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Introduction

> Organizations are more than instruments; they are themselves bundles of desires.[1]
>
> Browne and Wildavsky, 1983

I lost at poker that night. My fellow players were used to high stakes. They were Nairobi "hacks" – foreign correspondents who hopped from war zone to war zone in search of the next story. The riskier the situation, the better the tale. It was September 2000, and I had just found out I would move to Burundi to work for the United Nations (UN). Burundi was in the midst of a civil war. I would live in Bujumbura, the capital city, where high mountains on two sides of the city provided the perfect terrain for rebel groups to lob mortar shells into government buildings.

On the third side, Lake Tanganyika stretched out like a glistening ribbon wrapping the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), also embroiled in war. At night, I would watch tracer fire shoot across the sky – black, black, black, black, then red – marking the persistent struggle for control of the state and its resources between the rebels and the Burundian Army.

I had spent the previous four years working on international peacebuilding policy.[2] In the 1990s, many international actors adopted policies committing themselves to building peace in war-torn countries.[3] These "global governors" wanted to transform war-torn states into those that could sustain peace through rule of law, market-based economies,

[1] Angela Browne and Aaron Wildavsky, "Implementation as Exploration (1983)," in ed. Jeffrey L. Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky, *Implementation: How Great Expectations in Washington Are Dashed in Oakland* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 252.

[2] I worked for the Center for Preventive Action of the Council on Foreign Relations, a US foreign policy think tank, and the Forum on Early Warning and Early Response (FEWER), a global network that linked researchers in conflict-prone countries with actors outside of the country who could advocate to prevent violence and build peace.

[3] See, in particular, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping* (New York: United Nations, 1992); and the report of the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, *Preventing Deadly Conflict: Final Report* (New York, NY: Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1997).

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and liberal democracy.[4] I wanted to see for myself if global organizations could foster this type of local change. So, the news that I was going to Burundi simultaneously thrilled and terrified me.

The Nairobi hacks did not show much sympathy for either sentiment. I boarded the flight to Bujumbura a few days later.

International Organizations (IO), International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGO), and bilateral donors give their offices in war-torn countries – "country offices" – the authority to implement and oversee most of their peacebuilding activities.[5] As a UN staff person and, subsequently, as a researcher, I saw that these country offices were not equally successful at peacebuilding, a reality that existing scholarship did not address. For example, in Burundi in 2009, the UN peacekeeping mission implemented several highly successful projects that helped to reintegrate former combatants into society, combine former enemy forces into a relatively cohesive new military, and establish an independent human rights commission.[6] During the same year, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) implemented several well-intentioned yet harmful projects, including one that reduced the credibility of the newly established Burundian National Police.[7] This variation in country-office performance is not unique to these organizations or to Burundi. During my subsequent research in the DRC, Nepal, South Sudan, and Sudan, I also saw a high degree of variation in the success and failure of peacebuilding projects, regardless of the type of activity, the location, or the point in time.

To explain variation in peacebuilding success and failure, this book presents a new typology of country-office performance, outlining four types of country offices: *peacebuilding learners, micro-adaptors, sovereignty* reinforcers, and *stagnant players*. Organizational performance, in the most general sense, refers to whether an organization achieves its aims.[8] Country-office performance, thus, describes whether a country office

[4] Global governors are "actors who exercise power across borders for purposes of affecting policy." Deborah D. Avant, Martha Finnemore, and Susan K. Sell, eds., *Who Governs the Globe?* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 2.

[5] By bilateral donor, I mean the aid agency of a state that gives aid bilaterally to another country. In this book, I do not address the behavior or performance of private contractors, state military organizations, or national Non-Governmental Organizations.

[6] For a detailed assessment of these interventions, see Susanna P. Campbell, "Independent External Evaluation: Peacebuilding Fund Projects in Burundi," Evaluation (Bujumbura: BINUB, 2010), accessed December 17, 2017, www.unpbf.org/wp-content/uploads/Independent-Evaluation-Burundi.pdf.

[7] Campbell, "Independent External Evaluation: Peacebuilding Fund Projects in Burundi."

[8] Tamar Gutner and Alexander Thompson, "The Politics of IO Performance: A Framework," *Review of International Organizations* 5, no. 3 (2010): 227–48.

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achieves its aims in the country in which it intervenes. In this book, I focus on a minimal measure of country-office performance: organizational learning. In this book's typology, only one type of country office, the peacebuilding learners, is likely to achieve its peacebuilding aims. The other three types may pursue peacebuilding activities, but are unlikely to attain their desired peacebuilding outcomes. Over time, a country office may move between these four types, potentially becoming a peacebuilding learner if it creates informal local accountability and has formal accountability that prioritizes peacebuilding.

I use the term "local" in contrast to "global," referring to the people and events within a country, synonymous with "domestic" or "subnational."[9] The people and institutions that make up the local are, of course, complex and multifaceted; there is a high degree of heterogeneity. In fact, peacebuilding interventions aim to create sustainable peace, in part, by ensuring that the conflict-affected state and society no longer exclude particular groups from political participation or economic benefit. In other words, global peacebuilders try to ensure that local institutions represent the heterogeneity of local perspectives, with the implication that country offices should also ground their global interventions in this diverse local reality.

I developed the typology presented in this book by studying twenty-eight cases of country-office performance in Burundi, between 1999 and 2014.[10] Using original data, including over three hundred interviews, I identified two necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for country-office performance – informal local accountability and formal peacebuilding accountability – and the causal mechanisms at play. In developing this typology, I assessed the explanatory value of alternative hypotheses for peacebuilding success and failure – the conflict environment, organizational culture and practices, type of

[9] For excellent syntheses of the debates around the "local" in international peacebuilding, see Séverine Autesserre, "International Peacebuilding and Local Success: Assumptions and Effectiveness," *International Studies Review* 19, no. 1 (2017): 114–32; and Vanessa Newby, "Power, Politics and Perception: The Impact of Foreign Policy on Civilian-Peacekeeper Relations," *Third World Quarterly* (June 2017): 1–16.

[10] In research design terms, this is a typological theory. For descriptions of this approach, see Andrew Bennett, "Causal Mechanisms and Typological Theories in the Study of Civil Conflict," in ed. Jeff Checkel *Transnational Dynamics of Civil War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 205–30; Bennett, "Complexity, Typological Theory, and Research Design," Power Point (May 2015); David Collier, Jody LaPorte, and Jason Seawright, "Putting Typologies to Work: Concept Formation, Measurement, and Analytic Rigor," *Political Research Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (2012): 217–32; and Colin Elman, "Explanatory Typologies in Qualitative Studies of International Politics," *International Organization* 59, no. 02 (2005): 293–326.

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activity, and amount of resources.[11] The twenty-eight cases of country-office behavior in my sample enabled me to build the typology and validate each type using additional cases. I then examined the generalizability of my typology to other country offices operating in Burundi, the DRC, Nepal, South Sudan, and Sudan and found support for my findings there as well.

In this book, I argue that the variation in country offices' peacebuilding performance results, in part, from informal local accountability arrangements made by individual country-office staff. For country offices to achieve local-level change, they have to delegate authority to a representative group of local stakeholders who hold the country office accountable for achieving its local aims. This *informal local accountability* gives the country office the local-level feedback necessary to *identify actions* that may reduce the gap between its global peacebuilding aims and local peacebuilding outcomes. *Formal accountability that prioritizes peacebuilding* above other aims incentivizes the country office to *take these actions*. Over time, these feedback loops are likely to build local buy-in for the peacebuilding activity and possibly even "local ownership," a constant and elusive goal of international intervention.[12]

To create informal local accountability, however, country-office staff must circumvent standard operating procedures put in place by their headquarters or donors. This circumvention is necessary because country offices are designed to respond to the demands of their headquarters and donors, not to those of local stakeholders. Country offices are held accountable for delivering the goods and services mandated and funded by their headquarters and donors, regardless of whether local-level demand for them exists.[13] Good country-office performance, thus, requires seemingly "bad behavior" by individual staff members who break or bend rules to create informal local accountability. As one UN staff person wrote

[11] For discussion of alternative explanations of peacebuilding success and failure, see Séverine Autesserre, *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Autesserre, *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding*, Vol. 115, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Susanna P. Campbell, David Chandler, and Meera Sabaratnam, eds., *A Liberal Peace? The Problems and Practices of Peacebuilding*, (London: Zed, 2011); and Michael Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, *Making War and Building Peace: United Nations Peace Operations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).

[12] For a detailed discussion of the concept of local ownership and the way it is manifest in United Nations Peace Operations, see Sarah B. K. von Billerbeck, *Whose Peace? Local Ownership and United Nations Peacekeeping* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016), 114–26.

[13] Bertin Martens et al., *The Institutional Economics of Foreign Aid* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

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in the *New York Times*: "Too often, the only way to speed things up is to break the rules."[14]

The basic implication of this book is that IOs, INGOs, and bilateral donors are, ironically and unintentionally, designed to fail at peacebuilding. Their country offices are not structured to receive the diverse local-level feedback necessary for them to achieve positive peacebuilding performance. Consequently, these global governors succeed at peacebuilding only when well-placed country-office staff take the risk of grounding the organization's global peacebuilding priorities in the local reality.

The importance of informal local accountability for international peacebuilding means that effective global governance relies, at least to some degree, on the local governance of global actors. Efforts to strengthen peacebuilding performance solely through top-down accountability requirements and external evaluations are, thus, unlikely to have the desired results. To positively perform, international peacebuilders need to delegate authority to local actors who have little power in the global system. But the ability of country offices to delegate this authority to local actors hinges on innovative and entrepreneurial staff who use their own agency to bridge the divide between the global and local. The improved peacebuilding performance of global governors, thus, rests on their ability to create conducive environments for these innovative staff to operate.

In the following sections, I first discuss in more detail the measure of country-office performance used in this book: organizational learning. I then give an overview of the population of study, describing the different types of peacebuilding activities and the broader population of country offices who implement them. Next, I discuss the importance of studying the peacebuilding performance of these country offices for our broader understanding of peacebuilding success and failure, as well as for the performance of global governance actors. I follow this discussion with a review of the existing literature on peacebuilding and global governance, which largely overlooks the performance of individual country offices. I then provide an overview of this book's typological theory, outlining why the combination of (1) the presence or absence informal local accountability and (2) the presence or absence of formal peacebuilding accountability produces four typical types of country offices: peacebuilding learners, micro-adaptors, sovereignty reinforcers,

[14] Anthony Banbury, "I Love the U.N., but It Is Failing," *New York Times*, March 18, 2016, accessed December 17, 2017, www.nytimes.com/2016/03/20/opinion/sunday/i-love-the-un-but-it-is-failing.html.

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and stagnant players. Next, I discuss this book's findings, the broader significance of these findings, and the data, research design, and methods employed to generate them. I close by giving an overview of the remaining chapters of this book.

Country-Office Performance as Organizational Learning

The measure of organizational performance used in this book is *organizational learning of the country office*.[15] Some definitions of organizational learning refer to how an organization processes information about its actions, context, or outcomes, but do not consider how the organization acts on this information.[16] I use a measure of organizational learning that identifies the *actions* taken by the country office as the manifestation of learning.[17] In taking these actions, the country office is not simply adapting to the context without information about its successes and failures. *Country-office learning involves actions intended to reduce the gap(s) between the country office's aims and outcomes*, which requires that the organization receive feedback about the outcomes it has, or has not, achieved.[18] For the purpose of this book, I focus on learning in relation to the country office's peacebuilding aims, although I discuss the generalizability to other types of aims in the concluding chapter. I measure performance in terms of *whether the country office acts to reduce the gap between its peacebuilding aims and outcomes*. In the research section at the end of this chapter, I outline the precise conditions of this measurement.

Organizational learning is a minimal measure of peacebuilding performance – a necessary but insufficient condition for a country office to achieve its peacebuilding aims. Peacebuilding strives to transform the

[15] Organizational performance, as opposed to staff or policy-level performance, describes whether the organization achieves a set of organization-wide goals. For a fuller discussion of organizational performance, see Colin Talbot "Performance Management" in ed. Ewan Ferlie, Laurence E. Lynn Jr., and Christopher Pollitt, *The Oxford Handbook of Public Management* (Oxford, UK: Oxford Handbooks Online, 2007), 494.

[16] For further discussion of organizational learning, see Chris Argyris, *On Organizational Learning* (Boston: Blackwell, 1992); George Huber, "Organizational Learning: The Contributing Processes and the Literatures," *Organization Science* 2, no. 1 (1991), 88–115; and Jack S. Levy, "Learning and Foreign Policy: Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield," *International Organization* 48, no. 2 (1994), 279–312.

[17] This definition is based on the work of Argyris, *On Organizational Learning*.

[18] For discussion of the difference between learning and adaptation, see Jonathan Fox and L. David Brown, eds., *The Struggle for Accountability: The World Bank, NGOs, and Grassroots Movements* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 11–14, who refer to Peter Haas, *Saving the Mediterranean: The Politics of International Cooperation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); and Peter Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination,"*International Organization* 46, no. 1, (1992), 1–35.

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institutions that contributed to war into those that can sustain peace. This is a highly ambitious agenda, which is subject to high rates of failure.[19] Peacebuilding activities are assumed to be different from simpler tasks, such as food delivery, that do not aim to change behaviors.[20] The success or failure of any international peacebuilding activity is potentially due to many different factors, including the conflict environment, the preferences of local actors, the preferences of international actors, and the availability of sufficient and appropriate resources. At a minimum, however, a country office needs to take actions to reduce the emergent gap between its transformative ambitions and the changing local reality. Country offices that learn are thus more likely to achieve their peacebuilding aims than those that do not learn.[21]

As I discuss further in Chapter 1, organizational learning is important for all organizations but is likely to be particularly important to peacebuilding for at least four reasons. First, peacebuilding aims to change a changing context. Peacebuilding takes place in dynamic war-affected contexts. The institutions and actors that it aims to transform are in flux. A country office first has to figure out how to localize its global aims in that context. Then, it has to adjust these aims as the context changes, and its initial assessment and plans quickly become outdated. As Lise Morjé Howard found in her work on UN peacekeeping, this "field-level learning" is necessary precisely because global aims have to be localized within a context that keeps changing.[22] Second, we are not able to predict the precise causes of peace in a particular country. Learning, therefore, offers the country office the opportunity to figure out whether its activities seem to fit the particular conflict-affected context. Third, because peacebuilding aims to support change that local actors will sustain, it requires the buy-in of local actors. Organizational learning by the country office requires informal local accountability that

[19] Doyle and Sambanis, *Making War and Building Peace*.
[20] For discussion of the difference between simple and complex tasks in international intervention, see Stephen D. Krasner and Thomas Risse, "External Actors, State-Building, and Service Provision in Areas of Limited Statehood: Introduction," *Governance* 27, no. 4 (October 2014): 545–67.
[21] For further discussion of the role of organizational learning in peacebuilding performance, see Susanna P. Campbell, "Organizational Barriers to Peace: Agency and Structure in International Peacebuilding" (PhD dissertation, Tufts University, 2012); Susanna P. Campbell, "Routine Learning? How Peacebuilding Organizations Prevent Liberal Peace," in ed. Campbell et al., *A Liberal Peace?* 89–105; and Susanna P. Campbell, "When Process Matters: The Potential Implications of Organizational Learning for Peacebuilding Success," *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* 4, no. 2 (2008): 20–32.
[22] Lise Morjé Howard, *UN Peacekeeping in Civil Wars* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

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is also likely to engender local buy-in and ownership. Fourth, the standard implementation practices of IOs, INGOs, and bilateral donors are based on the assumption that if one develops a project description with the right analysis, the right strategy, the right project aims, and the right measurement indicators and anticipate the right risks, that project will achieve its desired outcomes.[23] Organizational learning enables country offices to correct these inflexible, supply-driven templates and adapt their peacebuilding interventions to the changing local reality.

The framing of peacebuilding performance as organizational learning is related to the policy goal of "conflict sensitivity," a goal that peacebuilding, development, and humanitarian actors have widely adopted.[24] For an organization to be conflict-sensitive, it has to (1) understand the conflict dynamics in which it operates; (2) understand the relationship between its interventions and these dynamics; and (3) take actions in response to this understanding to reduce its negative contribution and increase its positive contribution to conflict dynamics. If a country office learns in relation to its peacebuilding aims, it is thus also likely to qualify as conflict-sensitive.

Peacebuilding: Multiple Actions and Actors

Peacebuilding is an umbrella term that describes a wide range of interventions that country offices undertake to reduce the risk that a conflict-prone country will lapse or relapse into violent conflict. These interventions aim to address inequality that corresponds to ethnic, religious, gender, or other social cleavages; build domestic conflict management and service delivery capacities in the economic, security, justice, and governance sectors; improve society–society relations by enhancing social cohesion and building trust among social groups; and improve state–society relations by building trust in and the legitimacy of the government.[25] These interventions can take place before, during, or after the outbreak of civil

[23] For a discussion of these programming patterns, see Dennis Dijkzeul, "Programs and the Problems of Participation" in ed. D. Dijkzeul and Y. Beigbeder, *Rethinking International Organizations: Pathology and Promises* (Oxford, UK: Berghahn, 2004), 197–233.

[24] See International Alert, Saferworld, and FEWER, "Conflict Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peacebuilding: A Resource Pack" (London, 2004), 3.

[25] These peacebuilding "theories of change" were developed by the UN Peacebuilding Fund; see www.unpbf.org/application-guidelines/what-is-peacebuilding/.

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war or political violence.[26] They can include peacekeeping, statebuilding, conflict resolution, development, humanitarian, human rights, or other types of interventions.[27]

Since the 1990s, when UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali called for increased international peacebuilding, there has been rapid growth in the number of IOs, INGOs, bilateral donors, and other global actors engaged in local peacebuilding.[28] In any given conflict-affected country, there are dozens, if not hundreds, of global governors implementing peacebuilding activities at the local level. A country office's peacebuilding activities largely correspond to its organization's core mandate or area of expertise, reflecting "deeply rooted organizational mandates rather than 'best practices' born from empirical analysis."[29]

A single country office may implement humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding activities, making it potentially difficult to distinguish between them.[30] The basic difference between these types of activities is their ultimate aim. International development and humanitarian assistance aim to work *around* conflict dynamics. Peacebuilding aims to work directly *on* conflict dynamics.[31]

The causes of civil war and political violence are so multifarious that almost any type of activity implemented in a war-torn country can be labeled as a peacebuilding activity, given the appropriate

[26] For a justification of this broad conceptualization of peacebuilding, see Advisory Group of Experts, *Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture* (New York: United Nations, June 29, 2015).

[27] For a discussion of these different types of activities and their potential contradictions, see Charles T. Call and Elizabeth M. Cousens, "Ending Wars and Building Peace: International Responses to War-Torn Societies," *International Studies Perspectives* 9 (2008): 1–21; Susanna P. Campbell and Jenny Peterson, "Statebuilding," in ed. Roger Mac Ginty, *Handbook of Peacebuilding* (London: Routledge, 2013), 336–46; Roland Paris and Timothy D. Sisk, *The Dilemmas of Statebuilding: Confronting the Contradictions of Postwar Peace Operations (Security and Governance)* (New York: Routledge, 2009); and Oliver Richmond and Jason Franks, *Liberal Peace Transitions: Between Statebuilding and Peacebuilding* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).

[28] For this articulation of peacebuilding, see Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *Supplement to the Agenda for Peace* (New York: United Nations, 1995).

[29] Michael Barnett, Hunjoon Kim, Madalene O'Donnell, and Laura Sitea, "Peacebuilding: What Is in a Name?" *Global Governance* 13, no. 1 (2007): 53.

[30] Several humanitarian organizations, such as the International Commission of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Doctors Without Borders (MSF), focus on only life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection in order to maintain humanitarian neutrality. Most other large humanitarian organizations, however, consider themselves to be multi-mandate organizations and engage in peacebuilding activities as well as humanitarian and development work.

[31] For this articulation of the difference between peacebuilding, development, and humanitarian activities, see Jonathan Goodhand, "Violent Conflict, Poverty and Chronic Poverty," Chronic Poverty Research Centre Working Paper, no. 6, *SSRN Electronic Journal* (May 2001): 1–49.

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transformative spin.[32] For example, rebuilding roads, constructing schools, training judges, providing assistance to refugee populations, building local courts, equipping police forces, providing seed funding for small businesses, establishing truth and reconciliation commissions, launching military attacks, developing taxation offices, and training leaders in conflict resolution techniques could all qualify as peacebuilding activities. The implementing organization simply has to claim that the activity addresses a potential driver of conflict or peace in the recipient country.[33]

Although a broad set of activities could qualify as peacebuilding, a fixed set of supply-driven activities has emerged as the field has grown. Standardization, professionalization, and measurement have disciplined this crowded field. These activities focus on (1) reform of the security sector (police, military, and intelligence); (2) reform of the judicial system; (3) development of mechanisms to address crimes committed during the war ("transitional justice"); (4) development of conflict resolution capacities and representative state institutions ("good governance"); and (5) fostering of economic and infrastructure development at all levels of society ("socio-economic foundations").[34]

Just because an activity is labeled as a peacebuilding activity, of course, does not mean that it builds peace, or influences its determinants, however defined. Peacebuilding is an experiment. Before an activity is implemented, no one knows whether or not it will achieve its desired peacebuilding outcome, or whether that outcome will have the hypothesized effect on violent conflict or peaceful cooperation in the recipient country. "Peace" and its constituent elements are still hotly debated in both policy and scholarly circles, not to mention in conflict-affected

[32] See David Mason and Sara McLaughlin Mitchell, eds., *What Do We Know about Civil Wars?* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), for a synthesis of the literature on the causes of civil war and its recurrence; and Charles T. Call, *Why Peace Fails: The Causes and Prevention of Civil War Recurrence* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2012), for discussion of the importance of political exclusion in the onset of civil wars and the failure of peace agreements.

[33] For this conceptualization of peacebuilding, see CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, *Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP): Participant Training Manual* (Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2008).

[34] Among the many documents that describe this standard set of peacebuilding activities, these two provide helpful syntheses: Daniel Serwer and Patricia Thomson, "A Framework for Success: International Intervention in Societies Emerging from Conflict," in ed. Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall, *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007); and Dan Smith, *Towards a Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding: Getting Their Act Together*, Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Brattvaag, Norway: Hatlehols AS, 2004).

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