding and peacekeeping has continued to laud the core principles of peacekeeping listed above, the reality and practices on the ground have changed significantly. In the *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, known as the "Brahimi Report" after the Panel chair, UN Under-Secretary-General Lakhdar Brahimi (UN, 2000), held that the traditional principles "should remain the bedrock principles of peacekeeping", but that peace operations should be sufficiently mandated with robust rules of engagement for civilian protection and have the necessary resources to react where civilians were in danger (UN, 2000: ix-x).

This normative dilemma has led to the UN Security Council over the latter years mandating missions with explicit 'protection mandates', aiming to protect civilian populations from harm, something the UN missions in South Sudan (UNMIS), Darfur (UNAMID) and Chad (MINURCAT) are examples of.

In Haiti in 2005 and since, the UN mission MINUSTAH has engaged the criminal gangs in Cité Soleil in direct confrontation, also causing civilian casualties in Operation Iron-Fist. In a matter of hours on 15 August 2005, Peruvian and Brazilian peacekeepers fired more than 20,000 rounds of ammunition, grenades and mortar fire in a densely populated area, killing the gang leader Emmanuel "Dread" Wilme and many of his followers (Lynch, 2005). Jean-Marie Guéhenno, UN Under Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations at the time, said it was

necessary to stand up to armed groups that threaten to undermine peacekeeping missions. But he said U.N. commanders had to strike a balance between engaging in all-out warfare and resorting to the passive military posture that characterized U.N. operations in Srebrenica (Lynch, 2005).

Lipson argues that this is an example of organized hypocrisy in UN peacekeeping operations, violating the principle of consent (Lipson, 2007). However, it can also be argued that the support of the host state to extend of security and state authority could at times be a valid mandate of a peacekeeping operation. Johnstone (2010) argues that although the principle of R2P has not been implemented yet, evolving practice of peacekeeping operations suggests a normative shift, where the protection mandates are merged "with proactive public order mandates for peace operations" (in Jones et al., 2010: 197). The *Building on Brahimi: Peacekeeping in an era of Strategic Uncertainty* report, reviewing peace operations in the last decade supports this finding:

Divisions over peacekeeping and sovereignty are misleading because the majority of large-scale UN operations are *deliberately designed to extend rather than limit the authority of states*. In Haiti, UN operations in Port-au-Prince have successfully given the government authority across the capital. In Chad, the Security Council mandated UN police to train and operate with Chadian police in refugee camps. (2009: pp. 10-11, my emphasis)

4.2. Development of peacebuilding as a profession

Looking at practices of peacekeeping and peacebuilding practitioners alone does not fully capture how new norms evolve in the area of peacekeeping. The actors involved rely on their experience, which often times is from other institutional settings such diplomacy, think tanks and academia, and these environments also play a crucial role in the development of new norms. This is partly due to the low capacity of the UN Secretariat to generate lessons learned and best practices, informing the formation of new norms, but also because of the general lack of guidelines in the area of

peacebuilding creating a temporal lag between the formation of norms for peacekeeping and peacebuilding in the field, and the codification of these at headquarters.

During the last two decades the international normative framework for protection of civilians in armed conflict has significantly evolved. The development and adoption of the ‘Responsibility to Protect’ (R2P) is a case in point. In 1999, UN Secretary-General Annan argued that there was “a developing international norm in favour of intervention to protect civilians”. The debate continued through deliberations by international panels of experts and eminent persons (ICISS et al., 2001, UN, 2004, UNSG, 2005), and in 2005, the UN General Assembly adopted the principle of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), authorizing so-called humanitarian interventions (UNGA, 2005, UNSG, 2005). Academia, think-tanks and government officials were key to the development of the principle. One of the key institutions, both in the development of this concept as well as others, has been the Center on International Cooperation at New York University.⁸ The center publishes the Annual Review of Global Peace Operations and performs applied research on a series of concepts related to peacebuilding and peacekeeping. The Director of the center, Dr. Bruce Jones, had several key positions in the process leading up to the adoption of the principle of R2P in 2005, first as a Deputy Research Director to the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, and in the crucial period ahead of the General Assembly in 2005, where the principle was agreed upon and adopted in the eleventh hour (Stedman, 2010), he was a Senior Advisor to the Secretary-General.⁹ The think-tanks and academic institutions have often an explicit goal of normative change in the international system, on the website of the Asia-Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect the normative goal is clearly stated:

Despite the progress achieved to date in terms of the development, initial codification and state acceptance in principle of the R2P norm, much remains to be done to effectively implement the concept of the responsibility to protect if civilians are not to continue to be the victims of mass-atrocity crimes (APCR2P, 2010).

⁸ On its webpage, the center informs that it “works to enhance international responses to humanitarian crises and global security threats through applied research and direct engagement with multilateral institutions and the wider policy community. It has an international reputation for agenda-setting work on post-conflict peacebuilding, global peace operations, and UN reform.” The center relies on funding from traditional donor governments such as the UK, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands as well as charitable trusts and foundations. For more information, see <http://www.cic.nyu.edu/about.html>. Other important think-tanks and academic institutions include the [Asia-Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect](#) at the University of Queensland in Australia, the [Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect](#) at the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies at City University of New York, the [Norwegian Institute for International Affairs](#) (NUPI), the [Fafo Institute for Applied International Studies](#) (Fafo-AIS), and the [Norwegian Peace Research Institute](#) (PRIO) in Norway, [FRIDE](#) in Spain; the [International Peace Institute](#) in New York, government agencies with a focus on peace operations such as the [Folke Bernadotte Academy](#) in Sweden; the [African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes](#) (ACCORD) ; the [Institute for Security Studies](#) (ISS) in South Africa; and the [Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre](#) (KAIPTC) in Ghana. This is merely a narrow selection and many more could be added.

⁹ From the CIC website: Dr. Jones “was Senior Advisor in the Office of the Secretary-General during the UN reform effort leading up to the World Summit 2005, and in the same period was Acting Secretary of the Secretary-General’s Policy Committee. In 2004-5, he was Deputy Research Director of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. From 2000-2002 he was special assistant to the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East peace process; and held assignments in the UN Interim Mission in Kosovo, and in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.”

The development of the concept of ‘integrated missions’ could be used as a second example. The concept was gradually formed and mainstreamed into the doctrine of peacekeeping and peacebuilding through relentless pressure from some key governments such as Norway and the United Kingdom, and key actors within the UN system. The idea of a more integrated approach took shape with UNSG Annan’s report *Renewing the United Nations - A programme for reform*, A/51/950 (1997), launching a 10-year reform effort of the UN. The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs then sponsored a series of workshops where senior UN officials, member states and think tanks participated, as well as several publications. The Norwegian research institute NUPI arranged the workshops and also wrote up a key report fleshing out the concept *Report on Integrated Missions: Practical Perspectives and Recommendations* (Eide et al., 2005). NUPI was tasked by the Under Secretary-General Jan Egeland, the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), also a Norwegian.¹⁰ The Norwegian MFA also provided funds to the project. The concept was mainstreamed into UN peace operations with the *Integrated Missions Planning Process (IMPP): Guidelines Endorsed by the Secretary-General on 13 June 2006* (UN, 2006), and has been key in restructuring peace operations to achieve a more integrated approach where the UN peace operation develops and implements a joint strategy with other UN agencies already on the ground.

The paper has shown that a significant lag exists between established practices and codified norms and that norms are developed through practices and are codified in cooperation with key think-tanks, donor governments and other actors with vested interests. However, looking at the codification process in the area of peacebuilding I will also hold that the codification process of new practices into codified norms is a risky one. Member states accept practices such as engagement with armed non-state actors as long as they are informal, but when these practices are codified significant resistance can be mounted, as the codification may be at the expense of other powerful norms such as the principle of sovereignty. Instructive in this regard is the debate around the concept of ‘Responsibility to Protect’ (R2P). The principle was adopted by the General Assembly in 2005, but there has since been a massive critique from G77 countries and others, e.g. arguing that R2P is neocolonialism in disguise, infringing on the principle of sovereignty (see e.g. UNGA, 2005, Sharma, 2010).

5. Summary and conclusions

In this paper we have seen that there is a spatio-temporal lag in the normative formation and codification between periphery and centre in peacekeeping and peacebuilding. This can be explained by lack of material resources or ideational factors. Material factors include the lack of institutional memory and resources for best practices officers at HQ and slow establishment of a lessons learned/best practices unit (Benner et al., 2007, Benner and Rotmann, 2008). Ideational factors include the resistance against codification of practices on the ground that effectively are changing the notion of sovereignty (Krasner, 2009, Chesterman, 2004, Jones et al., 2010). However, the paper has also demonstrated while the material and ideational factors are valid reasons for the spatio-temporal lag of normative formation, looking at the development of peacekeeping as a developing profession through practices on the ground and the relationship with think-tanks, government agencies and academia gives a fuller picture.

Anomalous behavior or contradictions have been located as a consequence of discrepancies of talk and action between various parts of the UN system. The units of analysis in this paper are thus the sources of agency in the area of UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding. These comprise the sources of

¹⁰ Egeland had a prior career as Deputy Minister at Norway’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is today the Director of NUPI, which by the way the author is also affiliated with as a Research Fellow.

agency within the UN in the area of peacebuilding, as well as individual actors such as the Secretary-General and his special representatives and envoys.

The paper has also demonstrated how existing constructivist theory has significant shortcomings in grasping how anomalous behavior can be theorized and how norms are formed in the international system. The UN in the area of peacekeeping and peacebuilding is not one unitary actor, but has several centres of agenda and agency. An analytically eclectic approach, using the sociology of professions can augment constructivist theory to account for how other actors affect the normative formation in organizations, and a practice-oriented approach can be used as a method to grasp the normative change at the 'coal face'.

The paper will argue that there is a lag between practice and theory in the organization, both as a function of the lack of capacity, but also because of a silent acceptance by member states of informal practices and norms in the UN at field level. The gap between theory and practice should thus not necessarily be characterized as organized hypocrisy or a 'pathology', but could be a functional expression of the temporal lag of normative formation in the organization. Practices can thus be seen to evolve at the ground level and norms trickle both up and down in the system. The acceptance of parallel norms, rules, cultures and practices indicates that there is a function of what the paper would coin *pragmatic hypocrisy* or *functional disharmony* in peacebuilding and more narrowly in the UN engagement of armed non-state actors.

Furthermore, it is possible to argue that the UN is reliant on donors, think-tanks and academic institutions to develop policy and analysis capacity. This gives these actors a lead on the normative evolution or codification in the UN. Finally, as a function between the role donor governments and think tanks have on the normative evolution in the UN, the paper holds that there is reluctance among other member states, such as the G77, against codifying the *de facto* hollowing of the principle of sovereignty that the increased UN engagement of armed non-state groups signifies. One example of this can be seen in the backlash from many southern member states against the codification and formulation of the informal norm of *Responsibility to Protect* into doctrine.

Together, practices and linked ecologies are constitutive pillars for new norms. Norms are being established as a result of practices over time and these are slowly being put into doctrine with the states, think-tanks and academic institutions driving UN reform and the peacebuilding agenda taking the lead.

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