The Distinction of Peace

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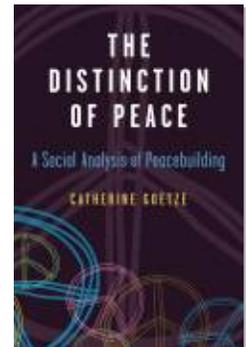⇒ For additional information about this book
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Pierre Bourdieu's Toolbox

*Fields, Power, Practices, and Habitus in the
Analysis of Peacebuilding*

What is peacebuilding? Shouldn't it be the normal requirement for a book on peacebuilding to offer a definition upfront? This certainly is the way most books on peacebuilding open, by setting out a definition with the words "peacebuilding is . . ."—and from there on the researcher proceeds to sort out which activities will count as peacebuilding and who peacebuilders are. In a next step, qualitative criteria may be attached to the definition of peacebuilding and then interrogated to determine whether the peace built is a "good" peace or not. Yet the first challenge in analyzing the patterns and modes that dominate peacebuilding is to question the validity of our analytical categories.[1] Asking what peacebuilding is produces exactly one of those categories of thought that formulates a common-sense understanding of reality, but without questioning which authority has privileged this way of thinking over others. For determining what peace is and how and by whom it has to be achieved is exactly what is at stake in the field of peacebuilding.

Definitions are never neutral, nor are they always benign. They reflect a certain subject position and perspective on the matter to be investigated. It is always necessary to clarify who is advocating which definition, and for what reasons. In this book, peacebuilding is initially understood in a wide and vague sense as any activity that is undertaken

by globally acting individuals or organizations in order to establish what they think peace is in a region that they have defined as being at war. The dichotomy between peace and war is at the core of this definition, which leaves it entirely to empirical analysis to determine who says what peace is and what war is. The book is, indeed, an exploration of the "who?" in this definition, and the research rationale is that the definition of peace results from knowing and understanding who is speaking, and on which grounds these persons have gained the authority to speak and to define peacebuilding.

These actors interact in a social field. The definition of peace, war, and peacebuilding is what is at stake in this field, along with what makes these different actors interact in the attempt to gain or assert their authority. The concept of "field" is one of the "thinking tools" borrowed from Pierre Bourdieu's analytical toolbox.[2] Bourdieu did not intend to build a fully fledged sociological theory, and he refused all throughout his voluminous work to unify and streamline his concepts into a consistent theory of society.[3] This refusal was grounded in an epistemology that rejected the fixing of meaning of our categories of thought. Bourdieu took the very fundamental stance on all sociology (and all sciences for this matter) that such fixing of meaning signifies an uncritical acknowledgment of the power structures that produce this meaning in the first place.[4] It is therefore inadequate to treat Bourdieu's concept of "field" and its relatives, "capital" and "habitus," as if they are part of a total theory of society. They are not; they are merely tools that allow analysis of exactly those power structures that produce meaning in a given space of social interaction.[5] They are what allow the social analysis (and the analysis of power) to be undertaken, and must not be confused with the faits accomplis of the analytical findings or social facts that are investigated.

Hence, it makes little sense to dissociate the dispute over the definition of peacebuilding from the question of who and what kind of activity belongs to the field. Consequently, it is in no way surprising that attempts to count definitions of peacebuilding, or even to nail one down as being the right one, have concluded that there are as many and as differing understandings as there are actors in the field.[6] An actor, international organization or other, identifies itself with the field and seeks distinction from other actors if it classifies its own activities or that of others as "peacebuilding" or as "humanitarian," or as something completely different. Who belongs to the field and who does not, and what kind of activity is considered right and good in the field and what is not, are questions that are constantly disputed, in flux, and malleable.[7] If we talk

of social fields, we are therefore talking of actors who relate to each other in a competitive manner and dispute the essential question of what they are doing and what authority can determine if these are the right things to do.[8] Fields are established by the weaving of webs of direct and indirect relations between actors in the field, and by their competitive and distinguishing practices; these relational webs form a microcosmos in the larger universe of society.[9]

Social actors are embedded in many and multiple relations and, hence, in many and multiple fields. Relations are, in principle, unbounded, and it is therefore the observer's decision that relations should be regarded in their entirety as fields to be investigated. It is the observer who takes up a certain viewpoint on the field and subsequently develops a specific perspective on it; Bourdieu speaks of a peephole through which the observer looks upon the field.[10] Yet the viewpoint is not chosen arbitrarily. The observer moves back and forth between the empirical observations of the field and her research questions and interests; by and large research consists precisely in mapping out the contours of the field. The viewpoint thus results from a reflective process of empirical research and theoretical questioning over the essence of the field under investigation. As mentioned above, the essence of the field is the debate specific to *this* field and which distinguishes it from others; it is what is at stake in this field only, and not in others.[11] To put it simply, one knows that a field is a field when one sees it; and those who are in the field recognize it as such and have very clear ideas of who belongs in the field and who shouldn't. In order to know what a field is the observer needs to consider the discursive claims that actors make about the field and the practices with which they reproduce the conditions of existence for such claims.

By using a field theoretical approach, this research departs in many respects from the commonly used frameworks for the analysis of peacebuilding. As a matter of world politics, most research on peacebuilding is framed within the theoretical debates in the discipline of international relations (IR), and draws mainly on political science models of analysis with their particular focus on institutions and organizational structures.[12] Field theory, however, is a sociological theory that privileges the exploration of social relations over the analysis of legal institutions, and focuses on social actors (as broadly understood) rather than on institutional actors.

There are many good reasons to espouse social theory in the study of world political phenomena. Conventional international relations theory

is largely insufficient when it comes to analyzing global social phenomena such as transnational social movements, globally and glocally acting nongovernmental organizations, various manifestations of globalized civil society or complex social transformative policies such as development aid, or, precisely, peacebuilding.[13] On the other hand, adjacent disciplines like sociology, geography, political science, or economics often remain within the tight limits of their respective methodological nationalism and struggle to integrate transnational, international, and global perspectives. Hence, although there has been an increasing body of sociological approaches in the analysis of world politics, many areas still are open to exploration. Peacebuilding is certainly one of them.

Peacebuilding is all at once a stately diplomatic affair, a constantly widening policy field of international organizations, and a normative discourse that motivates nongovernmental and transnational social forces to project their activities, norms, and ideas about how the world should be organized on a global and a local level. Each of these aspects could (maybe) be analyzed and explained by realism, institutionalism, and mainstream constructivism, respectively, but every single mainstream IR theory would struggle to cover all aspects. Importantly, the existing realist, institutionalist, and constructivist paradigms are sufficiently mutually exclusionary and contradictory that it would be impossible to establish a coherent analytical framework to grasp peacebuilding's internal logic and dynamics. This is particularly obvious when it comes to the puzzling question of why peacebuilding continues in quite the same manner since its inception even though the failure to build peace is rather obvious in many cases where peacebuilding is met with, sometimes violent, resistance. Neither mainstream school of international theorizing is able to address the process of inclusion and exclusion that is in the making when peacebuilding missions are deployed in postconflict settings.[14]

Fields

The holistic perspective of field theory allows peacebuilding to be captured to a much larger extent than traditional IR theories do. At its origins in the social theories of Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, and other founders of sociology, field theory was developed mainly to comprehend the synchronic movement of social differentiation and integration.[15] As Bernard Lahire points out, "fields have a history and only have meaning in the framework of differentiated societies."[16] Such differentiation con-

cerns mainly the increasing division of labor in modern societies. Contemporary globalization processes can certainly be understood as accelerated processes of global divisions of labor. Historically, the division of labor in the wake of the capitalist and industrial expansion has created new professions, and with this new socio-professional fields. At the same time, the reorganization of political communities in nation-states has led to an increased fragmentation and specialization of governing tasks with ever more differentiated bureaucracies, ministries, and specialized agencies. Similar processes can be observed on the international level and have been analyzed with the framework of field theory.[17] Peacebuilding combines processes of professional and bureaucratic as well as political differentiation and specialization. Such processes are exactly the topic of this book, for the emergence of peacebuilding as a socio-professional and political field is the result of such differentiations.

Bourdieu has developed and specified field theory into a broad framework of analysis that allows dissection of the specific rationales of inclusion and exclusion of such various fields as the literary field, the high bureaucracies, or academia. Rationales of inclusion and exclusion reflect patterns of power and domination that are specific to the field and its stakes. Power relations are woven through the direct and indirect interaction of actors in the field who are positioned at varying distances and positions to each other. Those differences in social positions result from the actors' capabilities to reproduce the resources that give them access to the field and to specific positions in the field. Bourdieu calls these resources "capital."

The concept of capital captures the temporal and versatile aspects of these resources: they might have been produced in the past; they can be exchanged and inherited, stored in the present and invested in the future. Bourdieu distinguishes four basic forms of capital; however, these four forms can be conjugated in infinitely diversified and differentiated sub- or alternative forms, as capital is often specific to the field in which it is employed. In its basic forms, one can identify economic (financial), cultural, social, and symbolic capital.

In Bourdieu's understanding of fields, capital forms are field-specific forms of power. Power is therefore not a resource per se (and it is certainly not a "thing"); any form of capital needs foremost to be recognized as important, crucial, valuable, and influential in the field. For instance, academic educational capital is important in the educational field and in fields that draw on it, for example, the field of liberal professions, yet it is rather irrelevant in the field of sports such as boxing. Or, to take

examples from Bourdieu's own research, economic and financial capital is important in the field of the modern labor market (or any capitalist market field), but it was irrelevant in the field of Kabyle village societies in 1950s Algeria.[18] The temporal and functionally versatile notion of capital allows, furthermore, accounting for a large range of manifestations of capital—educational capital, for instance, is not only expressed in the knowledge a person might have gained in his or her studies, but also, and importantly, in material proof such as certificates, doctorates, and books. Indeed, the imperative of defining fields in terms of their own self-ascribed logics forces the observer to identify in each case what specific kind of capital is important in the observed field. Hence, all fields can be identified as such because they are internally structured by a specific configuration of forms of capital that determine the social hierarchy of the field. The power relations that situate actors in a hierarchical order in a field are expressed through this grammar of field-specific capital configurations.

By extending the concept of capital beyond the category of money, Bourdieu seeks furthermore to emphasize the hegemony that modern utilitarian economic reasoning exercises over the social sciences.[19] Social action can be reduced neither to the gain-maximizing rational actor model nor to ideas of utilitarian egoism—both of which Bourdieu labels as being on the lowest level of sociological reflection.[20] That said, the notion of interest needs to keep its explanatory value, as actors do act in their own interests; yet their interests are much wider, more profound, and more differentiated than simply getting one's own. More important, the actors' interests cannot be gauged without taking into consideration the field they are in. Rational choice theory's assumption of immutable, fixed preferences, which have a value of their own, is a fiction. Value is ascribed by the actors themselves and by the "economy" of the field. Resources and preferences for action are only "capital" if they are considered valuable. Hence, by widening the notion of capital, Bourdieu takes into account the significant variations of the kind of resources actors put to work in order to gain, maintain, or defend specific subject positions within a field.

The concept of field reflects, in part, a structuralist understanding of interaction, but it is different from the understanding that is dominant in international relations realist theory and its variations. The notion of capital is both wider and more differentiated than the notion of capabilities, as is the Bourdieusian notion of interest. Structural realism certainly assumes that actors position themselves with respect to the actions of

others.[21] Recent reworkings of this basic premise, and the introduction of social constructivist elements like that of "security communities,"[22] "communities of practice,"[23] or "democratic peace,"[24] have furthermore tried to explain patterns of distinction and closeness of state behavior over time; yet none of these explanations has abandoned the ontology of states behaving as rational actors in search of exogenously defined national interests (such as preservation of territorial integrity and territorial and judicial sovereignty). Neither have they, for that matter, abandoned statist ontology as such.

The question why peacebuilding continues can hardly be answered through such narrowly defined analyses of self-interest. Certainly, much of the persistence of the field is due to hierarchical diplomatic games played among the UN member states, and most notably among the five permanent members of the Security Council (as will be explored in detail in chapter 2).[25] However, as a result of the diplomatic bickering the UN has carved out a specific role for its organization and, over time, as peacebuilding has become a "growth industry," as former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali stated, numerous other intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations have entered the field.

In this process, peacebuilding has also gained traction of its own, with a large range of nonstate actors involved. Furthermore, even if such state haggling over authority in the international realm can explain where UN missions are deployed and where they are not, this still does not tell anything about the specific forms and appearance of peacebuilding, for example, its excessive focus on human rights and transitional justice (as discussed in chapter 7).

Such lacunae in classical IR theory are the direct result of its narrow ontology of state behavior, which assumes that states act rationally in a utilitarian sense. In classical IR theory the state is taken for granted, while a critical analysis of world politics requires the scholar to precisely question this "natural" authority of the state to decree values and politics. Far from being "natural," this authority stems from the state's monopolization of not only violence capital but of all other forms of capital, too. Most important, the state's monopolization of cultural and symbolic capital has, historically and currently, profoundly shaped the categories within which we think of the state. Bourdieu's critical stance goes further than Alexander Wendt's argument that "anarchy [and by extension, sovereignty] is what states make out of it."[26] Wendt argues that concepts like anarchy or sovereignty are reproduced in the notions and rules that order interstate diplomacy. Yet he does not provide any explanation for

the specific forms of these rules, nor who generated them, or why and how they have been generated in the first place. Authority in and of a political community could have been, and historically has been, asserted in other ways than the currently dominant model of state sovereignty, just as the interaction among political communities could have been, and has been, modeled in quite different ways to the world's current model of interstate diplomacy.[27] In the same vein, the question remains unanswerable as to which changes have been initiated by the increasing and diversified transnational flows and spaces in the most recent globalization processes, of which peacebuilding is also part.

Liberal institutionalist IR theory and its avatar of constructivism have proposed more refined models of how ideas, norms, and discourses spread—among others, that of human rights, which informs peacebuilding—yet these approaches are commonly flawed in their incapacity to formulate the relationship between power and ideas. In much of liberal institutionalist and constructivist theories norms and ideas spread because they are persuasive per se.[28] Or, if they are not inherently "right," they are adopted because they are part and parcel of institutionalization processes that make actors gain other "right" things.[29] Rather than being imposed by a logic of consequences that presupposes threat and, eventually, force, the norms, rules, and ideas generate and draw on a so-called logic of appropriateness.[30] In liberal institutionalism, much of this reasoning is still cast in assumptions of rationalist utilitarianism, that is, expressed in the language of economics, where the costs of defection are higher than the costs of participation.[31] The theoretical debate between the logic of consequences and the logic of appropriateness is over the question of whether such costs are material costs, as realists or some institutionalists would argue, or whether they entail intangible values such as reputation or even identity.

In both cases, the rationalizing of actors' behavior as a form of utilitarian maximization of (reputational or material) benefits reduces both culture and power to simple and unidimensional variables. Power lies either with the idea or with the actor.[32] Both are properties of the actor rather than properties of social relations. Such types of constructivist or institutionalist analyses therefore risk overlooking how malleable both are, and how they are produced and reproduced both in infinitely miniscule practices and through huge encompassing contexts. They do not engage with the counterfactual understanding that for any policy promoted there could have been an alternative, because they assume that any policy decision must have an inherent

property—either it is a "good" idea or that it is the least costly—which makes it the best choice for the decision maker. Neither does the question come up what "good" actually could or should mean; nor is the question investigated on which grounds the decision makers have the authority (or not) to make those particular policies rather than others. In the case of peacebuilding, this means that the claim is not disputed that peacebuilding is inherently "good"; consequently, this analysis equally neglects the question of what lays at the foundation of these claims.

Power

A burgeoning literature has, in the past two decades, critically examined this classical IR theory understanding power as a property. Mainly drawing on Foucault's work, these analyses have shifted the focus from power as a property (of norms or of actors) to power as discourses.[33] This not only changes the conception of actors, but also of the norms and ideas and how they (or culture more generally) interact with power. Discursive power is understood as generative power that allows for certain actions to take place.[34] Such an analysis focuses on the effect discourses have on those actors at the receiving end, as well as on those who expound them. Discourses fabricate meaning and give sense to actions and practices; they do not have power per se, but power flows through them because discourses have effects.[35] Foucault's understanding of power is very similar to Bourdieu's inasmuch as both reject the essentialization of power that characterizes those social analyses that see power as a property of actors or institutions.[36] From that perspective, culture—ideas, norms, values, discourses, narratives, and so forth—*are* forms of power, and any critique of power needs to pierce and deconstruct its aura of normalcy and common sense.

Yet Bourdieu's approach of dismantling power's appearance of being "normal" is again different from Foucault's.[37] Foucault's main interest is that of an archeologist who seeks to excavate the different layers of meaning and show their contingency by resituating them in their historical context and transformed meanings.[38] Although Bourdieu is, in principle, sympathetic to the critical exercise of such genealogies, he argues that this is not enough to grasp the effects and workings of power. Genealogy, or critical discourse analysis, reveals the arbitrariness and contingency of meaning and, hence, undermines the myth of univer-

sality. However, analyzing what is said is not yet analyzing who is saying what. Bourdieu argues that powerful discourses, that is, such discourses that matter, are not only expressed in words and ideas, but are *enacted*. Some actors have more authority than others to speak; consequently, the power of discourses differs depending on who is speaking. Structures of domination and authority reflect social hierarchies, and these, in turn, shape what can be said, and what is said, by whom. They also reflect the relational positions of the speakers.

Furthermore, discourses cannot be dissociated from their practical contexts. Discourses become relevant and sense-generating because they are recognized as such in those contexts they are speaking to. The meaning of a discourse is hence not only constructed by its content—rather, it is the authority of the speaker that counts; this, in turn, is contingent on the structure of the field, which is formed by the different capital configurations with respect to what is at stake in the field.[39]

Bourdieu draws on Erving Goffman's concepts of performance and staging to express that power needs to be presented to an audience as such and that the audience needs to be able to read the performance appropriately.[40] Power that is not understood as such by the audience is not power. Performances contain both discourses and practices. They draw, furthermore, on existing knowledge and understanding, which the audience also incorporates in ideas and discourses as well as in practices and behavior. A connoisseur recognizes the value of a performance exactly because she has practical and ideal knowledge and, hence, normative ideas of the matter at stake. The meaning of a discourse is hence not only constructed by its content; rather, it is the authority of the speaker that counts; this, in turn, is contingent on the structure of the field, which is formed by the different capital configurations with respect to what is at stake in the field.[41]

This explains Bourdieu's proposal to conceive of discursive power as its own form of capital—namely what he calls "symbolic capital," whose power has an effect on people, practices, institutions, and culture (again always to be understood in its vague, overarching sense).[42] As these effects shape livelihoods, bodies, and minds, Bourdieu calls the power of symbolic capital "symbolic violence." [43] Social positions are recognizable in the way people speak, move their bodies, express their bodies, dress, walk—in short, how they perform and behave. Practices—how things are done—are therefore an essential object of observation if one wants to capture capital configurations in social fields.

Practices

So-called practice theory has become a new buzzword of critical IR theory and, together with a growing interest in ethnographic methods, has also been applied to the analysis of peacebuilding, for instance in Séverine Autesserre's book *Peaceland*.[44] In Bourdieu's work "practice" is one analytical category alongside all others and takes up its full sense only when considered together with the concepts of "capital," "field," "habitus," and "distinction" and serves as tool of analyzing power structures. Most of contemporary research in international relations that prides itself on being inspired by Bourdieu's "practice theory" ignores most of his other concepts and the way they need to be thought and used together to make sense of the social world. Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot, for instance, define "practice" as "socially meaningful patterns of action . . . performed competently."[45] Such a definition turns Bourdieu's research program on its head (and would do the same for this book). By integrating the adjective "competent" into the definition of practice, the authors skip over the crucial question of what makes certain practices appear competent and others not. Practices are indicative of social structures of power because it is through the economic, social, political, and cultural structures that competence is socially gained and recognized. If such conditions of possibility are not analyzed, practices remain simply a more or less noticeable phenomenon but do not tell an awful lot about power.[46]

The particularity of Bourdieu's theory of practice was exactly to go beyond this phenomenological use of the concept, hence transgressing the basic sense given to the term in common language. In a very basic sense "practice" is everything an observed actor does whether he or she is playing piano and doing so for exactly twenty minutes every Friday, or seating country representatives in international conferences in French alphabetical order. But in a sociological sense, and most particularly in Bourdieu's sociology, practice means more, for it refers to what an actor is doing to other actors and, hence, the social sense of such actions.[47]

Practices are the enactment and the realization of the actors' capital configurations in a given social field. Practices are what actors do to affirm their position with respect to others. Practices are therefore neither entirely freely decided actions as imagined in philosophies of individual free will, nor are they mechanistic responses to exogenous incentives or constraints as, for instance, Parsonian functionalism assumes.[48]

Practices are actions that people can do within the limits of the capital they have, their dispositions, their position in the social space, and the constraints imposed by the "other," for their recognition and acknowledgment is essential for any practice to have a social sense at all.

In the French original, Bourdieu commonly speaks of "agents" rather than actors in order to indicate that individuals, groups, or institutions are embodied social structures (in this book, however, I will follow the more habitual "actors"). Bourdieu calls this interplay between the actors' interiorization and embodiment of social structures the habitus (more on this later).[49] Looking solely at practices as manifestations of a "real" world disregards this relational web in which actors are embedded and this interiorization of social positions.

Autesserre's book *Peaceland* is a case in point. Having spent several years of participant observation, and drawing on hundreds of hours of interviews, Autesserre paints a highly detailed and rich picture of the everyday lives of peacebuilders. Her approach stands in the tradition of the anthropology of development, which seeks to produce applied and applicable anthropological research about the "facts of development."[50] This research documents, often in much detail, the daily routines of aid workers to expose not only their knowledge but also "the sociality of aid professionals: well knit, class closed, and culturally enclaved in capital cities; globally connected and permanent; but locally isolated and transient."[51]

Autesserre's focus is deliberately "micro" in order to capture every little way of doing things in the hope that these may reveal ways to improve and adjust peacebuilding to make it more effective.[52] Despite its richness, the ethnographic approach reduces the notion of practice to daily routines and seeks to find their social sense in the reality of these practices themselves.

To stay within the realm of this study, one has to note for instance that driving a SUV or writing an English e-mail are not, sui generis, unjust actions. Their effect of excluding and discriminating against others—the local population, in most occurrences—is relational and situational. These acts are unjust only because the beneficiaries of aid do not drive SUVs or have computers to write English e-mails on. Practices are manifestations of social structures; they are the enactments of what people can do given their social position, the resources ("capital") to act they have at their disposition, and the goals they want to achieve.

As this example shows, observing practices alone does not allow the

production of knowledge about power and inequality structures in world politics, despite claims to the contrary.[53] The focus on the microcosmos of aid communities does document how particular types of knowledge are dominant and how they are embedded in structures of unfairness and injustice. However, research needs to dig deeper and more widely over time and space to understand what kind of specific knowledge this precisely is, where it comes from, and why this and not any other has become dominant in peacebuilding circles. Types of knowledge or practices do not become dominant because of their intrinsic value but because they emerge as socially recognized forms of worldviews and behaviors; and commonly this happens through a complex struggle in which dissenting and alternative knowledge forms or practices have been socially deconstructed and discarded.

The most important argument, hence, against such reduced understandings of "practice" is that simply noting that an actor does something like this or like that does not tell us how this practice has come into being and why it is perpetuated. This latter point remains particularly striking if certain practices are met with resistance, protest, or even violence, or if the practitioners themselves do not want to produce inequality and injustice, as it is often the case in development aid, humanitarian assistance, and peacebuilding. Hence, Autesserre (and others like Lisa Smirl, Béatrice Pouligny, David Chandler, Ole Jacob Sending, and many more[54]) recount how often and regularly peacebuilders develop denigrating attitudes toward local populations, including local staff, and that these attitudes provoke often violent reactions from the local populations, hence creating vicious circles of animosity. She also reports that many peacebuilders and many "locals" she talked to were conscious of the negativity of such vicious circles.[55] Thus, what remains puzzling is why such behavior is not changed.

Habitus

The particular force of social fields is to keep all actors inside the field through their interiorization of the "rules of the game." This interiorization, the dispositions that make actors act in a manner that is appropriate to their position in the field and to the field itself, is called habitus. Hence, the reason why peacebuilders do not change their behavior is simply that practices, habits, and behavior do not change easily once

they are normalized as habitus. It is the social function of the habitus to provide a stability of behavior that allows the entire field to act in a concerted and mutually understanding manner, according to Bourdieu:

> A field can only work if there are sufficient individuals who are predisposed to act as sensible actors in the field, who will employ their money, their time, sometimes their honor or their lives, to keep the game going, only for the little gain they might reap and that might appear, from a different perspective, as illusionary. . . . The motivation for action is not rooted in the material or symbolic utility of action as the mechanistic view says. The motivation for action is rooted in the connection between habitus and field, of the kind that the habitus determines all that it is determined by.[56]

Capital configurations bring about specific behaviors (or specific behaviors bring about specific capital configurations). They shape an actor's habitus. Capital links conceptually the structure of a field to the habitus. The habitus is a "structuring structure" inasmuch as it expresses, on the one hand, actors' ways of thinking and behaving as the result of their position in larger social structures, and, on the other hand, actors' reproduction of these structures in the ways they behave, act, and think. The habitus concept allows arguing that not only is the world a "world of our making" (to take up the title of an IR constructivist classic), but that we are of the world's making.

The concept of habitus, however, is based on the assumption of a sociological circularity but not on an assumption of logical circularity. Habitus and field evolve over time and their reproductive dynamics are spread over a large variety of actors whose respective positions allow for ever more and new conjunctures. In his elaboration of the concept in his afterword to Erwin Panofsky's *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*, Bourdieu specifies that the notion of a commonly shared culture that underlies the concept of "habitus" does not assume the unity and homogeneity of culture. On the contrary, culture must be understood as an infinity of variations over socially constructed and interiorized schemes.[57]

A habitus is the "modus operandi" of culture, that is, it is the foundational principle by which cultural expressions, whether in language (including literature and poetry), discourse, practices, or material forms (e.g., architecture), are generated. The habitus is a general disposition, which may have an infinite number of phenomenal expressions.[58] In fact, it necessarily will have many different forms of social realization

as every actor's social position is a different one in the field, and these distinctions play out in an endless row of social interactions. Bourdieu defines the habitus as an actor's and society's "embodied history";[59] it is, hence, as infinitely variable as the ways individuals move within their numerous fields and social contexts.

Bourdieu's concept of habitus is not as rigid as most concepts of identity (in fact, he never uses the concept of identity); he noticeably avoids referring to psychological or psychosocial vocabulary when talking about habitus.[60] The habitus must not to be confounded with the person itself; rather, it might be perceived as a capacity of the agent to act and react in a given situation in an appropriate way. In this sense, the habitus should be compared to a language, which on the one hand follows socially constituted rules and meanings yet on the other hand can be individually and creatively crafted to fit given social situations (or not).[61] The habitus describes ways of behavior as they are socially constituted and have become the expected and appropriate behavior in any given field or social situation. And this can also apply to situations that are new or radically different from former experiences—the capacity of any one agent to react and navigate (or not) shocks or situations, which are entirely new, is part of the person's habitus.

Hence, some people are better placed than others to defend, maintain, or advance their social positions in certain fields or changing environments. Importantly, some people are better placed to *communicate* their capacity to deal with new situations in a way that others in the same field would *expect* them to do. Actors in the same field, and more generally in the same culture, share the same habitus even if they express themselves very differently, and, as it might be, in a contradictory manner. As a habitus must be understood as modus operandi, it generates across a field similar, and because of this similarity, recognizable, and acknowledgeable discourses and practices. This does not preclude conflict, dissent, and protest, but such will happen within the limits of the "rules of the game."

The concept of habitus also must not be confounded with the concept of "social roles." Roles are defined by the functional requirements of the social system they are attributed to and are in need of "filling." The concept of habitus describes, on the other hand, the actor's manner of molding and morphing themselves into the social and cultural fabric of their environment. The habitus is the product of particular socialization and education processes. Acting according to a habitus is rarely a conscious behavior, even though it does reflect subjective strategies

of maintaining specific social positions. As such the concept of habitus is an answer to the conundrum of all sociological analysis, namely how to understand the objectively recognizable reproduction of social structures without the subjective intention of individuals to do so. The concepts of habitus and field elude the ontological problems of functionalist or other structuralist and deterministic accounts of behavior. Bourdieu, hence, proposes a solution to the agency-structure problem that has puzzled the social sciences. Both concepts, field and habitus, are, at the same time, structured and structuring, plastic in the light of the actions taking place and malleable according to the way the agents in the field are disposed to interact. They must not be understood as substitutes for "agency" or "structure," respectively. Fields do not exist without being constituted through the acts and interplay of the agents, their discourses and practices; habitus doesn't exist without being embedded in a field and arising out of its expectations and formations. One is, at once, the history, the context, and the condition of possibility of the other.[62]

The Empirics—Fielding Methods of Field Theory

This constant mutual ontological conditioning of field and habitus is expressed in the dialogues and struggles over the practical, institutional, organizational, discursive, and normative forms that the field and habitus should take. These commonly concern the questions of the right thing to do, to say, or the right manner to do or say. Yet these struggles and dialogues are rarely intentional and conscious strategic interactions. Rather, they have to be seen as naturalized, social, and relational processes of tuning into each other within the realms of a social field.

In the case of peacebuilding, for instance, this struggle takes place over the overtly political debate on intervention, peace, justice, and so forth, and, at the same time, in the organizational struggles over careers, appointments, mandates, financial and human resources, and so on. The encounter of habitus and field materializes, for instance, in recruitment processes where the applicant's habitus meets the field's expectations or not. In this interplay, field and habitus accord themselves almost naturally. Only such people who share the habitus of the field will consider entering the field and will be considered to have some legitimacy to do so; only such webs of social interaction that are successfully selective in constructing their membership can constitute themselves as distinct fields.

When investigating fields and habitus, it is therefore necessary to identify these conjunctures and their conditions of possibility, that is, those capital configurations that are specific to the field and which the agents seek to reproduce for themselves and to control for others. The key to understanding fields and habitus lies therefore in understanding the genesis of those capital configurations, and how they practically and discursively play out.

CONSTRUCTING THE RESEARCH OBJECT

It is important to understand that both "field" and "habitus" are schemes of social order, sense, and behavior that only appear because the researcher's analysis makes them emerge. They do not exist as hard facts, and actors are rarely aware of the structuring and ordering effects of their behavior. Whatever we do, we rarely act with the explicit intention of reproducing a social system. A prima facie analysis that takes the actors' own justifications for action at face value can hardly reveal the underlying dynamics and schemes. Every analysis of a social reality is necessarily based on assumptions and interpretations of what this reality *should* be.

The difficulty in accounting for the construction of the research object does not lie, therefore, in the analysis per se but in the critical reflection of the construction process. The research object is, indeed, an object in the grammatical sense of the term: it exists only because the observer's observation acts upon it, and the research objects' status is determined by the relation between observer and *observandum.* Hence, "fields" and "habitus" exist because the observer has constructed them as analytical objects.

Yet this construction process is not arbitrary or illusionary. Social facts are facts after all. People do talk, act, think, behave; socially constructed norms, ideas, and practices do shape bodies and minds. The constellations in which social actors find themselves positioned with respect to each other, and the resources they dispose of, have real effects on their lives and the lives of others. And many of these constellations are materialized and can, in fact, be measured, noted, documented, and captured through various data collection methods.

The difficulty lies, however, in the construction process itself. On the one hand, the categories, concepts, and notions, with which the analytical model is created, are already socially constructed and prestructure

the research object in certain ways. On the other hand, research objects themselves are not without agency and will—especially in situations in which they can influence the observers, for instance, interviews—try to manipulate the data they reveal. Social sciences need to take into account both the social construction of the social world and of its observation. This happens mainly in two processes: on the one hand, fields need to be reconstructed as contexts that produce their own meaning for the actors involved; on the other hand, discourses and practices have to be understood exactly in such contexts and with respect to the historicity of the social field in which they are embedded. Keeping in mind the relational and processual, that is, the historical character of fields and habitus, such an analysis is not circular. Rather, such an analysis enters into dialogue with the history, practices, and texts that make up the field and habitus.

The history of fields can be reconstructed by critically using data that reflect the materialization of capital such as income, professional status, educational achievements, parents' occupation, and so forth, but also more fundamentally through age, gender, and so on. However, such an analysis always has to take into account the social construction of these categories themselves, that is, a reflective understanding that any categorization reflects symbolic struggles in the field.

For instance, in the case of peacebuilding, the creation of a job description and position such as an under-secretary general for peacekeeping tells at least as much about the need to affirm the authority of the United Nations Secretariat General in peacekeeping as it tells about the increased importance of peacekeeping in world politics. Attached to such positions are explicitly and implicitly formulated expectations of the officeholder's education, background, ideas, and ways of speaking and presenting herself that again reflect the history of the field as well as of the habitus displayed in the field.

Using sociological categories for the analysis of fields therefore requires a reflective and genealogical approach to the categories used for the construction of data categories, echoing the structuring structures of the field. In the peacebuilding field, the following chapters will reveal, for instance, an important divide between those who have gained their university degree and professional training in a high-income country, and within those countries at some universities in particular, and those who have received their professional training in a middle- or low-income country. There is also a further gap to be observed between the family-inherited economic capital between those peacebuilders who originated

from a former colony, or what is now often called the global South, and those who originated from a high-income Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) country. Both gaps would be accepted without further reflection if the dominance of European and North American elite universities were not questioned. If, however, this finding is set against an awareness of just how much the dominant position of elite universities are constructed through the internal rules of the academic and educational field, it becomes clear that any person born and residing in the global South will need much more economic capital to allow them to study in the global North. Education in English, a secondary school education of a quality that allows university entrance in the North, the economic capacity to sustain visa applications[63] and allow for oversea studies, and so forth, all come at a very high price in the global South, and hence they are only accessible to a small minority of citizens. Data on the educational background of peacebuilders show, therefore, not only the conditions of possibility of their individual careers and lifestyles; they also reflect the global structuring of the educational field with its patterns of socioeconomic dominance among and within countries.

Sociological data hence allow the mapping of actors' capital configurations and situating the actors within fields. Analyzing the respective importance of various capital types furthermore provides indications as to what is at stake in the field and how symbolic capital is created. Yet the sociological data about peacebuilders is extremely difficult to come by. In the national contexts of most sociological research, samples can be relatively easily drawn from population data provided by national statistical agencies. Some high-income countries like Germany or the United Kingdom have additionally developed high-quality data in recent decades on the socioeconomic living conditions of their populations that allow refinements to the national statistics in categories such as household income and expenses.[64] These datasets also include a range of survey questions on attitudes and political behavior.

Internationally, however, such data do not exist, and particularly not for the purpose of studying the field of peacebuilding. As noted above, the field of peacebuilding contains an indeterminate and unbounded population, contrary to national populations, where each birth and death of a citizen and everything in between these two life events is statistically reported. Cross-national comparisons of datasets cannot provide the scope or quality of data required, either, as statistical reliability varies enormously among countries, undermining the reliability of the data.

Importantly, however, cross-national data gathering would not allow delimiting the *transnational* population of the peacebuilding field. A further difficulty facing the peacebuilding field is that it is not only unclear which organizations and activities belong to the field and which do not, but that peacebuilders also move in and out of the field, as we will see in chapter 4. Even if it were epistemologically unproblematic to establish a stochastic sample, it would be impossible in the case of peacebuilders because the size and structure of the base population is simply unknown. This has up to now seriously impeded social analyses of peacebuilding in particular, and of the world of transnational governance more generally.

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

A reflective approach to research refutes the assumption that there is some kind of ready-made data out there that we only need to piece together properly. With such an approach, the identification and finding of data becomes the research process in itself, and there is little distinction between the hermeneutic, exploratory, and final data analysis for one is a refinement and in-depth exploration of the other. Proponents of nonlinear, hermeneutic research have proposed a number of ways to describe such processes: as back and forth, as double hermeneutics,[65] as spirals,[66] as grounding theory,[67] and so forth. All these labels imply a refusal to see and practice the research process as a linear, planned in advance, and predictable procedure that leads the researcher from a hypothesis to an operationalized model to indicators to data and finally to the testing of hypotheses and reliable results. Contrary to its claims of linear reasoning, such an approach to research risks being circular as every single element can fit into the chain only if it is preconceived and standardized to fit in. Said the other way around, such observations will enter the analytical frame only if they fit its inherent definitions and categories, or, as Abraham Maslow so precisely said: "It is tempting, if the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail."[68]

Rather, a research process must be understood as a broad and multiform process where various elements of a larger picture are pieced together. Like with a painting coming into being, the research process starts with a rough sketch, and is then elaborated in more and more detail. The process is neither linear nor circular but rather a turbulent falling into place of various pieces.

The aim is to develop a coherent narrative in which single aspects

and pieces of knowledge come together in a systematic exploration, yet the way pieces of knowledge are identified and found does not follow a checklist strategy. Rather, single aspects and perspectives are explored as they emerge in the process of research itself. The systematic quality of the process results from the consistent referral to the original research-guiding question. The guiding question that ties all single investigative steps together is how the social relations of peacebuilders are shaped and how this shape influences their discourses and practices of peace. Hence, the research process is not arbitrary in the selection of the data and information it seeks, but it is consistently guided by the question whether and what exactly information, data, and knowledge is needed to answer these questions.

One critique that could be formulated, however, is that the data sought out could be heavily biased to fit a preexisting idea of peacebuilding as a social field. Such a critique assumes that nonbiased research is possible and that there are, for instance, means to assure a reliable representativity of data. Although the critique as such is legitimate—there is a risk of bias—both inverse assumptions about representativity and squeezing data into the model need to be refuted here. Both arguments refer, again, to a linear model of research in which a model, once defined, cannot be altered, and where a known and bounded population can be gauged by using fixed and unquestionable categories of measurement. Even if such an epistemology were at the basis of the research presented here, it would be impossible to establish a stochastically representative sample because the base population is simply unknown. The population of peacebuilders is unbound, and the essence of the social field plays out exactly through disputes of who is in and who is out, that is, in those fuzzy boundaries and gray zones.

But more fundamentally the epistemology of the research presented here is very different. The process of acquiring knowledge is not thought of as a process of confirming or refuting a predefined model and hypotheses, but should rather be seen as a learning process. Knowledge is stepwise added together, partly refuted when learned to be wrong or corrected when needed. The "model" can be, and even has to be, altered in the process. This means that "bias" is embraced and taken into account throughout the process—it is hardly the social reality that is wrong; if data, information, or knowledge pieces do not fit, it is very likely that the model is wrong and requires correction. The concepts used here—field, habitus, capital—are empty with respect to the specific types, forms, and characteristics of the social relations under

investigation. Consequently the research process is guided not by the wish to confirm preformulated hypotheses but to question and critically revise the picture of peacebuilding as it emerges in the process of building knowledge about it. A reflective and critical epistemology, in fact, requires critically investigating every newly acquired element of knowledge in order to check not only its plausibility but also to control for its potential to act as bias in further research.

In this case, the research process started with a rough sketch of the sociological profile of the peacebuilders. A first questionnaire survey was undertaken in 2008 with the aim of establishing a profile of the civil staff in the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) through a census survey. However, an initial authorization by the UN was withdrawn just a couple of weeks before the census survey was to have taken place. One can speculate about the reasons for the UN's refusal, but as a matter of fact no one has yet gained access to human resource data at the UN, not even researchers who are much better connected than I am. Consequently, the 2008 survey was undertaken with a selection of former staff of UNMIK. Many of these former staff members were working for the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) so that unintentionally the scope of the survey became larger than UNMIK itself and opened up the perspective on peacebuilding as a field.

The survey questionnaire consisted of three parts: a first section inquiring about fundamental social indicators such as origins, education, income, and marital status. The second section asked broad questions about political values and worldviews. The third section, finally, delved into the everyday working lives of the peacebuilders. While the aim of the first section was to capture a sociological image of the "typical" peacebuilder, the two other sections were designed to seize the perceptions that peacebuilders have of their own activity.

A common critique of survey research consists in bemoaning that survey data will rarely show what respondents "really" think. For a large variety of reasons, respondents are likely to give "wrong" answers, because memories are vague and often embellished, because respondents have various reasons to make them want to manipulate their self-image, or because respondents give answers they believe are socially acceptable. In the research for this book, such a response bias was, however, not problematic as it was exactly the self-representation of peacebuilding that was at stake in the questionnaires. It does not really matter, for instance, whether respondents have really read the authors they cited in the ques-

tionnaire section on "favorite political readings." What does matter is that these readings are those which peacebuilders think should be those they *should* cite. And, indeed, it is astounding how coherent the picture is of ideal readings, ideal heroes, and ideal historical narratives that emerged from the questionnaire (always keeping in mind that most of these questions were open ended). There certainly was respondent bias (does anyone really have Plato's *Republic* on his or her nightstand?), but the aim of the questionnaire was precisely to draw out this ideal image that peacebuilders hold of themselves.

In order to control for a potential regional bias in the 2008 survey and in order to check whether the coherence of this self-representation might be due to the fact that all respondents had a shared experience in UNMIK, I undertook a second wave of the survey in 2012. For this survey, I contacted people who had worked or were working in other countries where UN peacebuilding missions were taking place. Using the professional network site LinkedIn I contacted about 300 staffers, of which 146 took the survey (a response rate of roughly 50 percent). The sociological profile of this wave was different with respect to the age range of respondents and their geographic origins. However, the narratives of political values and worldviews, as well as of their daily working lives, were very similar to the findings from the first wave.

Both surveys, as well as a small number of in-depth interviews, pointed to the importance of education in the career choice and development of peacebuilders. They also pushed me to look more closely at the daily work lives and especially at the continuities and discontinuities of careers in peacebuilding. For both interests, I undertook a prosopographic analysis, again using the professional network site LinkedIn. This site allows users to upload their resumes and to describe their professional experience for all other users to see. Using the UN peacebuilding missions as search words, I collected about 600 resumes, of which about 550 provided sufficient data to be part of a larger N analysis of educational and professional trajectories in the field.

The prosopographic analysis and again a number of in-depth interviews showed a very closed network structure of careers. In order to better grasp this network structure, I undertook, on the one hand, a historical analysis of the first UN mission in the Congo, and, on the other hand, extensive research in newspaper archives and on the internet in order to retrace the career trajectories of higher echelons of the peacebuilding field.

The first peacebuilding mission in UN history, the mission to the

Congo from 1960 to 1964, was also extremely instructive about the terms in which peacebuilders see themselves. Through access to foreign office records in the United States, Belgium, the Soviet Union, and other countries, several historians have able to retrace in much more detail the events of this first mission and first failure of peacebuilding.[69] On the background of such a detailed event analysis, a deep analysis of the biographies and memoirs allowed me to reconstruct how the peace-builders themselves understood what they were doing in the Congo, and, on the other hand, how they judged what other actors, for example, local actors, were doing for peace. Unwittingly, those memoirs were com-piling criteria and describing what the authors saw as "good" peace or not, who they considered to be a peacebuilder or not, and what a "good" peacebuilder should be like. These findings could be usefully compared to the findings of the two surveys and the in-depth interviews that had informed the construction of the questionnaire.

The numerous memoirs, furthermore, allowed a network analysis in order to explore how careers developed in peacebuilding at this early stage, and it provided insights into the question of how the field had been institutionalized in legal and organizational terms. The network analysis was extended to present times, using the prosopographic data extracted from the LinkedIn resumes, and the biography data collected through newspapers and the internet. The present-day analysis allowed an appraisal of the contours of the field, its adjacency and overlaps with other socio-professional fields, and its internal structuring.

Bourdieu's preferred method for retracing capital configurations and the way they structure the field was the correspondence analysis. For a variety of reasons (not least money and time), such a correspondence analysis could not be undertaken for this book. However, using the visu-alization of network analysis has the same effect of showing concentra-tions of specific capital configurations and well serves the purpose of illustrating the argument made in the first section of this book about the structure of the field.

Neither analysis, of field or habitus, stands alone, but every data anal-ysis informed in one way or the other the conclusions drawn in this book. Another extremely valuable source was, it needs to be pointed out, prior and similar work undertaken by colleagues. Séverine Autesserre's, Lisa Smirl's, Kai Koddenbrock's, and Béatrice Pouligny's in-depth explora-tion of the interaction between peacebuilders and local populations;[70] Berit Bliesemann de Guevara's, David Chandler's, Vanessa Pupavac's, Mark Duffield's, and others who have explored the peacebuilding imagi-

nary universe;[71] Thomas Weiss's, Michael Lipson's, Wolfgang Seibel's, and Ole Jacob Sending's investigation into the bureaucracy and organization of peacebuilding and the UN—all these are only some of the excellent examples of research alongside numerous single case studies that have hugely informed this book.[72]

Conclusion

This book does not offer a universal definition of peacebuilding as it is not assuming that peacebuilding exists outside the experience of the people seeking to define the field from the inside. Peacebuilding is conceived as a social field in which the question of what constitutes peace and how to build it is the essential dispute that allows actors to position themselves with respect to each other. The concepts of field and habitus have guided and shaped the research for this book. The research object has been constructed with reference to these two concepts because they allow particularly well to capture the power relations that are enacted and incorporated in the peacebuilding field. Bourdieu's concepts of social relations allow analyzing both the actors' behaviors and their social conditions of possibility. In international relations such a sociological analysis is seriously handicapped by the difficult access to crucial sociological data. The analysis draws therefore on several different types of data: two waves of survey data, a prosopographic analysis, in-depth interviews, extensive biographical research, and a network analysis.

In the following, the first section of the book will retrace the emergence of peacebuilding as a socio-professional field and investigate the social networks and "classes" that make up the field. It will particularly carve out the social origins of peacebuilders and analyze how this shapes the symbolic capital in the field. The second section will delve deeper into the peacebuilder habitus by analyzing the discourse, imaginary, norms, and rules of the peacebuilding field.