Whose peace? Local ownership and UN peacekeeping

Book

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Introduction

> National and local ownership is critical to the successful implementation of a peace process. In planning and executing a United Nations peacekeeping operation's core activities, every effort should be made to promote national and local ownership and to foster trust and cooperation between national actors. Effective approaches to national and local ownership not only reinforce the perceived legitimacy of the operation and support mandate implementation, they also help to ensure the sustainability of any national capacity once the peacekeeping operation has been withdrawn.[1]

The above quotation, from the 2008 *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines*, known as the Capstone Doctrine, of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), reflects what has become a near orthodox commitment to local ownership in United Nations (UN) peace operations in post-conflict states. Similar rhetoric surrounding local ownership can be found in any number of DPKO guidelines, best practices, and lessons learned documents, as well as in the mandates of current peacekeeping operations throughout the world, all of which endorse local ownership as a key principle of peacekeeping.[2] Advocates of local ownership of peacekeeping assert that it renders peacekeeping more legitimate and more sustainable by preserving host-country consent; protecting UN impartiality; ensuring that reconstruction

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[1] United Nations, *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines* (Capstone Doctrine) (New York, United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support, 2008), 39.

[2] See, for example, United Nations, Capstone Doctrine; United Nations, A/63/881-S/2009/304 (2009), *Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict*; United Nations, A/65/747-S/2011/85 (2011), *Civilian Capacity in the Aftermath of Conflict: Independent Report of the Senior Advisory Group*; and United Nations, *Handbook on United Nations Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations* (New York: United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Best Practices Unit, 2003). With a few exceptions, UN mission mandates do not usually employ the term local ownership, but reiterate that the primary responsibility for governance and security lies with the government of the host country.

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efforts are rooted in indigenous structures, culture, and norms; and building local capacity.

Because of these purported benefits, local ownership has emerged as one of the leading principles shaping peacekeeping operations today. In a 2011 meeting of the Security Council, local ownership was recognized "not only as a moral imperative but also as a pragmatic necessity for legitimacy and sustainability."[3] The 2009 UN *Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict* puts ownership at its heart, also calling it an "imperative" in peacebuilding.[4] The 2011 UN report *Civilian Capacity in the Aftermath of Conflict* similarly makes national ownership the first of its four operational recommendations, noting that international interventions should nurture existing national capacities as much as possible and support national institutions "from within."[5]

The culmination of this emphasis on ownership within the UN is, perhaps, the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in 2005, which puts local ownership at the center of its doctrine. To be on the agenda of the Commission, a member state must request it, and a compact is then concluded between the Commission and the state. Countries may also be referred to the Commission by the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, or the Secretary-General, but again, the state's consent is required. Moreover, the Commission is not an operational body, but one that acts in an advisory capacity for the Security Council and the General Assembly, meaning that leadership of program design, implementation, spending, and evaluation rest with the government of the concerned state. The local ownership approach to peacebuilding is thus codified by the PBC as one the UN must take, and Security Council Resolution 1645, which established the Commission, affirms "the primary responsibility of national and transitional Governments and authorities of countries emerging from conflict or at risk of relapsing into conflict . . . in identifying their priorities and strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding, with a view to ensuring national ownership."[6]

Yet despite the widespread use of the term, local ownership remains remarkably understudied and, to date, understandings of ownership have been based primarily on assumptions and normative beliefs held broadly in both the policy and academic communities. These assumptions and beliefs appear to be sound, justified, and even commonsensical, and it is difficult to argue with the perceived advantages of local ownership in peacekeeping. If international

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[3] United Nations, S/PV.6630 (2011), *Proces-Verbaux of 6630th Meeting [provisional]: Maintenance of International Peace and Security*, 2.
[4] United Nations, A/63/881-S/2009/304, 1.   [5] United Nations, A/65/747-S/2011/85, 10.
[6] United Nations, S/RES/1645 (2005).

actors "do" everything for local actors—that is, ensure security, build institutions, draft and uphold legislation, and encourage reconciliation—not only will the peacekeeping process be perceived as externally imposed and hence illegitimate, it is also likely to fail once the UN departs, as national actors will have been unable to build the necessary capacity to continue what the UN has begun. Accordingly, without local involvement, peacekeeping will both lose legitimacy and be less sustainable over the long term.

However, despite these purported benefits, the UN has failed to realize local ownership in the broad way in which it is presented in discourse. Instead, the UN often relegates local actors to a secondary role in peacekeeping, and aside from a select group of elites, they tend to be excluded from decision-making and implementation. This selective approach to ownership in turn prevents the generation of legitimacy and sustainability that a more inclusive approach to peacekeeping is thought to bring. In short, the UN both conceptualizes and operationalizes local ownership in ways that undercut the very benefits it claims local ownership bestows.

Argument in Brief

Why does the UN advocate for local ownership based on a set of purported benefits while operationalizing it in a way that undermines the achievement of those very benefits? I argue that the primary reason for this is that peacekeeping brings two key UN obligations into conflict, one normative—the upholding of national self-determination—and one operational—the maintenance of international peace and security.

Much of the emphasis on local ownership in peacekeeping relates to a deeper normative dedication to the principle of self-determination within the UN. As an organization, the UN has long been a proponent of this principle and of the corollary principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of member states. At the same time, the UN has an operational responsibility to take action—including, at times, the deployment of armed peacekeepers to war-torn states—when situations are deemed to constitute a threat to international peace and security. However, international intervention, by definition, violates the principles of self-determination and non-interference, forcing the UN into a situation where it must either not act and violate one set of institutional imperatives, or act and violate another. The emphasis on local ownership, then, may be viewed as an attempt by the UN to reconcile these conflicting imperatives. By giving local actors a leading role in peacekeeping, the UN can minimize the degree of imposition entailed by its operations and maintain the ability of local actors to determine their own political path, even in the context of international intervention.

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However, as this book will show, because it is a contradictory and contested concept and gives rise to its own set of operational challenges, local ownership only enables the UN to paper over that difficulty. More specifically, while discursively local ownership may seem like an appropriate solution to the violation of institutional principles entailed by peace operations, in practice the UN perceives the excessive devolution of responsibility for peacekeeping to local actors to put at risk two key operational goals—the liberalization of the post-conflict state and the delivery of demonstrable outputs in the short term—goals that the UN links to its responsibility to maintain international peace and security and that it is therefore under obligation to achieve. As a result, the UN adjusts and limits local ownership both conceptually and in practice, relying on it primarily as a discursive tool for legitimation but not an operational principle for effective peacekeeping.

However, this restrictive approach to local ownership in practice brings the UN's actions into sharp contrast with its discourse, which depicts local ownership as entailing the broad and open inclusion of national actors in peacekeeping and a relatively high degree of deference to their aspirations and wishes. Because of this gap between the UN's words and deeds, the UN's attempts to create legitimacy through discourse fail to persuade local actors, suggesting that the UN's discursive efforts appear to be more successful as a tool of internal self-legitimation than one able to generate perceptions of legitimacy among national actors. Moreover, because of variability in the ways that the UN operationalizes local ownership, the UN not only deepens the curtailment of self-determination and the degree of external imposition on the host country, it also undercuts its ability to realize the very operational goals it is trying to protect by constraining ownership, thus also limiting any legitimacy it may derive from operational effectiveness.

Ultimately, while local ownership may be theoretically sound at first glance, it is not well understood and is actually a deeply contested concept, one that does not lend itself to easy definition, one that can be translated into practice in many different ways, and one that, at its broadest, is linked to the conflicting operational and normative imperatives that face the UN. While it may be able to reconcile the clash between intervention and self-determination "in theory," it does not enable the UN to actually eliminate this underlying tension, and its operationalization of the concept is ultimately detrimental to both its ability to adhere to the principles of self-determination and non-imposition *and* to its operational effectiveness.

These arguments do not imply that local ownership has no positive value whatsoever, that it cannot foster legitimacy and sustainability, preserve self-determination, and mitigate external imposition. Nor does it imply that the UN's emphasis on local ownership is misguided or imprudent, that the UN is "wrong" to include or exclude local actors under certain conditions, or that

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local ownership should be jettisoned as a principle of UN peacekeeping oper-
ations. But because ownership is advocated so pervasively, it merits critical
examination in order to determine how the concept is understood, how it is
operationalized, how these understandings and practices do or do not lead to
expected effects, and what they reveal about the motivations of the UN in
peacekeeping.

Scope of the Book

The perception that local ownership may help to overcome the tension
between the UN's normative and operational obligations in peacekeeping
and thus boost its legitimacy and sustainability has informed UN peacekeep-
ing policy to a large extent, but to date, the UN has proclaimed these positive
benefits without describing the mechanisms that allegedly produce such
effects, specifying the conditions under which this correlation holds, or pro-
viding convincing empirical evidence that ownership does indeed boost legit-
imacy and sustainability by protecting self-determination and minimizing
external imposition. The claims that no peacekeeping effort will be sustain-
able if it is not directed by national actors or that peace and good governance
cannot be externally imposed are echoed by scholars, but they are grounded
neither in a careful theoretical and empirical analysis of the relationship
between international and national actors in the post-conflict space and
their differing perspectives on peacekeeping and ownership, nor in an exam-
ination of how the UN translates the idea of local ownership into practice.
Indeed, because local ownership both as a concept and as a policy is thought
to be understood and considered to be logically sound, it is rarely questioned,
deconstructed, or analyzed, and is instead generally taken for granted by
international peacekeepers.

Worse, exactly what local ownership is remains unclear, despite its frequent
invocation in peacekeeping scholarship and policy discourse. According to
Simon Chesterman, local ownership refers "in a . . . vague way to the relation-
ship between stakeholders," hazily suggesting the need to include national
actors in some way in international peacekeeping activities.[7] When, how, and
exactly who should be involved, remain underspecified, and the UN offers no
coherent definition of its own, despite its persistent emphasis on it.[8] In
addition, neither the UN nor other analysts make reference to *local*

[7] Simon Chesterman, "Ownership in Theory and in Practice: Transfer of Authority in UN
Statebuilding Operations," *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 1, no. 1 (March 2007): 4.
[8] Béatrice Pouligny, "Local Ownership," in *Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: A Lexicon*, ed. Vincent
Chetail (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 175.

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understandings of local ownership, to whether these coincide with UN under-
standings, and to whether local actors feel a sense of ownership of the peace-
keeping process in their country, points that are critical to determining if local
ownership indeed functions as UN discourse suggests.

Additionally, though local ownership discourse has been present in peace-
keeping for more than a decade, few multidimensional peace operations have
conclusively "achieved" ownership, in the sense of having an implementa-
tion process that grants a significant degree of agency to local actors, effects an
eventual full transfer of authority to them, or both. Many UN staff admit that
local ownership in peacekeeping complicates or even impedes the achieve-
ment of the UN's operational objectives, most importantly the establishment
of liberal democratic political systems in the post-conflict country and the
more immediate delivery of demonstrable results, such as the disarmament of
combatants and collection of weapons, the undertaking of military patrols,
the holding of elections, the passing of legislation, and the running of public
sensitization campaigns.[9] More importantly, despite the heavy emphasis on
local ownership in recent peacekeeping discourse, the same period has not
been marked by demonstrable changes in the legitimacy levels of UN mis-
sions, the long-term sustainability of their efforts, or the efficiency and rapid-
ity with which goals are achieved.[10] In other words, it remains unclear how to
operationalize the principle of local ownership for peace operations in a way
that will both increase their sustainability and legitimacy and enable the UN
to realize its operational goals.

This "failure" of ownership is indicative of a disjuncture between policy
theory and actual practice: while local ownership may make sense in theory,
as described, it often fails to produce its intended practices and effects. "Good"
policies that are theoretically sound can still lead to "bad" outcomes because
of differences in understanding, contradictory goals and obligations, and
problems in implementation, which bridges beliefs, intentions, and effects.[11]
In the case of local ownership, for all the logical soundness of the concept in

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[9] The results-based budget (RBB) exercises that UN peace operations undertake provide a good overview of the types of demonstrable outputs that missions seek to deliver. These tend to be measured quantitatively, for example, the number of patrols undertaken, the number of meetings held with various national and international interlocutors, the number of weapons collected, or the number of police trained. For financial performance reports that show progress on these outputs, see, for example, United Nations, "ACABQ Reports: MONUC United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo," <http://www.un.org/ga/acabq/documents/all/572?order= title&sort=asc>.

[10] Legitimacy in peacekeeping can, of course, derive from a variety of sources (as well as crumble for a variety of reasons), but according to the discourse of local ownership, the degree to which local actors are involved in peacekeeping should make a significant and visible difference to legitimacy levels.

[11] See David Mosse, "Is Good Policy Unimplementable? Reflections on the Ethnography of Aid Policy and Practice," *Development and Change* 35, no. 4 (2004): 640–1.

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terms of increasing legitimacy and sustainability, it fails to regularly produce these results, suggesting that theories—or assumptions—of how local ownership functions are incomplete. More specifically, local ownership may not "work" as expected because of divergent understandings of what local ownership is, because of how the UN "does" local ownership, because of conflicting organizational imperatives, or because of differing perspectives on legitimacy.

This book, accordingly, strives to understand the gaps between theory, practice, and effect by mapping the history of local ownership, the current discourse of ownership, the various understandings of it on the part of both UN and national actors, the various ways in which the UN operationalizes the concept, and the divergent expectations of what it should deliver. My objective is twofold: first, to explore and unpack the concept and practices of local ownership in peacekeeping, and second, to explain why local ownership has failed to be effectively operationalized by the UN. These two objectives are intertwined. In describing and categorizing understandings and practices of local ownership, an explanation for the UN's contradictory behavior emerges.

My analysis takes two approaches. First, I contextualize the issue of local ownership through an analysis of the discourse of ownership. This includes an examination of the origins of the concept in the field of development and its adoption into and evolution within peacekeeping, as well as the definitional ambiguity surrounding the concept and the various potential local owners in post-conflict situations.[12] This analysis helps to uncover what the anticipated benefits of local ownership in peacekeeping are, and I explore in greater depth how ownership is expected to boost legitimacy and sustainability by protecting self-determination and minimizing external imposition.

Second, I examine the understandings of local ownership on the part of UN and national actors as well as the different ways in which the UN operationalizes the concept. I do this both at the level of the UN more broadly as well as in the context of one primary case, the peacekeeping mission in Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies en Congo (MONUC), and a number of shadow cases, including the UN missions in East Timor, Liberia, Afghanistan, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.[13] This is done through analysis and interpretation of in-depth structured,

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[12] I examine UN documents on peacekeeping, the mandates of current and past missions, other relevant Security Council resolutions, policy analyses, and academic writings.

[13] MONUC officially ended in June 2010, but the mission continues, essentially unchanged, under the new name of the Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies de Stabilisation en Congo (MONUSCO). The UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) ran from 1999 to 2002, though it was succeeded by several follow-on missions; the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) from 2003–present, though it was preceded by several earlier missions; the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA), which is officially a Special Political Mission managed by DPKO, from 2002–present; and the UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) from 1995 to 2002. See United Nations, "Peacekeeping Operations," Department of Peacekeeping Operations, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/>.

semi-structured, and unstructured interviews.[14] This analysis enables me to understand the UN's understandings and operationalization of local owner-ship in relation to the broader premises from which it defines its interests, intentions, and values; to uncover areas of contestation and contradiction within local ownership; and to clarify why the concept's logical soundness does not translate into stable or regular practices or effects.

Ultimately, this book shows that the contradictions that underlie local ownership in peacekeeping are related to the broader institutional identity of the UN. The UN is, on the one hand, a normative actor, one expected to adhere to and promote the principles of self-determination and non-interference; on the other, it is an operational actor, one that is expected to deliver concrete results in peacekeeping and to contribute to the democratic transformation of post-conflict states as a safeguard against future conflict. Because of the tension between the goals dictated by these two sides of the organization's identity, local ownership is most appropriately viewed as a tool for legitimation used by the UN, one that is expected to help it balance between the normative and operational obligations that it faces as an organization.

Cases

While this study focuses on the UN's peacekeeping practice as a whole, in order to illustrate how the UN operationalizes local ownership and to capture the national perspective on ownership, I use the UN peacekeeping mission in DRC (MONUC) as a primary case study. MONUC was established in 1999 in the context of the second civil war to ravage DRC.[15] It was not only the largest mission in UN history, with a total of over 22,000 uniformed personnel (troops, military observers, and police) at its peak in 2007,[16] but it also had one of the broadest mandates, including provision of security and protection of civilians; promotion of human rights; disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of combatants; disarmament, demobilization, repatriation,

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[14] A total of eighty-seven semi-structured and unstructured interviews were conducted between 2009 and 2012 with UN staff; staff of Permanent Missions to the UN; Congolese political and military officials, civil society actors, and academics; and relevant academics, policy analysts, and journalists. I also draw on my general knowledge of Congo and MONUC from the time that I lived and worked there, 2006 to 2008.

[15] I limit my analysis to the period from 2003, when the post-war Transitional Government was established, until the mission's end in 2010. The First Congo War (1996–7) resulted in the ousting of long-time dictator Mobutu Sese Seko and his replacement by Laurent-Désiré Kabila. The Second Congo War (1998–2003) followed just a few months later, pitting externally backed rebel groups against the regime in Kinshasa.

[16] United Nations, "MONUC Facts and Figures," Department of Peacekeeping Operations, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/monuc/facts.shtml>, and United Nations, S/RES/1856 (2008).

reintegration, and resettlement (DDRRR) of foreign combatants; security sector reform (SSR); electoral assistance; and stabilization. It also included departments specifically dedicated to HIV/AIDS education and awareness and gender equality, and it established the largest UN radio station in history, Radio Okapi.[17]

The war itself was highly complex, pitting externally backed rebel groups against the regime in Kinshasa. It was characterized by multiple conflict parties, shifting alliances, and both the fractioning of existing rebel factions and the emergence of new ones during and after the war. At its height, the conflict also became significantly internationalized, drawing in seven neighboring African countries.[18] The conflict formally ended with the signing of the Global and All-Inclusive Agreement in Sun City, South Africa, in December 2002, and its Final Act in April 2003, following a negotiation process known as the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, which brought together the main Congolese parties to the war as well as the political opposition (a coalition of unarmed groups and parties) and civil society (known as the *forces vives*), including traditional leaders. The agreement established a transitional government known as the 1+4 model, which included one president, Joseph Kabila, and four vice-presidents, one each from two main rebel groups—the Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie-Goma (RCD-G) and the Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo (MLC)—Kabila's former government, and the political opposition. Two other agreements—the Pretoria Agreement between Congo and Rwanda and the Luanda Agreement between Congo and Uganda—were signed in July 2002 and September 2002 respectively.[19]

Peacekeeping following these internecine conflicts came with a number of challenges. The rapidly changing constellation of conflict parties and stakeholders has meant that even a question as simple as determining who potential local owners are is complicated. In addition, some parts of the country, notably the northeastern district of Ituri and the eastern provinces of North and South Kivu, continued and continue to see intermittent fighting well after the formal cessation of hostilities, both related and unrelated to the "main" divisions of the war. These challenges have been exacerbated by the presence of large deposits of natural resources, including oil and timber, and copper, coltan, cassiterite, gold, diamonds, and other minerals, which evoke the interest of neighboring countries and multinational mining companies as well as enable state and non-state actors to sustain their activities. On a

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[17] See United Nations, S/RES/1493 (2003); S/RES/1565 (2004); S/RES/1596 (2005); S/RES/1756 (2007); S/RES/1794 (2007); S/RES/1797 (2008); S/RES/1856 (2008); S/RES/1906 (2009); and "MONUC Mandate," Department of Peacekeeping Operations. <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/monuc/mandate.shtml>.

[18] These are Rwanda, Uganda, Angola, Chad, Burundi, Namibia, and Zimbabwe.

[19] Séverine Autesserre, *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 51–3.

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practical note, the sheer geographic size of the Congo (approximately the size of Western Europe), together with its weak to non-existent infrastructure, made the logistics of the operation complex and expensive.[20] Finally, the size of the mission itself meant that coordination and communication between departments, between civilian and military staff, and with headquarters in New York were challenging.

While the case of MONUC is an extremely complex one, it is also one that is central to understanding the UN's conceptualization and operationalization of ownership and therefore one from which conclusions can be expected to apply more broadly. Because it was the largest peacekeeping operation in UN history and garnered widespread international attention, MONUC has had a strong influence on the UN's peacekeeping practice generally and has been vital to defining and redefining the principles according to which peacekeeping is pursued, both within and outside of the UN. Indeed, MONUC was established around the same time that local ownership began to seep into peacekeeping discourse and it embraced the rhetoric of national ownership and inclusive approaches. It is thus a case from which the assumptions underpinning UN understandings of ownership and the resulting practices can be gleaned. In addition, because peace operations now constitute one of the UN's most important activities, with the DPKO budget nearly double the regular budget, critical examination of the assumptions and practices that inform peacekeeping policy is a necessary and important endeavor.[21]

While Congo provides a highly pertinent case for examining the meanings and uses of ownership, this study is not exclusively about Congo. Indeed, local ownership is a crosscutting or "meta" issue that is treated as a general principle of peacekeeping by UN staff, not as one relevant to certain missions and not others. UN staff therefore do not usually view its importance or operationalize it differently in different operations, but instead transfer conceptions of it from one context to another.

For this reason, the study is also enriched with examples from a number of other cases, including East Timor, Liberia, Afghanistan, and Bosnia.[22] While these cases incorporate many of the challenges seen in Congo, such as shifting alliances and fragmenting conflict parties, the presence of natural resources,

[20] Congo has only 2,794 kilometers of paved roads and less than 1 fixed line telephone per 100 people. See Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), "The World Factbook: Congo, Democratic Republic of," <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cg.html>. The UN therefore relied on air transportation for the movement of personnel and goods in the country. Air operations regularly accounted for over 50% of the mission's operational budget and over 20% of its overall budget. See United Nations, "ACABQ Reports."

[21] The UN's regular budget for the biennium 2016–17 is $5.4 billion, and its peacekeeping budget for the 2015–16 fiscal year is approximately $8.27 billion. See United Nations, A/RES/70/249 A-C (2016); and United Nations, A/C.5.69.24.

[22] Though the armed interventions in Bosnia and Afghanistan were not led by the UN, it was extensively involved in civilian peacekeeping.

the interference of neighboring states, and complex mission structures, they were selected primarily because they represent different models of peacekeeping that vary on the degree of authority that local actors can and should have. The UN missions in Bosnia and East Timor were highly intrusive international transitional administrations, in which the international community effectively took over sovereignty from the host state and became intricately involved in nearly all aspects of post-conflict governance and reconstruction on a temporary basis. By contrast, the international community adopted a "light footprint" approach in Afghanistan that put local actors in the lead on peacekeeping. Liberia, for its part, is often held up as a success for local ownership, where a number of institutions were handed over to Liberians and remain effectively managed by them. These examples thus represent a variety of "takes" on local ownership, and are thus able to confirm and add subtlety to findings in the primary case of Congo.

Why Read this Book

This book's primary contribution is to the ongoing discussion surrounding local ownership in peacekeeping, one that often takes for granted the benefits of local ownership and treats it as accepted wisdom. It contrasts ownership in theory with ownership in practice, unpacking the discourse, understandings, and operationalization of the concept and providing detailed empirical data to demonstrate how ownership works—or does not work—in peacekeeping. This analysis is relevant both to peacekeeping scholars and policymakers, for whom local ownership has become a key principle and a widely accepted, yet understudied, concept.

More broadly, this book contributes to debates about different approaches to rebuilding war-torn states, the effectiveness of UN interventions, and the conflicting obligations of the UN. As mentioned, local ownership gets to the heart of the question of the appropriate roles for national and international actors in post-conflict settings. By taking into account the dynamic relationship between actors and the contradictory interests and obligations they face, this book adds nuance to debates over how more or less international intrusion affects the effectiveness and legitimacy of peacekeeping.

Beyond the debate over peacekeeping paradigms, there exists a broader debate about whether international intervention can ever be effective. As described, there is a good deal of normative discomfort with the imposition of external structures and norms on national polities, as well as a strong resistance to it by national actors, because it is perceived to violate the right to self-determination. At the same time, many studies conclude that international interventions can go a long way toward helping war-torn states on

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the road to stability and development, and few are willing to leave them to their own devices. By addressing the relationship between local and international actors in peacekeeping and between the operational and normative obligations of peacekeepers, this study adds a new dimension to a larger debate in international relations about the effect, if any, of external interventions on internal processes, a discussion that extends "upwards" to development assistance, democratization, and globalization, and "downwards" to issue-specific areas such as transitional justice and security sector reform.

Finally, this book frames its analysis within a broader discussion of the conflicting normative and operational objectives of the UN, thus shedding light on the motivations of the UN as an actor and the ways in which it seeks to generate legitimacy and reaffirm its identity (or identities). Ultimately, by increasing our understanding of the various goals of the UN's peace operations and the different obligations behind actual practices, this book speaks to students of international organizations, helping to increase our understanding of how international organizations function and prioritize their various goals.

Overview of the Book

My argument is developed through a further eight chapters. Chapter 2 establishes a framework for understanding local ownership, focusing on the conflict between the UN's normative and operational obligations in peacekeeping and drawing on theories of the behavior of international organizations. Specifically, I examine the principle of self-determination, assessing current understandings of the concept and how a duty to uphold the self-determination of member states constrains the UN's approach to intervention, while also taking into account the operational imperative of the UN to act in conflict situations. My analysis of the UN's various institutional imperatives and the contradiction between them enables me to demonstrate how current thinking about and the apparent logic behind local ownership in peacekeeping fails to hold in practice.

Chapter 3 traces the evolution of the concept of local ownership from its origins in development to its introduction into peacekeeping. This discursive history examines the various usages of the term—What is being owned? Who are the owners? When should ownership begin? This discussion brings to light two important assumptions on the part of the UN: first, that local ownership enhances legitimacy and sustainability by preserving the host country's self-determination and minimizing the degree of UN imposition on it, and second, that ownership is something technical and implementable, and not something normatively laden and contested. This view, however, neglects the normative bases for understandings of ownership, thus failing to grasp

the fact that national and international actors understand ownership very differently and therefore have different expectations of their respective roles in peacekeeping.

Chapter 4 focuses on this latter point, examining how in fact divergent normative beliefs inform understandings of ownership. Specifically, it shows how different conceptualizations of peacekeeping—namely liberal and communitarian peacekeeping—give rise to these different understandings on the part of UN and national actors: for the UN, local ownership is a limited concept that entails a process of appropriation by national actors of a liberal vision of post-conflict political order; for national actors, ownership is a broad concept in which national actors imagine, define, and realize their own vision for post-conflict peace and peacekeeping, with material and technical assistance from international actors.

This discussion brings two important contradictions to light. First, while the UN's discourse reveals a belief that local ownership will boost the legitimacy and sustainability of peacekeeping by rendering it more indigenous, its understanding reveals a conviction that indigenous practices are necessarily illiberal and contributed to the outbreak of fighting in the first place, and therefore must be replaced or altered. Second, it shows that while the UN's discourse of local ownership displays a belief that ownership will also render peacekeeping more legitimate by promoting self-determination, its understanding of local ownership actually restricts self-determination and deepens external intrusion into the host country by limiting it within liberal parameters. Most importantly, this discussion shows how the UN shapes and constrains the version of local ownership present in its discourse in order to preserve the achievement of a key operational goal—in this case the liberalization of the post-conflict state.

Chapters 5 and 6 turn to the issue of how the UN operationalizes ownership. Chapter 5 focuses on practices of ownership, that is, the concrete activities that the UN undertakes to create and maintain ownership. I show that the UN implements ownership in a half-hearted and ad hoc manner, employing a range of practices that are neither coordinated nor explicitly or exclusively geared toward the creation of local ownership. Most importantly, I show how the UN undertakes these practices in a restrictive way that limits the amount of substantive agency turned over to local actors, out of a fear that doing so will imperil the achievement of its operational goals. Accordingly, in line with understandings, the UN constrains the practices of local ownership in order to promote its operational objectives; in so doing, it further weakens self-determination and thus legitimacy and sustainability.

Chapter 6 addresses a different aspect of operationalization, focusing on the UN's selection of local owners. It outlines two distinct approaches to the selection of local owners: first, in what I call *liberal ownership*, the UN interacts

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Whose Peace?

with and includes a broad variety of groups in its activities, regardless of their capacity levels, with the condition that they be moderate and liberal; second, in what I call *elite ownership*, actors are selected for their existing level of capacity to undertake and maintain peacekeeping and governance activities, regardless of their liberal credentials. These both represent highly selective approaches to ownership, again demonstrating how the UN constrains the broad and inclusive ownership depicted in discourse in order to protect its ability to achieve its operational goals. However, this selective operationalization of local ownership also negatively affects self-determination and deepens the level of UN imposition onto the host country, thus imperiling legitimacy and sustainability further.

Chapter 7 brings together the previous three chapters to address why the UN, despite the fact that it has a restricted conceptualization of ownership and constrains it operationally, continues to invoke the discourse of local ownership. I examine how the UN aims to generate legitimacy through discourse both for local actors and for itself by depicting the intrusive activities of peacekeeping as locally owned. I show, however, that because of the gap between its rhetoric and its behavior and between the UN's and local actors' understandings of what local ownership should entail, these efforts are unconvincing in the eyes of local actors. At the same time, despite its failure to boost legitimacy in the eyes of local actors, local ownership discourse is employed as a tool for self-legitimation for the UN, enabling it to justify its actions internally and reassure itself of its continued legitimacy. However, both of these legitimation efforts, whether successful or not, seek only legitimacy through adherence to institutional principles, with little regard to other sources of legitimacy, including, most importantly, operational effectiveness.

Chapter 8 turns to this latter point, examining how the UN's restrictive, ad hoc, and selective approach to local ownership, conceptually and operationally together with the broad discourse it invokes, affect its ability to achieve its two overarching operational goals—the liberalization of the host country and the delivery of tangible outputs—despite the fact that that it is precisely the concern for these goals that leads the UN to limit local ownership. The chapter explores several reasons for this. On the one hand, because liberal ownership emphasizes the interaction with liberal but weak actors with little capacity and little influence, it weakens its own ability to deliver results quickly and efficiently while also minimizing its impact on the nature of the structures and institutions of the state. On the other hand, because elite ownership entails the interaction with more capable actors but ones that often have illiberal tendencies, the UN often entrenches their power and loses leverage over them and thus undercuts its ability to achieve results in the near term and to orient them in more democratic directions. This effect is aggravated by the UN's discursive emphasis on local ownership, which enables local actors,

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particularly elites, to justify their resistance to the UN, in effect turning the UN's own discourse against it. Ultimately, the UN's failure to achieve its stated goals also imperils its legitimacy, as it prevents the UN from demonstrating operational effectiveness.

Chapter 9 offers concluding remarks on my findings, while also situating the book within broader debates in peacekeeping and international relations.

A Note on Terminology

Several terms employed throughout this study require clear definition. First, this book addresses multidimensional peacekeeping operations, which some analysts refer to as peacebuilding. Within the UN, however, peacebuilding refers to the work of the PBC, so I use the term peacekeeping, except where I reference the work of others who use the term peacebuilding. I also use the term peacekeeping and peacekeepers to refer to both military and civilian activities and personnel.

Second, for expediency, I use the term United Nations (UN) to refer to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and its field missions. The UN is, of course, a large and diverse organization, and its many different departments, funds, and agencies represent a plethora of viewpoints and opinions on the matters discussed in this study. Indeed, as can be seen from the diversity of interviewees targeted by this study (see Annex I), it was my specific intention to capture this diversity of perspective. However, as the headquarters and field staff of DPKO are the primary UN actors with which I am concerned, when I use the term UN, I refer to them unless I specify otherwise.

Finally, I use the term local ownership interchangeably with national ownership. Local ownership is the phrase most commonly found in UN peacekeeping discourse as well as academic and policy writings on the subject, and it is therefore the phrase used most often in this book. However, by local I do not mean subnational, I simply mean the opposite of international, unless specifically noted. For this reason, I also refer to local and national actors interchangeably, unless otherwise specified.