EFFECTIVENESS OF MIDDLE POWER PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVE: THE UNITED NATIONS PEACEBUILDING FUND

IKRAME KOHL

Mohammed V University-FSJES Souissi-Rabat-Morocco. Email: ikrame.kohl@um5r.ac.ma

Abstract

Middle powers have increasingly played a significant role in the peacebuilding activities in the world, especially in post-conflict areas, because their diplomatic capabilities and the spirit of multilateralism enable these powers to fill the gaps between the major powers and local interests. The effectiveness of middle power-led peacebuilding programs is considered in this article using the example of the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (UN PBF), examining how these nations help in post-conflict recovery. Through this approach the study concentrates on the comparative case study method by examining the particular role of the middle powers in enhancing sustainable peace within the countries that are affected by conflicts. The major implications of the key findings include the fact that the effectiveness of the middle powers depends on the capacity to build local ownership, proper coordination, and a long-term interest in the consistency of peacebuilding. The paper also determines what contributes to the success or loss of such initiatives, including political goodwill, distribution of resources, and the alignment of the local and international players. The paper is relevant to the field of peacebuilding theory in that it demonstrates the unique role that middle powers play in the international peacebuilding systems and gives policy suggestions on how to maximize this contribution of the middle powers.

Keywords: Middle Powers, Peacebuilding, United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (UN PBF), Sustainable Peace, Local Ownership, Multilateral Diplomacy, Post-Conflict Recovery, Middle Power Diplomacy.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background: Increasing Middle Powers in International Peacebuilding.

Middle powers have become especially relevant in peacebuilding in the international sphere, particularly in the post-Cold War period, with the way the world powers used to interact with each other changed. Middle powers that usually describe the countries that have significant influence within the region without the global dominance that the superpowers possess, have been given a new avenue to participate in the peacebuilding process in the world. Such nations cannot impose their will on the basis of forceful military or economic influence but possess a special ability to influence due to the diplomatic interaction, multilateralism, and normative leadership (Acharya, 2014; Higgott, 2013). Middle powers like Canada, Norway and South Korea have been known to utilize diplomatic talks and their identification to the international structures and are therefore players in the international peace-making initiatives.

Over the past few decades, the middle powers have become of central importance in the process of peacebuilding, especially by way of multilateral organizations like the United Nations (UN). Such nations usually tend to mediate, assist in facilitation of dialogue amid the warring countries and aiding the rebuilding process after the war has ended (Lambourne & Herro, 2008). Their diplomatic ability, neutrality, and peace building interest have enabled them to assume major roles of the multilateral peacebuilding

operation. The middle powers do not merely engage in peacebuilding, they aid in shaping the peace process by fostering structures allowing political dialogue, reconciliation and institutional reform. As peace brokers, middle powers can offer a closing between local actors and the international community, to the extent that peacebuilding processes are not dictated by the outside, but are also contextual and locally owned.

On top of that, the middle powers are more inclined to underline the significance of peacebuilding based on the cooperation and localization of ownership, which is in contrast with more militaristic or top-down policies, that are commonly linked to the major powers. By doing this they are able to contribute to the peacebuilding process which is sustainable and responsive to the needs of the post conflict societies.

1.2 Defining Middle Powers and the Applicability of the UN PBF as Multilateral Peacebuilding Instrument.

Middle powers may be considered as countries that though not as dominant as great powers globally are powerful in regional and international politics. These countries have huge diplomatic and economic capabilities but do not have the military and coercive strength of the world superpowers (Fleck, 2015). Middle powers are generally those that advocate norms, including democracy, human rights, and international cooperation and tend to advocate multilateral solutions to the international problems. This rare blend of soft power and diplomatic influence enables them to play a major role in the peacebuilding initiatives in the war-torn areas without the need of using force (Evans, 2014).

Middle powers can have a chance to participate in the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (UN PBF), which is an essential tool in terms of middle task execution, offering financial statements at the right time in the post-conflict recovery process. The UN PBF was founded in 2006 and is aimed at assisting nations in overcoming the conflict situation through sustainable peace by supporting the efforts aimed at enhancing governance, the rule of law, and reconciliation (UN PBF, 2021). Such mechanisms of peacebuilding have long been identified by middle powers as the strategic nature of participating in such activities to enable them to influence the situation in a multilateral manner without necessarily having to intervene with direct military force or by coercive diplomacy.

The UN PBF avails an opportunity to middle powers to engage in peacebuilding in a manner that it is acceptable to them and their diplomatic policies. Middle powers can use the UN PBF to influence the conditions of post-conflict recovery by providing financial assistance and experience that aims at long-term stability, rather than the short-term peacekeeping actions. This flexibility of UN PBF is important because it provides middle powers with an opportunity to align their contributions with the post-conflict needs with the focus on local ownership and capacity building.

1.3 Research Paucity: What We Know/Do Not Know about the Performance of Middle Power Peacebuilding through UN PBF.

Although the involvement of the middle powers in the peacebuilding process has been increasingly active in the recent past involving the use of various establishments like UN

PBF, the literature on the effectiveness of their participation in these undertakings is relatively silent. The majority of literature on the UN PBF is inclined to address the role of the fund as a whole (Caplan, 2019) or to discuss the role of major powers (Ghani and Lockhart, 2008), but it is the contributions of middle powers that are underrepresented. Although the contribution of middle powers in peacebuilding diplomacy has gained increasing attention, there is limited research on the effectiveness of middle powers in the framework of the UN PBF.

The existing literature does not pay much attention to how the middle powers use the UN PBF to market peace in the post-conflict nations. It is clear that with their growing participation the need to conduct research on the particular mechanisms that are employed by middle powers in the UN PBF and how their efforts result in the long term success or failure of peacebuilding is urgent. Specifically, there is no research on the involvement of middle powers with the local actors, whether they can coordinate with other international stakeholders, and whether they need political will to maintain the peacebuilding process in the long-term.

The gap also exists in the realization of the struggles of the middle powers in a case of being engaged in peacebuilding by the multilateral organizations. Although a significant portion of the current literature is devoted to the external issues of peacebuilding, including the status of domestic actors and external donors, little is done to analyze the internal aspects influencing the efficiency of middle power-driven peacebuilding efforts. These have been domestic political climate, the degree of international support and the ability of middle powers to make their peacebuilding activities part of the wider international strategies.

1.4 Research Questions / Aims

The real goal of the present research is to criticize the efficiency of middle power-based peacebuilding efforts by the UN PBF. The research questions of the study are as follows:

- The effectiveness of middle power led initiatives through the UN PBF in attaining sustainable peace?

- Which conditions can make or deter middle powers more effective in peacebuilding efforts facilitated by the UN PBF?

By answering these questions, the study shall yield useful information on the roles played by the middle powers in the peacebuilding processes and how the impacts of their involvement in the international peacebuilding efforts can be increased.

1.5 Importance of the Research: Theoretical and Practical Implication

Theoretical Significance: This study adds to the understanding of peacebuilding by enlarging the theoretical premise to incorporate the role of middle powers when it comes to multilateral peacebuilding. The literature on peacebuilding available already is largely centered around the efforts of the great powers or the mechanics of the international organization. This paper, however, emphasizes the special roles of middle powers, which

play important roles in the process of peacebuilding but not based on military or economic superiority, but based on diplomacy, multilateralism, and norms (Barnett, 2012). The study will contribute to the existing knowledge of the dynamics of peacebuilding in the UN PBF and provide a more detailed perspective on how middle powers influence the overall outcome of peace in the world.

Practical Significance: The study has practical recommendations that can be applied by middle powers concerning the best way to play their role in peacebuilding initiatives in the UN PBF. The study will help to educate the policy makers on the best practices in participating in peacebuilding by considering the factors that determine the success or failure of middle power-led initiatives. Moreover, the research will provide information on the way the UN PBF can enhance its assistance to middle powers so that their input would result in more sustainable and inclusive peace processes in post-conflict nations (Osman et al., 2024).

1.6 Structure of the Paper

The structure of the paper is the following:

Section 2 provides a literature review of the research topic in questions of middle power peacebuilding and the role of UN PBF in multilateral peacebuilding efforts of middle powers.

Section 3 presents the research methodology, including the approach to the case study, the sources of data, and methods of its analysis to measure the effectiveness of middle power contributions.

Section 4 includes the findings of the research, which explains the efficiency of particular middle power-based initiatives in the framework of the UN PBF.

Section 5 talks about the findings and their comparison with the existing theories and provides practical policy suggestions on how to increase middle power involvement in the process of peacebuilding.

Section 6 is the conclusion of the paper, which presents the main findings of the paper and provides the future research directions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Peacebuilding: Ingreat Definitions and Frameworks.

Peacebuilding is a multi-dimensional and intricate process of providing long term peace and stability of post-conflict societies. Although the definition of peacebuilding differs, people tend to think of peacebuilding as the measures which are taken to mitigate the threat of conflict relapse by focusing on the causes of conflict and restoring the societal framework which will be required to maintain a permanent peace (Lambourne & Herro, 2008). A number of frameworks have been put forward to conceptualize peacebuilding with each framework emphasizing various aspects of the peace process.

One of the strongest frameworks in the peacebuilding theory is Liberal Peace. According to this model, liberal democratic institutions, free markets, and rule of law are put forward as the pillars to sustainable peace (Lambourne & Herro, 2008). As per this framework, the promotion of democratic governance, human rights, and economic liberalization will result in peace. Nevertheless, the liberal model of peace has faced much criticism due to being top-down in nature, which usually lacks attention to the needs, cultures, and preferences of the local people (Autesserre, 2017). Some critics believe that the imposition of the liberal democratic norms may weaken the indigenous social and political orders to render the peacebuilding efforts rather ineffective in the long term. Another important framework in the present-day peacebuilding is Local Ownership. It puts an emphasis on the role of local actors in the process of leading future peace processes, and the external actors act as assistants and facilitators (Autesserre, 2017). The point is that, the more peace processes are designed and implemented by local communities they have vested interests in the success of the peacebuilding efforts. This methodology is a critique of the liberal model of peace because it proposes a more context-sensitive and participatory form of peacebuilding, where local dynamics and traditions, as well as the ambitions of the communities impacted, are considered. The other aspect of an effective peacebuilding is Exit Strategies. The notion means the planning and realization of systems of withdrawal of international actors in the post-conflict areas when peace has been established (De Coning & Stamnes, 2016). The proper exit strategy is that which does not cause dependency among the peacebuilding interventions and also leaves the post conflict societies at risk of returning to violence. Studies have found that peacebuilding must be a gradual initiative in which local actors will be empowered to assume the role of governance and security. Nonetheless, exits created poorly may cause destabilization in case local capacity fails and a vacuum is created that may be occupied by local insurgent groups or even by re-emergence of violence.

2.2 International Relations Literature on Middle Powers.

Middle powers are the countries, which lack the influence that the superpower has on the world, yet they have considerable impact in the region, diplomatic influence, and economic capabilities (Hearn et al., 2014). They are usually regarded as influential in world politics based on diplomacy, multilateralism and norm promotion as opposed to the application of force and coercion. The idea of middle powers has been characterized as some of the key actors in the peacebuilding due to their special role in international relations. They are regarded as peacebuilding leaders using diplomacy since they can be neutral because they have the credibility to intervene between the parties in conflict (Behringer, 2005). Middle powers like Canada, Australia, and South Korea have taken part in playing active roles in peacebuilding processes both locally and internationally through the utilization of their diplomatic resources. These nations tend to become norm entrepreneurs whereby, they promote international norms concerning human rights, democracy, and humanitarian intervention (Behringer, 2005). Their ability to spearhead peacebuilding efforts is because of the fact that they can co-operate both with small and large states and fill in the gaps that are not filled by the great powers who are not willing or able to intervene. The incentives of the middle powers participation in the

peacebuilding are manifold. To others it is led by the humanitarian principles, a sincere wish to ease suffering and encourage human rights (Pearce, 1999). To others, their engagement in peacebuilding is associated with being able to improve their status and to appear as a powerful player in the world arena. Additionally, regional power is also very important, where middle powers are aiming at stabilizing the region and ensuring that conflicts are not propagated across national borders (Pearce, 1999). These are the motivations that will guide the middle powers to make strategic decisions to participate in peacebuilding processes through the multilateral institutions such as the UN.

2.3. Research on the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (UN PBF): Mandate, Structure, and Prior Evaluations

UN PBF was founded in the year 2006 as a means of responding to the urgent demands of post conflict countries. The fund has a mandate of providing post-conflict recovery activities, which are aimed at reestablishing the ability of the state to deliver security, rule of law, and governance and promoting social and economic development (Hancock, 2023). The UN PBF is a subset of the overall UN peacebuilding architecture cooperating with the other bodies such as the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). It is primarily powerful due to its flexibility, which means that it will have prompt financial resources that can be used to implement early recovery measures. The UN PBF operational structure has funding assistance of the projects to enhance governance arrangements, assistance of security sector reform, and reconciliation and growth. Although the fund has potential, its effectiveness in recovery operations at the post-conflict stage has resulted in both positive and negative findings when evaluated. Studies show that although the fund has been successful in creating a short-term stability and rebuilding capacity, the long-term results of UN PBF projects are less evident (Osman et al., 2024). These reviews show how vital coordination among international actors with local actors is, and how peacebuilding efforts must be holistic to achieve sustainability. Middle powers are significant players in the UN PBF as donors and also as source of expertise. Their work is usually oriented at establishing the local ownership and making sure that the work of peacebuilding is oriented on national priorities. Nonetheless, their presence is minimally covered in literature, as the majority of research on the fund has been on the overall functioning of this fund or the role of major powers (Hearn et al., 2014). This gap is an opportunity to get a closer insight into the role of middle powers in the success of UN PBF

Table 1: Core Themes from the Literature

Theme	Key Point
Peacebuilding frameworks	Liberal peace, local ownership, and exit strategies shape how sustainable peace is built.
Middle powers	Diplomatically active states that mediate, promote norms, and support peacebuilding.
UN PBF	Flexible UN fund for post-conflict recovery with mixed long-term impact.
Research gap	Little focus on middle powers' specific role and effectiveness within the UN PBF.

2.4 Research of Peacebuilding Initiative Effectiveness.

Political will, local incorporation, international actors' coordination, and the extent of financial and technical assistance are some of the factors that influence the effectiveness of peacebuilding initiatives. Local engagement has become one of the greatest determinants of the success in peacebuilding efforts. The research has continuously indicated that peacebuilding efforts have higher chances of success when the local actors are incorporated in the planning phase, as well as implementation (Santiso, 2002). Such participation will assist in making sure that the initiatives will be culturally relevant and will be backed by local population that will enhance their likelihood of success. Meanwhile, the international cooperation is an important factor that determines the effectiveness of peacebuilding efforts. International aid is also fragile and lacks coordination of the international donors, which may spoil the process of peacebuilding and result in poor outcomes (Lambourne & Herro, 2008). The importance of middle powers is also more than considerable because it is often possible to make them the intermediaries encouraging cooperation and coordination between larger international players and local stakeholders. Nevertheless, the process of peacebuilding can be problematic especially in cases where local capacity is underdeveloped, or the international players also have not the political goodwill to stick with their promises. These issues are especially applicable to middle powers, where their level of impact might be weakened by their financial capabilities and the complications of operating in a multilateral setting (Autesserre, 2017). One of the criticisms of this program is that the UN PBF does not create sustainability of the peacebuilding process in the long term, in case external assistance is removed (Autesserre, 2017).
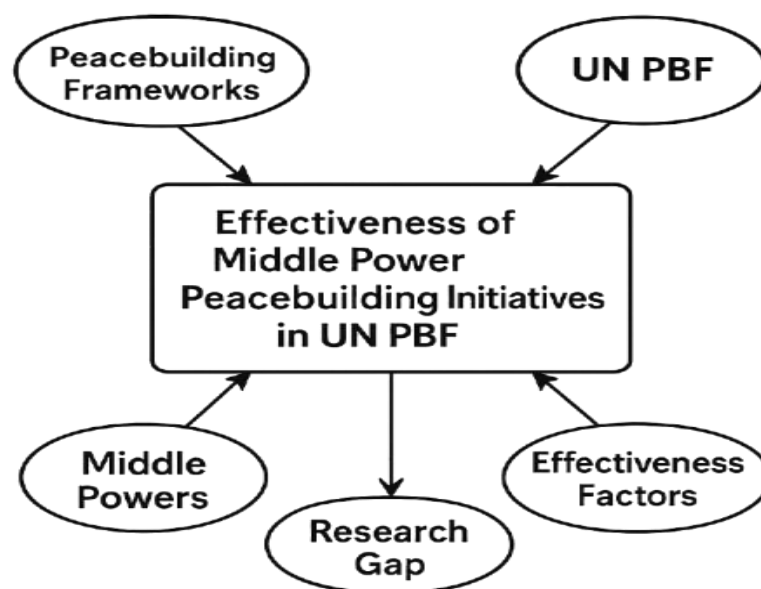

Diagram 1: Theoretical Overview of Significant Themes in the Peacebuilding Literature

2.5 Research Gap Identification.

Whereas much of the literature is available on peacebuilding and the role of international organizations like the UN, there is a conspicuous gap in the literature that outright looks at the role of middle powers in the UN PBF framework. The literature available is inclined to dwell upon the role of the key powers or the efficiency of the UN PBF as such (Caplan, 2019; Ghani and Lockhart, 2008). There have been limited researches on how middle powers can be instrumental in the success of the peacebuilding endeavors under the fund and how the specific diplomatic and multilateral capacities influence post-conflict recovery operations.

Also, the literature does not include comparative research that will determine the effectiveness of middle power-led peacebuilding efforts in the context of the UN PBF. This paper seeks to address this gap by putting particular emphasis on the contributions of the middle powers to the UN PBF and the determinants that increase or decrease their effectiveness in promoting sustainable peace.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The paper follows a comparative case study design to explore the contribution of the middle powers towards peacebuilding efforts funded by the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (UN PBF). The study objective is to determine the role of middle powers in peacebuilding with the aid of the UN PBF and also to determine the success of peacebringing by the middle powers. The comparative case study approach would enable the narrow research on particular nations that have been assisted by the UN PBF where middle powers have been very much active in the peacebuilding efforts. The comparison of various case studies can give the study an opportunity to study the diversity of middle power engagement and find the key trends of the success or failure of their initiatives. The selection of the cases will be done on the basis of the participation of the middle powers, the theme of the projects financed by the UN PBF and the results of these projects. This paper will be based mainly on the qualitative analysis, which will rely on a mixture of existing reports, interviewing of the stakeholders, and the policy documents as the main sources of evaluating the effectiveness of middle power involvement into peacebuilding. This qualitative methodology is appropriate to the purpose of the study to learn the context, challenges, and successes of the middle power-based peacebuilding in the post-conflict countries. The analysis of various sources of data will allow the study to offer a thorough insight into the dynamics of interaction and the elements that render the peacebuilding efforts successful or unsuccessful.

3.2 Data Sources

The major sources of data to be used in this study will be:

1. UN PBF Reports: The reports offer in-depth details of the goals, execution and achievements of any UN PBF-funded project. They are important in knowing the strategic

priorities of the fund, the kind of projects that it finances, and middle power's role in these projects. The reports will also give information about the effectiveness of the initiatives in terms of the peacebuilding results, including the enhancement of the governance, social cohesion, and economic development.

2. Publications of Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations: These will provide the crucial information on the local situation in the countries under the study, the introductions to the political, social, and economic problems that arise in the process of the peacebuilding. These organizations will also deliver reports that will reveal the role of the middle powers in the peacebuilding processes and offer them a chance to evaluate their role. They will assist in triangulating the information provided by the UN PBF reports through independent assessments and viewpoints by the stakeholders.

3. Primary Sources: The interviews with the UN PBF officials and peacebuilding experts will be one of the significant sources of data in this study. Such interviews will offer first-hand information on the working nature of the UN PBF, and the influence of middle powers on the process of peacebuilding.

Another aspect that will be discussed during the interviews is the challenges and success of middle power-led initiatives as per the people who were involved in funding and implementation of peacebuilding projects. Also, the local stakeholders such as the government officials and the representatives of the civil society will be interviewed to find out the effect of the middle power involvement on the local peacebuilding processes.

3.3 Analytical Framework

The data analysis framework of the present study will revolve around some of the major indicators of the effectiveness of the peacebuilding and these indicators will be applied in evaluating the results of the middle power-led initiatives and the support of the UN PBF. The effectiveness indicators will contain:

1. Sustainability: Sustainability of the changes caused by the initiatives is one of the key markers of the success of the peacebuilding. This would involve testing the sustainability of the governance structures, social systems, and economic policies undertaken in the process of peacebuilding by the withdrawal of external support, which can be the support provided by the UN PBF. The research will evaluate the capacity of the local actors such as governments and civil society in owning the peacebuilding process and ensuring its sustainability.

2. Local Ownership: The extent of ownership of the local actors in the process of peacebuilding is also another key indicator. One of the main principles of the modern peacebuilding theory is local ownership that guarantees that the process of peacebuilding is not only externally dominated but also adopted by the people who are the direct beneficiaries of the conflict. The research will assess how much local actors have been engaged in designing, implementing, and monitoring peacebuilding projects especially relating to the middle power-led initiatives.

3. Governance Improvements: In most cases, effective peacebuilding is achieved by strengthening state institutions, fostering the rule of law, and effective governance. This measure will dwell on the question of whether middle power-led programs through the UN PBF have been able to bring positive results in the field of governance in post conflict countries. The analysis will also include the variations in the major governance indicators including transparency of the government institutions, rule of law and inclusion of the political process.

Besides these indicators of effectiveness, the paper will assess some of the factors that lead to success or failure of peacebuilding efforts:

1. Local Context: The local political, social, and economic contexts of the nations under investigation will also be of crucial importance as it will help to determine the efficiency of middle power-led programs. The local context may affect the effectiveness of a peacebuilding initiative in a multiplicity of different ways, including the degree of institutional strength, armed factions, or inter-ethnic or inter-group strains. The paper will look at the effectiveness of middle power-based initiatives in adapting to local requirements and challenges.

2. External Support: There will also be the role of other international players, including the UN, the donor nations and non-governmental organizations. The paper will also examine how much middle powers can coordinate their peacebuilding activities with other international actors and the extent to which these actors either contribute to or curtail peacebuilding activities.

3. Resources and Coordination: The availability of financial and technical resources is one of the most essential factors that will predetermine the success of peacebuilding activities. The question that the study will consider is the extent to which middle powers can mobilize resources and align their activities with local governments and other international partners. Coordination would be key to ensuring that there is efficiency in the utilization of resources and that peacebuilding is not devoid of coordination or duplication.

These indicators and factors will be evaluated by the use of analytical framework, which will use thematic coding, and cross-case comparison. The qualitative data in reports and interviews will be identified with the help of thematic coding to determine the patterns and themes. The systematic comparison to middle power contributions to various settings and peacebuilding efforts will be possible using cross-case comparison.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Case Study Analysis

This part will include the analysis of the middle power participation in particular UN PBF-assisted peacebuilding policies and will concentrate particularly on two case studies South Africa and Brazil. These countries were chosen due to their high positions as

middle powers in the peacebuilding processes within the region and in the entire world, and also due to their membership in the UN PBF.

South Africa

South Africa has been known as a leader in matters of peacebuilding in the region, especially in the post-apartheid Africa. The activity of the country in the UN PBF started with its role in assisting peace efforts in its neighbors which were in conflict situation like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Burundi. These peacebuilding activities are in line with South Africa overall foreign policy objectives of enhancing stability and reconciliation in Africa (Lucey et al., 2014).

The projects funded by the UN PBF in South Africa were aimed at enhancing governance and encouraging democratic values particularly within post-conflict environments. These efforts were essential because of the diplomatic policy of the country that focused on the inclusion of dialogue and local ownership. South Africa used its technical skills in governance reform and conflict management to assist local governments and other international partners to develop capacity of national institutions.

The success of the peacebuilding efforts by the South African government using the UN PBF can be determined by the sustainability of the results. In Burundi and South Africa for instance, South Africans worked tirelessly and managed to bring a more inclusive government and reintegrated former combatants into the society. But as much as the efforts helped in the short-term stability, the long-term peace was weak because of the hurdles on having local ownership and enough funds to continue with the development.

Brazil

Another middle power that has had great influence in the UN PBF is Brazil, which is also quite influential in the region. The participation of Brazil in peacebuilding activities especially in Haiti in the form of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) has brought out the humanitarian orientation and regional collaboration in Brazil (Lambourne and Herro, 2008). The PBF-funded programs in Haiti by UN were intended to empower the state institutions and serve to build reconciliation following natural calamities and political violence. The situation with Brazil and its work as one of the contributors to MINUSTAH and other peacebuilding projects implied the combination of the diplomatic relations, peacekeeping, and the capacity-building activities.

The role played by Brazil in the Haiti peacebuilding process with the UN PBF was perceived as effective in the first phases especially in offering security and stability in the post-earthquake reconstruction efforts. Nevertheless, issues of sustainability of such initiatives arose due to the fact that the ability of the local institutions in Haiti was poor. Local ownership that Brazil insisted on was vital but the nation had a challenge in making sure that the Haitian government was prepared to assume long term peacebuilding duties.

The main lessons of Brazil experience are that it is necessary to pay continuous attention to the post-withdrawal of the external forces of peace and the status of the effective

incorporation of local actors in the development of peacebuilding projects. The diplomatic leadership of Brazil played a key role in the creation of trust, yet the absence of adequate local capacity discouraged the long-term success.

Table 2: Overview of Middle Power Peacebuilding using the UN PBF.

Dimension	South Africa	Brazil
Main context	DRC, Burundi, regional post-conflict Africa	Haiti (MINUSTAH, PBF-funded projects)
Core focus	Governance reform, reconciliation, democratic consolidation	Security, state capacity, post-disaster recovery
Approach	Dialogue, mediation, local ownership	Humanitarian diplomacy, local ownership
Key gains	Inclusive governance, ex-combatant reintegration, short-term stability	Initial security and stability, support to reconstruction
Main challenge	Sustainability, funding gaps, weak long-term local capacity	Weak local institutions, difficulty sustaining peace after withdrawal

4.2 Cross-case Comparison

The analysis of the middle power role in South Africa and Brazil gives important feedback on the success factors and pitfalls of middle power-initiated peacebuilding efforts.

Key Success Factors

1. **Diplomatic Engagement and Mediation:** Middle power diplomatic engagement played a key role in both scenarios to create dialogue between the parties involved in the conflicts as well as to make sure that peacebuilding was an inclusive process. The involvement of South Africa in Burundi and that of Brazil in Haiti underscore the diplomatic approaches to seizing openings between local and international actors, which middle powers implement.

2. **Local Ownership:** South Africa and Brazil had strong preferences towards local ownership meaning that the peacebuilding activities were not imposed on them but rather carried out by the locals. The method helped to make the peace processes in both countries acceptable and legitimate.

3. **Flexibility and Multilateral Coordination:** Middle powers expressed their flexibility in contributing to the UN PBF and through this situation, they were able to coordinate multilateral efforts. This ability to change enabled them to respond to the evolving conditions and make sure that the peacebuilding efforts were tailored to both local and international interests.
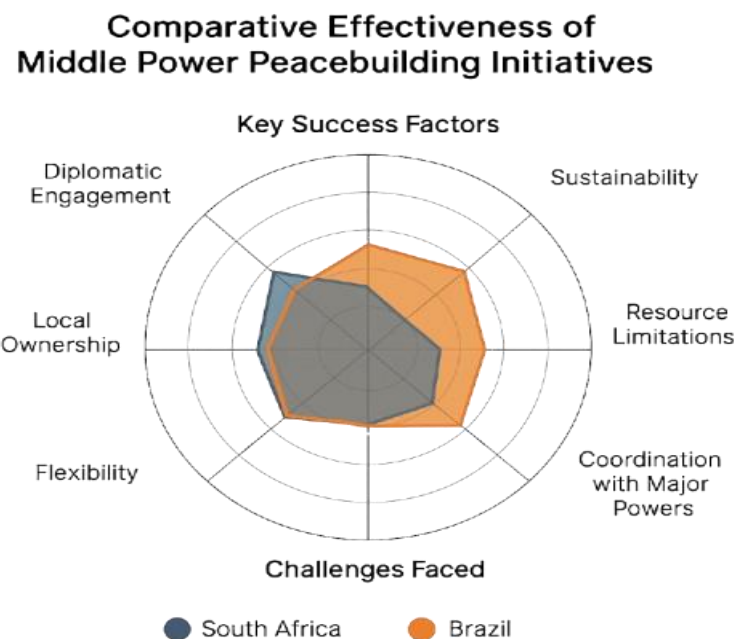
Challenges Faced

1. **Sustainability:** South Africa and Brazil had difficulties in making the process of peacebuilding sustainable in the long term. Short term stabilization was carried out, but with no option to establish a permanent local capacity, both nations proved incapable of keeping the peace after foreign aid was cut down. The political instability in the neighboring countries was the root of the challenges in the case of South Africa, and the

lack of strong local institutions and sufficient resources became a hindrance to the long-term recovery in Brazil (Autesserre, 2017).

2. Resource Limitations: Middle powers, although with diplomatic power, are usually limited in financial and technical expenses in comparison with major powers or multilateral agencies. This is a weakness that will affect their provision of steady support to peacebuilding efforts in the long term. The South Africa and Brazil also needed to depend on foreign donors to complement their work, which shows how challenging it is to maintain the peacebuilding process with scarce resources.

3. Co-ordination with Major Powers: Although middle powers are usually effective in developing local ownership, failure to coordinate with the major powers or multilateral organizations can compromise their work in peacebuilding. This was witnessed in South Africa as well as in Brazil where the international strategies did not have local priorities, and at times, alignment was not so easy. The success of middle powers in facilitating peace is largely based on their capacity to harmonize with other players which may not be very easy in a multi-actor setting.

Graph 1

Comparative Effectiveness of Middle Power Peacebuilding Initiatives

Comparison: Middle Powers and Major Powers and Multilateral Organizations.

Comparative examination of middle powers and major powers or multilateral organizations shows that there are significant differences in the style of approach to peacebuilding. In the case of major powers, like the United States or the United Kingdom, especially security and geopolitical interests are put into priority and that may cause a more militaristic or interventionist approach. Middle powers, in their turn, are more likely

to focus on diplomacy, local ownership, and multilateral cooperation. Though the approach may be more inclusive and sustainable in the long run, it is more susceptible to resource constraints and also needs good coordination with other international actors.

Multilateral organizations, like the UN, tend to be similar in the issue of coordination and resource distribution. But what makes them have a comparative advantage over middle powers is their capability to marshal the financial and technical support. Although the middle powers have the power to shape the future of the peacebuilding process, they have limited ability to influence the large-scale and long-term change due to their reliance on the multilateral institutions to provide financing and resources.

The middle powers are also a crucial part of the peacebuilding as such by working on a multilateral basis, such as the UN PBF. Their attempts are, however, usually hampered by the issue of sustainability, resources, and liaison with other international actors. Using the case studies such as South Africa and Brazil, we have been able to learn more about the advantages and disadvantages of middle power-enabled peacebuilding efforts, and the reasons why they work or do not work.

The following is a Discussion section of your article about 1500 words in length about the Effectiveness of Middle Power Peacebuilding Initiatives: Lessons to the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund. It comprises the findings interpretation, theoretical implications, policy recommendation, limitations and future study options.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Interpretation of Findings

The research results of this paper highlight a major role that the middle powers play in the process of peacebuilding, especially when they participate in the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (UN PBF). Through the use of case studies of South Africa and Brazil, the study details the effectiveness of middle powers to use both diplomatic and financial inputs to improve the result of peacebuilding efforts, even though challenges may still remain in making the contribution sustainable with time.

As the study shows, middle powers possess a special capacity of mediation between warring parties and facilitation of dialogue thereby ensuring inclusive peace processes. These diplomatic skills coupled with their fairly neutral standing in global affairs enable them to fill the gaps between the great powers, the local as well as the international players and organizations. The intervention of South Africa in Burundi and the peacebuilding of Haiti by Brazil are the main examples when the local ownership was given the priority, and the peacebuilding process was planned with the powerful local involvement, which made the success of these directions in the short run.

Nevertheless, the study also concludes that even with the considerable contributions of middle powers, their initiatives are experienced with a lot of challenges as far as sustainability is concerned. Though the South African and the Brazil case showed that initial recovery and stabilization was possible, the weak institutional capacity of the local

institution and insufficient resources negatively affected the success of the peacebuilding efforts in the long run. Since middle powers are not always well-endowed with resources in comparison with other major powers or multilateral organizations, they cannot offer the very support no matter how long the peacebuilding process takes. These middle powers also did not offer long-term financial and technical assistance, which led to the difficulty of realizing the long-term peace results.

Conversely, major powers and multilateral bodies tend to have larger financial and logistic possibilities enabling them to bring stability in the long term. However, in other cases, their activities are more geopolitical centered as they are guided by security and political agendas instead of peacebuilding that is long term and inclusive. This highlights the uniqueness of the middle power in offering a normative and cooperative solution, which can be more sustainable but needs to be well coordinated with other players of the international system and local players.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

The results of the present research contribute significantly to the theory of peacebuilding, especially the role of the middle powers in determining the outcome of peacebuilding, as well as improving the current models of peacebuilding, including the liberal peace and the local ownership. To begin with, this paper questions and builds on the liberal model of peace, which emphasizes the need to promote democracy, free markets and rule of law, as general pillars to post-conflict recovery (Lambourne and Herro, 2008). Though these factors are definitely crucial, the research shows that the peacebuilding policies followed by middle powers tend to focus on the importance of contextualization and localization, which is underestimated in the liberal peace paradigm. The examples of South Africa and Brazil demonstrate that, unlike other countries, middle powers are likely to concentrate on inclusive governance and reconciliation in society, as opposed to economic liberalization and development of democratic institutions. This implies that peacebuilding in the post-conflict societies must not be implemented in a strict form of liberalism but must be customized to suit the requirements and capabilities of local inhabitants, which is closer to the local ownership theory. The local ownership framework (Autesserre, 2017), which proposes that the local actors should be actively involved in the process of peacebuilding, is highly supported by the results of this research. Both South Africa and Brazil, as participants in the UN PBF programs, had their interests in empowering the local stakeholders, as well as in the fact that the peacebuilding process would not be imposed by outsiders but it should be guided by the local populations. The effect of this approach was that peacebuilding at local level achieved more acceptance and legitimacy which supports the significance of local ownership of the achievement of the sustainable peace outcome. Nevertheless, local ownership was also a major success factor in both scenarios, the limitations of a weak local capacity and insufficient resources suggest that more powerful support systems of the local actors are required. The complexity of international peacebuilding is also highlighted in the study. Although middle powers frequently facilitate multilateral policymaking and cooperation, they continue to depend on big powers and multilateral agencies to provide funding and other resources. The

success of their peacebuilding operations usually depends on the greater international environment that may either derail or reinforce their undertakings according to the correlation of interests among the middle powers, the major powers and other players in the international arena. In such a way, the peacebuilding theory has to adapt and acquire the dynamic relations between the local, national, and international levels of interaction, instead of being reduced to the one-size-fits-all kind of approach.

5.3 Policy Recommendations

Otherwise, some policy recommendations can be presented based on the results of this study to middle powers, the UN PBF, and other international organizations, which participate in the process of peacebuilding.

1. Increase Middle Power Contributions: Middle powers need to keep on using their diplomatic potentials in mediating peace processes and enhancing dialogue. They should however be more strategic in their contributions towards the establishment of local capacity within the post-conflict regions. This involves training the locals in the aspects of governing, conflict management, and economic growth thus making sure that not only is the local ownership encouraged but is also viable in the long run. Middle powers also ought to work on aligning their efforts with the major powers and multilateral organizations in order to make resources to be distributed effectively and the peacebuilding process is not divided.

2. Increase Financial and Technical Assistance: Middle powers must make efforts to heighten their financial resources towards peacebuilding programs in multilateral funds like UN PBF. On top of this, the need to strengthen technical skills and offer more sound post-conflict recovery institutions will also guarantee that peacebuilding does not become short-term, but is sustainable. This must entail long term engagements toward rebuilding state institutions, structures of governance and local economies.

3. Enhance Co-ordination in the UN PBF: The UN PBF can be improved to have more coordination systems which would allow it to incorporate more middle power contribution to the overall peacebuilding process. This will involve defining better roles and responsibility of middle powers in peacebuilding, sharing of knowledge and ensuring that funds are well implemented as per the needs and priorities of the locals. The processes of evaluation of the UN PBF should also be enhanced in order to see that the contributions of the middle powers should be evaluated adequately, and their effectiveness can be determined with time.

5.4 Future Research Limitations and Avenues.

Although this research can give considerable information on the middle power in peacebuilding, it is also limited in many aspects. The sample size of the case studies analyzed is one of them. The effectiveness of middle power-led peacebuilding initiatives was evaluated using only two case-studies, including South Africa and Brazil, which can also be viewed as a limitation in the generalization of the results. To consider a more extensive comparison, future studies must have a larger sample of countries in which

middle powers have been proactively engaged in the process of peacebuilding. The other constraint is the availability of data. Although the present research was based on publicly available reports and interviews, confidential information or direct observations of middle power policy makers and local stakeholders may give a deeper explanation of whether or not peacebuilding is successful or not. Further studies are necessary in order to compile a more detailed collection of data by utilizing primary interviews and fieldwork in peacebuilding environments. In addition, the research ought to examine the long-term effects of middle power-led interventions in post-conflict nations in the future. Longitudinal research where the development of governance, social cohesion and economic development are monitored over an extended time is the key to sustainability of peacebuilding results.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary of Key Findings

This paper notes that the middle powers have played a significant role in peacebuilding especially by participating in the UN PBF. Middle powers can resolve conflicts, develop local capacity, and make the peacebuilding efforts inclusive. Nevertheless, the sustainability of such initiatives is still problematic because of the resource limitation and poor local capacity. The research also outlines the significance of the local ownership and the necessity of the strategic coordination with the major powers and multilateral organizations.

6.2 Policy Implications

In order to empower the middle powers in the peacebuilding process, the policymakers ought to emphasize on increasing the contribution in terms of diplomatic and financial support though local ownership is made a priority. The UN PBF needs to enhance more coordination and provide clearer models that middle powers can work with to achieve sustainable work on peacebuilding. Enhancement of such moves will make sure that the middle powers remain central figures in influencing multilateral peacebuilding efforts. The concluding statements point to the possibility of middle powers taking the initiative in effective and inclusive peacebuilding in post-conflict areas. They are at the heart of the realization of sustainable peace in the contemporary world because of their capacity to be mediators, facilitate local ownership, and cooperate with the international players.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

design, methodology, and interpretation of findings. The author owes his debt to the anonymous reviewers and editorial team to their useful suggestions and the family and friends to their support all through the research and writing process. Any judgments, opinions, and sentiments made in this paper are entirely those of the author and do not always represent the official judgments or policies of CNRST or any other institution or individual recognized above.

References

1) Hancock, L. (2023). Peacebuilding Accountability: The United Nations Peacebuilding Fund and Community-Based Monitoring and Evaluation. *Negotiation Journal*, *39*(4), 427-453. https://doi.org/10.1111/nejo.12442

2) Lambourne, W., & Herro, A. (2008). Peacebuilding theory and the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission: implications for non-UN interventions. *Global Change, Peace & Security*, *20*(3), 275-289. https://doi.org/10.1080/14781150802390467

3) Autesserre, S. (2017). International peacebuilding and local success: Assumptions and effectiveness. *International Studies Review*, *19*(1), 114-132. https://doi.org/10.1093/isr/viw054

4) Osman, S. S. A., Elbashir, H. A. E. G., & Hosnia, A. O. (2024). Evaluating the Effectiveness of United Nations Peacebuilding Operations. *Journal of Ecohumanism*, *3*(7), 3319-3335.

5) Hearn, S., Bujones, A. K., & Kugel, A. (2014). *The United Nations" Peacebuilding Architecture": Past, Present and Future* (Vol. 8). Center on International Cooperation.

6) Bertram, E. (1995). Reinventing governments: The promise and perils of United Nations peace building. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *39*(3), 387-418. https://doi.org/10.1177/00220027950390030

7) Jenkins, R. (2008). Organizational Change and Institutional Survival: The Case of the UN Peacebuilding Commission. *Seton Hall L. Rev.*, *38*, 1327.

8) De Coning, C., & Stamnes, E. (Eds.). (2016). *UN peacebuilding architecture: the first 10 years*. Routledge.

9) Benner, T., Binder, A., & Rotmann, P. (2007). Learning to build peace? United Nations peacebuilding and organizational learning: Developing a research framework.

10) Chesterman, S. (2005). From state failure to state-building: Problems and prospects for a United Nations peacebuilding commission. *J. Int'l L & Int'l Rel.*, *2*, 155.

11) Behringer, R. M. (2005). Middle power leadership on the human security agenda. *Cooperation and Conflict*, *40*(3), 305-342.

12) Santiso, C. (2002). Promoting democratic governance and preventing the recurrence of conflict: The role of the United Nations development programme in post-conflict peace-building. *Journal of Latin American Studies*, *34*(3), 555-586. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022216X02006508

13) Pearce, J. (1999). Peace-building in the periphery: lessons from Central America. *Third World Quarterly*, *20*(1), 51-68.https://doi.org/10.1080/01436599913910

14) Lucey, A., De Carvalho, G., & Gida, S. (2014). South Africa and the United Nations. Strengthening opportunities for effective peacebuilding. *Institute for Security Studies Papers*, *2014*(268), 12. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC159121

15) Ramcharan, B. G. (2024). 6 Lessons Learned from the History of UN Efforts in Mediation of Smaller and Bigger Conflicts. *From the Foreword by Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, former*, 110. DOI: 10.4324/9781003565765-9