Taking the local turn seriously: Identifying conditions for local government contributions to sustainable peace

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Abstract

In recent peacebuilding literature the exclusion of local actors, their agency as well as context specific circumstances has been referred to as one of the reasons behind centralized, shallow and failed peace. Against this background there is a growing local turn in peacebuilding literature arguing for the inclusion of the local to remedy these failures. Focusing on local governments as actors of peace as put forward in literature on the local turn in peacebuilding this paper identifies eight conditions of how local governments contribute to furthering peace. Arguing that ideas of peace as well as notions of how peace is formed influences measures and outcomes, the paper discusses the possibility of the eight conditions for local government contribution to peace forming one overarching framework for peacebuilding on a local level. It highlights that the eight conditions serve as a starting point for an analytical framework but that empirical material is needed to explore the relevance of the eight conditions, possible amendments, contradictions or interactions present in relation to conditions of how local governments can contribute to peace.

1. Introduction

The last decade or so, the international peacebuilding debate has seen an increasing disappointment with and critique against the way peace is built. Despite large peacebuilding efforts, it has been noted that after reaching a peace agreement, almost 50 percent of post-conflict countries relapse into violent conflict within the next five years (Collier, 2003, p. 83). Where peace manages to hang on, its sustainability is questioned by peace resulting in privileging the elite and constrained possibilities for the poor (Hughes, 2009, p. 22f; 2013). These failures of peace, often explained by peace being too shallow, too centralized or neglecting the local context (Brinkerhoff & Johnson, 2009; Paris & Sisk, 2007), have resulted in an increased influx of the local in both policy and academic debate, also referred to as the “local turn” in peacebuilding (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013, p. 771f; UNDP, 2014).

Although the current local turn in peacebuilding literature builds on a long-standing discussion about the importance of “the local” in peace, a deeper scrutinizing of the debate reveals (at least) two
different ways of conceptualizing the local turn. On the one hand, an effective local turn in peacebuilding includes targeting sub-national units through local governance and local ownership to a great extent building on the liberal understanding of how peace is built (Brinkerhoff, 2011; Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013, p. 771; Schou & Haug, 2005). On the other hand the local turn is seen as “an important opportunity in the conceptualisation and making of peace” (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013, p. 780) through its attentiveness to particularism and local variations and in its support of subjects and local agency, representing an emancipatory local turn in peacebuilding. Although both the effective and emancipatory approaches to the local turn strive towards sustainable peace, notions of how to achieve it differ. This paper aims to move beyond the critique of international peacebuilding agendas and instead identify conditions for peace through local governments put forward in literature on local turn in peacebuilding.

The focus in this paper is on local governments and the role local governments can play in contributing to deepened peace. Through analysing previous literature on the local turn in peacebuilding the paper aims at identifying conditions for how local governments are claimed to play a role for peace. However, before turning to the main discussion on how peace is supposedly built and furthered the paper starts out by exploring what is meant by peace and the local. The third section then turns to a short discussion on the local turn in peacebuilding to be followed by a fourth section analysing four themes and eight conditions of how local governments can contribute to peace locally as found in the literature. In the fifth section, the paper then discusses the eight conditions and whether the eight complement or contradict each other for a deeper peace ending with a sixth section with an outline for how to proceed to develop an analytical framework for an empirical study of local government contributions to deepening peace. The paper as a whole is a theoretical framework in my PhD thesis guiding the empirical study of Lebanese local governments and their role in deepening peace.

2. Conceptualising peace and the local

Peace is a concept often taken for granted. However, as this paper will try to show, what peace is assumed to be also defines what kind of peace is aimed for and how it is thought to be achieved. No definition of what peace is stands free from underlying assumptions. Nevertheless, the basic definitions of peace commonly agrees on the absence of violence as its minimum requirement, and, as defined by Galtung (1969), a negative peace implies an absence of personal violence whereas the absence of structural violence makes up a positive peace. In post-conflict settings, what is sought after is a sustainable, or a self-sustaining peace meaning structures or a societal order that create a

However, what is in focus for building peace depends on the conceptualisation of peace. In current day international peacebuilding the liberal peace agenda holds a dominant position (Webel & Johansen, 2012, p. 43). The notion of liberal peace builds on democratization, marketization, freedom and human rights for the achievement of sustainable peace (Webel & Johansen, 2012, p. 38) and it rests on the institutionalisation of democratic governance as peaceful ways to solve conflicts (Jarstad & Sisk, 2008, p. 7). The emphasis within the liberal peace is on individualised rights being fulfilled through the creation of liberal institutions to uphold the social contract between the state and its citizens (Richmond, 2007, pp. 467, 471).

To others, sustainable peace instead rest on a need to enhance relationships between former conflicting groups, foster coexistence and a vision of a shared future (Lederach, 1997; Stefansson, 2010). Such a conceptualisation of peace includes a focus on social dynamics and relationship building emphasising the experiences lived by those affected by conflict as well as future expectations, rather than emphasising statebuilding institutions (Lederach, 1997, p. 22-24). However, the focus on individuals and relationships does not mean ignoring structures of society which inform and allow for certain types of relationships (Lederach, 1997, p. 55ff).

A conceptualisation of peace that takes its point of departure in local communities is presented by Odendaal. Peace, in his view, is “inextricably linked to the absence of violence, economic survival, the healing of family and community, the settlement of local disputes, and the reliability of government institutions” (Odendaal, 2013, p. 9). Such an understanding combines the governance approach of the liberal peace with the focus on coexistence and healing of relationships put forward by Lederach. In addition, a needs-based approach is emphasised as important for communities to be able to address past grievances, develop and move beyond conflict.

As seen in the conceptualisations of peace presented above, the idea of how peace is achieved depends on what kind of peace is sought after. This emphasises the view of peace as engineered and peace as possible to influence and achieve only the right formula is implemented (Webel & Johansen, 2012, p. 41f). As such, peace is seen as a process with an inherent causal logic, where inserting certain measures replicates a predefined outcome. For example, the idea that post-conflict democracy offers solutions to plurality, difference and even conflict (Mitchell, 2010, p. 646). While the engineering of peace underpins the normative goal of achieving peace, inherent in peace research and peacebuilding policy, it also highlights the exclusion of alternative approaches, since alternatives to predefined outcomes are unthinkable within the process. This implies that critique
against the peace process is ignored, silenced or excluded and critical actions are seen as spoilers who might return to violence since there are no other options (Mitchell, 2010, p.654ff).

Alternatively, Mitchell argues for seeing peacebuilding as going beyond processual logic. In this sense peace should be seen as open for disruptive actions which change the course of events (A. Mitchell, 2010, p. 663f). Within this understanding peace must be seen as being open for multiple conceptualisations with the goal and the process continuously shaping each other. What peace is assumed to be shapes the steps included in the peace process, and, simultaneously, the steps included in the peace process shape the possible conceptualisations of peace (Mitchell, 2010; Richmond, 2007, p. 467f). What happens during the course of peacebuilding is therefore not to be seen as disruptive but rather as constituting building peace. As such, Richmond and Mitchell claim that liberal peace failures are not to be seen as failures but rather as the successful inclusion of local agencies confronting the liberal peace framework, thus, creating hybrid peace which allows for the inclusion of local autonomy and local variations (Richmond & Mitchell, 2012, p. 2).

Multiple ways to define the local are also present in peacebuilding literature. Conceptualisation can range from defining the local as a fixed space to a fluid network of actors and actions (Lambek, 2011). However, as seen in many policy papers and academic debates, the most usual strategy is that the local is not defined, and more specifically, it is not discussed. The diversity of the local can be seen by juxtaposing the use of the local by a number of different international peacebuilding actors. For example, the local may in some instances be referred to as sub-national governments (World Bank, 2011), informal institutions or local community committees (DFID, 2010; USIP, 2012; World Bank, 2011), non-state actors and NGOs (DFID, 2010; United Nations, 2011) as well as local political elites (Donais, 2012, p. 10). Whether the local is seen to exist at a national or sub-national level is not always clear. For example by the United Nations’ reference to a local civil society as legitimizing processes of ownership on a national level but where these presumably locally owned grassroots initiatives may in practice be professionalized NGOs based in the capital (Kappler, 2012; Leonardsson & Rudd, forthcoming 2015, p. 8). The lack of definition and discussion of the local does not only leave the reader in the dark about who is referred to but also assumes that the local is inherently authentic and legitimate, thus circumventing the need to critically assess who this local represents.

In this paper, the local actor in focus is the local government. Local government refers to sub-national authorities being politically elected, with fiscal powers in terms of managing budgets and collecting taxes and administrative responsibilities ranging from waste management and road maintenance to education and public health (Grindle, 2007, p. 4ff). However, in practice, the degree to which local governments have been granted rights and responsibilities for local governance greatly
varies with, in some cases, extensive autonomy and responsibilities while in others, little power being decentralised beyond local elections (Romeo, 2013, p. 78).

3. The local turn in peacebuilding, where it comes from and what it wants

The emphasis on the local has gradually grown over the last two or three decades. In the 1990’s, authors such as John Paul Lederach, Adam Curle and Carolyn Nordstrom provided a local perspective on peacebuilding emphasising the capacity for peace found in conflicting communities themselves (for and overview see Leonardsson & Rudd, forthcoming 2015). Simultaneously, the development debate saw an increased focus on decentralisation as a promise for delivering development and good governance (Grindle, 2007, p. 4ff) but also notions of participation, local ownership and partnership (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013, p. 775). Within international peacebuilding, the 1990’s slowly turned away from the lighter versions of peacekeeping focusing on ceasefires that had been used during the cold war towards more extensive peacebuilding operations including greater cooperation between actors within a broader liberal peace- and statebuilding agenda (Roberts, 2011, p. 9ff). Peacebuilding operations became more coherent and robust focusing on “reformed systems of governance that are responsive to people’s basic needs at the local, regional and national levels” (United Nations, 2001, p. 2). Pertaining to a liberal framework, international peacebuilders such as the UN, EU and INGOs have turned to promoting democratisation, marketization and human rights (Paris, 2004, p. 5f). Despite good intentions, extensive critique has risen accusing peacebuilding operations of falling short in implementing its liberal goals, being an externally driven, top-down, Western intervention which ignores the human needs on the ground through its singular approach “that presents Liberalism as a means to all ends” (Greener, 2011; Leeuwen, Verkoren, & Boedeltje, 2012; Mitchell, 2010; Paris, 2010; Roberts, 2011, p. 10).

Despite such diverse claims, the local turn in peacebuilding is a lively debate putting forward ideas on peacebuilding which both challenge and deepen current knowledge on peace.
Embedded in the normative tradition of peace studies, papers on peace or conflict resolution would strive towards extracting a number of practices, conditions or advices that would serve to guide builders of peace (Wallensteen, 1988). Literature on the local turn in peacebuilding is no different, arguing for localised processes of peace as alternatives, or complements, to (failed and shallow) national peacebuilding. Building on literature on the local turn in peacebuilding, this paper aims to move beyond the critique towards international peacebuilding agendas and instead examine ideas put forward in the literature of the local turn in peacebuilding on how to further peace. It argues that while both the emancipatory and effective local turn in peacebuilding strongly emphasise the inclusion and participation of the local, their measures, or will to present measures, vary. As defined by Mac Ginty and Richmond (2013) the emancipatory local turn in peacebuilding centres around particularism and local variations, supporting its subjects instead of defining them, enabling local critical agency and resistance a space within peacebuilding and acknowledging that it is a truly localized process where peace finds its legitimacy within its local setting. Thus, defining best practices for emancipation falls short on its own terms.

The rest of this paper builds on conditions of sub-national governance for deepening peace that have been identified in literature adhering to the effective approach to peacebuilding within the local turn in peacebuilding. As part of a previous literature review (Leonardsson & Rudd, forthcoming 2015), the author of this paper has identified eight conditions that are put forward as possible ways for sub-national governments to contribute to peace. However, the identified conditions are not to be seen as a model for local peacebuilding but are arguments put forward in previous studies on local peacebuilding. In addition, the role of the emancipatory literature in developing this paper, as well as influencing the “effective” conditions, is not to be ignored. Through a closer scrutiny of underlying assumptions of how peace is constructed and for what peace the paper aims to build a theoretical framework on the contribution of local governments for furthering peace. A later analysis will then ask how the identified conditions for local governments’ deepening of peace contradict each other or allow for a nuanced and contextualised idea of how to further peace.

4. Four themes and eight conditions – local governments building peace

Focusing on four broad themes, leadership and relationships for coexistence; service delivery and economic development; citizen – state interaction and participations; and accountability, transparency and legitimacy, the following section picks out eight conditions of how local governments can contribute to deepening peace as claimed in the literature on the local turn in peacebuilding.
4.1 Leadership and Relationships for Coexistence

This paper starts out by discussing the theme of leadership and relationships for coexistence and its importance for furthering peace.

Coexistence refers to different communities living side by side. Coexistence ranges from shallow coexistence where communities peacefully live side by side but with little to some interaction and cooperation between different communities to deep (or thick) coexistence which also includes the “meeting of hearts and minds” with multiple interactions both in economic and social terms (Stefansson, 2010, p. 64). The role of local governments in striving towards coexistence, whether more shallow or deeper in its scope, focuses on their motivational power and possibilities to influence people around them (Gerzon, 2003). Depending on their interests, as well as the ideology inspiring their work, local leaders can play a significant role in fostering inclusion locally (Jackson, 2013, p. 354f). Local leaders are seen as having more flexible positions than the top-leadership as they are not as locked into publicly outspoken positions to the same extent. This flexibility allows them greater room to manoeuvre in local processes of peace (Lederach, 1997, p. 41). Leaders can also express significant agency through giving witness to past deeds and, thus, open up spaces allowing the wider population to speak the unthinkable. Such acts are of great importance in driving processes of reconciliation and working towards coexistence (Rigby, 2012, p. 238).

Also found within this theme are relationships. As argued by Lederach, one of the core notions of building peace is that “relationship is the basis of both the conflict and its long-term solution” (1997, p. 26, emphasis in original). Within the literature on the local turn, the relationship between the local and national level has been identified as particularly important for deepening peace (Brinkerhoff, 2011; Kälin, 2004). Central, local as well as regional actors need to see each other as partners in order for sub-national governance to have any conflict mitigating ability. It might seem self-evident, but where post peace agreement cooperation between the local and central level is lacking the struggle for advancing peace risks becoming a struggle for power (Kälin, 2004, p. 309). Whether for specifically peacebuilding projects, or other governance measures that could have a conflict mitigating impact, as will be seen below, the acceptance, and/or encouragement from the national level matters for the possibilities of local actors to implement measures that could further peace, both when locally initiated or implemented through a national agenda (Mitchell & Hancock, 2012, p. 2ff). The importance of the national and local level working towards the same goal is, thus, a crucial ingredient for local governments to be able to play a role for peace.
However, the nature of the relationships between the central and local level can vary greatly in post-conflict settings. In some settings local – central relationships are characterized by lack of trust with national, and also international actors, doubting the capacity of local actors and local actors mistrusting the priorities of national and international actors (Richmond & Mitchell, 2012, p. 7). On the other hand, central – national relationships may also be strong within the own religious or ethnic identity group while intra-group relationships may be lacking, both nationally and locally (Lederach, 1997, p. 43).

The emphasis of both leadership and relationships for furthering peace locally puts significant weight on the agency of actors. Thus it is emphasised that representation is not enough – just as institution building is not a replacement for conflict resolution (Donais, 2012, p. 150). Political posts are not only seats to be filled but people filling them are agents. Similarly to other actors locally and nationally, local leadership has the agency to cooperate or resist, accept, adopt, promote or mock larger frameworks of peacebuilding and statebuilding, as well as initiate alternative processes. Through local actors’ agency, outcomes of peace and statebuilding are changed, creating hybrid forms of peace. As such, the local level is not to be seen as a separate unit but local, national, or international actors often interact within the same space (Mac Ginty, 2010; Richmond & Mitchell, 2012, pp. 5, 8, 11).

As such, hybridity does not only work within an institutional form of democracy but rather a form that more broadly incorporates governance, political community and the everyday life. Through the notion of the everyday, people’s strategies for navigating around institutions of power, adapting to and taking ownership over these institutions are revealed. Acting from a privileged position within a localised context, agencies used by local government leadership in this process may have considerable effect on outcomes of peace (Richmond & Mitchell, 2012, p. 14ff). Where liberal notions of peacebuilding may see local governments in post-conflict settings as lacking democratic standards the emphasis on local agency through relationships and leadership acknowledges that where a window of change is provided, no matter how small or faulty, local leaders may take the opportunity to demand more (Romeo, 2013, p. 78).

The focus on actors and agency reveals a notion of peace as defined through agents and constructed through relationships and leadership. Whether actors act within liberal institutions and/or are democratically elected seems to be less important. Social dynamics are emphasised as well as the possibility of those dynamics changing with the actors involved. Thus, the peace is not a process that is defined at its outset but goes beyond this processual logic and is instead continually changing and possibly creating hybrid peace. However, the focus on agency means that both peace and conflict
can be promoted by local actors as well as central – local relationships. In this view, peace is an act of agency as actors chose to maintain it and work towards it (Richards, 2005, p. 4).

The focus of this theme is on local governments who, although maybe disadvantaged in comparison to the national, are often made up of local elites. Although opting for the inclusion of agency, these conditions are, thus, less concerned with the emancipation of the people and more so with how individual leaders act as well as how leaders on central and local level interact.

The previous literature on the local turn thus serves us with two conditions of how local governments can play a role in contributing to peace locally:

1. Sub-national leadership strives towards peace and coexistence
2. Central – sub-national relationships are harmonious and strive towards the same goal

### 4.2 Service Delivery and Economic Development

After discussing issues concerning social dynamics surrounding local governments this paper turns to the possibilities of local governments to influence peace through service delivery and economic development.

An inclusive and effective service delivery is an important criterion for local governments to have an effective post-conflict role through the improvement of the socio-economic situation. The argument of service delivery is two-fold. Firstly, it rests on the assumption that through efficient service delivery local governments promote economic development and the image of a well-functioning state which fosters legitimacy for local government as well as the state as a whole (Bland, 2007, p. 208f; Brinkerhoff, 2011). Secondly, promoting service-delivery at the local level is perceived as having positive effects on conflict, because through its proximity to the users, the local level is naturally better at supplying the services needed within that locality (the subsidiarity principle, Føllesdal, 1998). Service-delivery at the local level allows for the tailoring of services delivered to specific local needs where minorities who may not have influence in bigger constituencies can have a say (Brinkerhoff, 2011, p. 142f).

As mentioned above, through their role as service providers, local governments are seen as important actors in promoting local development which prevents a relapse into conflict (Jackson, 2013, p. 355). To promote local development local governments are seen as having five advantages compared to other public, non-governmental or private actors. First, by being government authorities they act within a broad mandate allowing them to plan and act with a multi-sector
approach. Second, they have legitimacy which other local actors lack. Third, they have regulatory powers. Fourth, they have the ability to be sensitive towards needs and preferences in the local context. And fifth, they enjoy institutional stability. Within the broader frame of national development, local governments are also seen as being able to play a redistributive role of resources between regions (Schou & Haug, 2005).

However, the possibility of local governments to promote development and redistribute resources rests on the assumption that they have autonomy and capacities. Autonomy is defined as a combination of the power to take initiatives as well as freedom from control by others. The degree of autonomy enjoyed by the local governments directly affects the change local governments can promote (Romeo, 2013, p. 67).

The focus on services and economic development portrays a picture of peace being constructed through a needs-based approach. It incorporates ideas of effectiveness through claiming that the local level is more effective in its knowledge of needs and therefore also appropriateness of services provided as well as adhering to emancipatory values of including the marginalised. However, the needs-based approach contrasts the liberal peace framework which is mainly concerned with creating institutions for delivering equal rights (Donais, 2012, p. 149). The needs based approach in fact does not guarantee that needs be equally met. Rather, the redistributive role that local governments may have in a national context may have an opposite effect. Unlike the notion of leaders’ agency and relationships existing no matter societal structures (although sometimes detrimental rather than positive), the possibility of local governments to further peace through service delivery and economic development to a great extent depends on their capacities. To a certain degree, the capacities of local governments may depend on institutional arrangements defining legal responsibilities and room for manoeuvre in terms of for example resources allocated to the local level. In this regard, the literature emphasises ‘the right ingredients, appropriate timing and some degree of experimentation’ (Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007, p. 9) in creating functional local governments. However, the other side of the coin is that capacities are not necessarily derived from above, as Menkhaus has shown in the case of Somalia where a central authority devolving powers is lacking and instead a governance without government is created (Menkhaus, 2006).

The two conditions on economic issues that have been identified in previous literature on the local turn are thus:

3. Local governments provide service delivery which is inclusive and efficient
4. Economic resources are justly redistributed and local economic development is promoted through autonomous and capable sub-national governments
4.3 Citizen – state interaction and participation

The third theme that has been identified in the literature on the local turn in peacebuilding is citizen – state interaction and participation.

The multi-level governance that sub-national government puts in place brings the state closer to the people which allows for multiple state – citizen interactions (Brancati, 2006; Brinkerhoff, 2011). In addition to greater interaction, multiple arenas of state authority open up for political contestation including possibilities for minority influence at the local level to address social exclusion and grievances within arenas closer to them (Brinkerhoff, 2011, p. 139). As within economic development and service delivery, sub-national governments need to be stable in their existence as well as in their rights and responsibilities for multi-level governance to function (Kälin, 2004). As a final point some scholars see the division of power installed through sub-national governments as a way to impede the re-emergence of authoritarian regimes nationally (Bland, 2007) or that through multi-level governance state outreach is established in remote areas previously not under government control (Schou & Haug, 2005).

The arguments proposed above, closely relate to arguments used in the decentralisation literature. Firstly, decentralisation is seen as bringing “power and authority closer to the citizens it affects in order to promote more efficient and democratic policies” (Bevir, 2009, p. 64). Secondly, the need for local governments to be democratic, as well as having the capacities and autonomy in order to implement responsibilities is highlighted. Thirdly, decentralisation is often argued to be the counterpoint of authoritarian rule through its spreading of authority and democracy throughout society (Bevir, 2009, p. 64ff). In the peacebuilding literature there is an increasing focus on local governments’ peacebuilding potential, mainly through the inability of national and international peacebuilding to establish sustainable democracy and peace. A bottom-up approach to democracy is said to enhance participation and citizen engagement through dealing with issues closer to people’s everyday lives, it is claimed that the local level provides better opportunities of local agency to engage with political elites and thus demand accountability, and promoting more stable grounds for locally owned sustainable democracy (Donais, 2012, p. 54f).

An additional factor relates to the motivational power of local governments and their ability to foster feelings of inclusion, motivation, hope or to some extent even happiness (Jackson, 2013, p. 354f). Increased opportunities of participation is important in this respect as it is argued to build trust between groups (Schou & Haug, 2005), foster inclusion and allows for the resolution of conflicts through discussion and compromise (Bland, 2007). The idea that participation fosters trust,
understanding and consensus is often put forward by propagators of participatory democracy not only in post-conflict settings. Usually participation is seen as a complement to representative democracy, where meetings, hearings, surveys as well as more direct forms of citizen initiatives, referendums and citizen juries are proposed (Bevir, 2009, p. 146f). In peacebuilding contexts, participation is seen as a mean to overcome one of the key problems with post-conflict reconstruction, namely that “state-level processes remain inaccessible to the vast majority of the population” (Donais, 2012, p. 53). In more recent peacebuilding literature, legitimate local-level governance is claimed to provide the best choice for including citizen voice and agency in political processes (ibid., p. 54).

Local governments are also seen as arenas for fostering inclusion. As argued by Sisk and Risley, “[m]unicipal councils, as collective decision-making bodies, lend themselves to inclusion and consensus-oriented problem solving” (Sisk & Risley, 2005, p. 37). Inclusion in this sense is often created through the division of seats between different constituent groups (ibid., p. 11) but the motivational power of local governments suggests that local governments can also play a role in fostering inclusion through ideas of coexistence and envisioning a common future as discussed above (Dugan, July 2003).

The discussion on local governments deepening peace through citizen – state interaction as well as participation resonate many of the ideas inherent in liberal peace as it rests on the view that democracy and democratic institutions provide a good basis for solving conflicts. In developing democratic capacities local governments are given importance but within an externally defined process, a notion that downplays other contextual capacities that local governments may have. Therefore, although participation acknowledges the importance of agency, the interpretations presented above move away from the view of everyday acts play an important role in creating peace, as emphasised in the emancipatory local turn. Instead, participation through democratic arenas, municipal councils, meetings, hearings, etc. is given more attention. Participation is also emphasised as a stepping stone for peacebuilding as statebuilding in that it increases legitimacy of the state. In its focus on institutional participation in democratic arenas notions of citizen – state interaction and participation have a process centred approach to peacebuilding in which certain measures are assumed to have certain outcomes, in this case, democratic arenas creating participation and interaction. This contradicts the need to go beyond a processual logic emphasised in the focus on agency within the first two conditions of leadership and relationships.

Within the theme of citizen – state interaction and participation previous literature on the local turn present two conditions:
5. Multi-level governance allows for citizen-state interaction as well as bargaining over distribution in sub-national governments that are stable, and have autonomy and capacity to address local issues.

6. Sub-national government fosters inclusion and broad participation.

4.4 Accountability, transparency and legitimacy

The last theme on how local governments can deepen peace that is found in the literature on the local turn in peacebuilding is an emphasis on accountability, transparency and legitimacy. The role of local governments for accountability is emphasised as it is argued that the proximity between rulers and ruled “creates greater opportunities for democratic accountability and control” (Donais, 2012, p. 54). For sub-national governance to be beneficial for peace accountability is put forward as a crucial condition as it helps ensure that local elites do not abuse their positions for particular interests. Local governments need to be downwards accountable in terms of the people being able to elect their leaders as well as choose not to re-elect leaders. Transparency and access to information on government actions is therefore important. In addition, upwards accountability through well-defined responsibilities for lower levels of government is needed (Kälin, 2004, p. 308f).

The argument is thus for procedural accountability in post-conflict local government. Procedural accountability relies on institutions of representative democracy to hold representatives to account through elections. It is closely related to the notion of responsibility in which people who should pursue the will of others give an account for their actions allowing those others to decide whether or not to reward these representatives with further confidence. The concept of procedural accountability incorporates a processual thinking about how accountability is ensured with a focus on institutions and the mechanisms installed through them. This resonates with common peacebuilding agendas in which democratic elections provide for a “peaceful alternation of power” through representatives being held accountable by the citizenry (Donais, 2012, p.46). In addition, through establishing good state-society relations, accountability is a crucial part of creating legitimate post-war governance (Jarstad & Sisk, 2008; Sisk, 2009, p. 196ff).

Legitimacy in itself “is the belief in the rightfulness of the state” (Curtis & Dzinesa, 2012, p. 50). It essentially deals with the viability of the system of government in a country and is achieved when the system is widely accepted by the public opinion. When the public believes in the appropriateness of the system the system’s effectiveness and stability is maximised (Hague & Harrop, 2004:15). Statebuilding which strengthens political and administrative institutions of the state enhances state legitimacy and, thus, also contributes to the peacebuilding agenda (Curtis & Dzinesa, 2012, p. 49).
Legitimacy for local as well as state-wide institutions is a fundamental part of establishing stability in post-conflict states. A legitimate state and state institutions facilitates the collection of revenues which is essential for the state’s capacities. It also ensures sustainable institutions since illegitimate institutions, in contrast, are easily challenged and rebellions towards illegitimate state and institutions are often supported by the wider public. Thus, illegitimacy can be a driver of state failure and war (Curtis & Dzinesa, 2012, p. 51).

In post-war contexts, democratic electoral processes including design of democratic institutions, campaigning, voting and implementation of election results, are seen as tools for establishing popular legitimacy (Sisk, 2009). As seen above, local governments are seen to be important players in economic development, provision of services and security as well as enabling a broad participation of citizens, all of which play a crucial role in enhancing local legitimacy, and in prolongation the wider state idea (Brinkerhoff, 2011, p. 138f; Jackson, 2013; Schou & Haug, 2005). Elected local governments imply that democracy and state institutions are brought closer to the people which enhances legitimacy, and, thus, as argued by Jackson, “specific responsibilities of local governments, or even their very creation, can be a fundamental part of the peace agreement” (Jackson, 2013, p. 354).

As can be seen in both the emphasis on accountability and the creation of legitimacy through local governments, although on a local level, the same liberal framework influences local post-conflict interventions (Chandler, 2013). At the same time, promoting a local alternative to shallow, centralised and failed national peacebuilding echoes the idea that it is possible to find the solution for post-conflict societies, only you have the right tools (Brinkerhoff & Johnson, 2009; Hamieh & Mac Ginty, 2010; Paris & Sisk, 2007). One of the main critiques against the (international) liberal peacebuilding agenda is that it comes with an assumption of ready set solutions to contextual problems. It is a processual thinking expressing what Donais has termed “epistemological certainty” in which answers to important contextual questions for promoting peace are taken as given (Donais, 2012, p. 145). In this case, the search for accountability, transparency and legitimacy are seen as means to establish a liberal peace locally. Donais points out that one of the underlying assumptions to the implementation of a ready set framework for peace is that local capacity is often seen to be lacking. Stressing the need of local governance reveals an assumption that there is a lack of local governance at present and a need to implement a local governance model which is externally defined. However, if turned on its head, this argument could reveal a lack of local capacity as defined in external/western notions of local governance, but not necessarily a lack of capacity, emphasising that local actors do possess capacities needed for the local context, so too for building peace in the local context (Donais, 2012, p. 145). Within the literature on the local turn in peacebuilding authors
writing on the emancipatory perspective would argue precisely this, that through its emphasis on liberal mechanisms to create peace and stability local capacities, or local agency, is overlooked. However, it seems that literature on the effective local turn in peacebuilding to a great extent still relies on an externally defined liberal framework for peace.

The two conditions regarding accountability and legitimacy that can be found in the literature on the local turn are, thus, as follows:

7. Local governance increases accountability and transparency both upwards and downwards
8. Local governance increases legitimacy both for state and sub-national governance level

5. Eight Conditions for Deepened Peace: Creating Chaos or Allowing for Complexities?

In the above section the eight conditions on how local governments are claimed to contribute to deepened peace in a local setting has discussed the eight conditions separately. However, if they are to be considered important within a local process of peace analysing how the eight conditions interact, contribute or contradict each other is of importance. The following section will discuss whether the way peace is assumedly built, as well the kind of peace supposedly built inherent in the different conditions encourages or constrains deepening peace. The final section of this paper will present an outline of an analytical framework for how an empirical study can make use of the identified conditions for studying the role of local governments in deepening peace.

As the discussion above has shown, how the different conditions relate to peace as constructed through processual logic, agency of actors, institutions and structures or liberal ideas vary. Conditions within the themes of citizen – state interaction and participation as well as accountability and legitimacy stress a processual logic in which certain measures are seen to have specific outcomes. For these four conditions the assumption is that democratic arenas create interaction, participation, accountability and in prolongation legitimacy which contributes to peace. Within the theme of leadership and relationships, on the other hand, the notion of building peace moves beyond a processual logic as agency is seen as continuously influencing the process of peace. This focus on actors also implies that democratic arenas are not enough but that what becomes of leaders’ representation to a great extent depends on agency of actors. It might actually mean that democracy itself is less important because benevolent leaders working for peace are not necessarily seen as dependent on democratic institutions for their actions.
Within the conditions of leadership and relationships the willingness to work towards peace is emphasised rather than the capacity to do so. Indeed it seems that the presence of capacity is never questioned. However, within the themes of citizen – state interaction and participation as well as accountability and legitimacy the emphasis on the need for democratic local governments seem to suggest a perception of a lack of local capacity at present and the need to establish local capacity through externally defined liberal governance which emphasises a particular kind of local government. When it comes to service delivery and economic development the presence or lack of capacitates is not the issue, but rather the need for capacities are stressed. Whether that means seeing capacities as already present or the need to create a certain kind of capacity is not discussed. Furthermore autonomy is claimed to play an important role for the possibility of implementing projects aiming at service delivery and economic development which requires both structures of capacity and room of manoeuvre for agency of local governments. Thus, the space and capacity to act does not seem to require a liberal structure at all times.

Although slightly differing on why and how, the eight conditions on local governance peacebuilding all adhere to the belief that through being closer to the local population the local arena plays an important role in peacebuilding. Within the condition of citizen – state interaction proximity is crucial as it allows better opportunities for people to engage in local governance opening up for the marginalised to voice their concerns. Within the condition of service delivery its importance is stressed as the local government is seen as more knowledgeable of the populations needs, possibly through a greater participation of the local population. However, supplying for the populations needs does not necessarily imply distributing services equally or equally responding to voiced concerns. Thus, the proximity argument is frequent in the literature on the local turn in peacebuilding. Within debate on legitimacy it is claimed that “specific responsibilities of local governments, or even their very creation, can be a fundamental part of the peace agreement” (Jackson, 2013, p. 354). Such statements open up for an emphasis of local governments but, as has been shown above, what role the local government is assumed to play, and especially, what kind of peace process they are seen to be part of can vary to a great degree.
6. Analytical Framework

The literature on the local turn in peacebuilding may agree on the need for the local level to be part of peacebuilding but at the same time puts varying emphasis on kind of structures and capacities needed, as well as the idea of peace as processual or moving beyond process. As this discussion has showed, disagreements, contradictions and interactions between the different conditions that are put forward by the literature are plenty and often not fully seen at first glance. Thus, what seems to be lacking is empirical material which could explore whether these eight conditions identified in literature on the local turn in peacebuilding, or other conditions at work in local contexts, help us explore the importance of local governments for deepened peace. An empirical data could reveal whether governance measures are largely influenced by a liberal notion of peace or if other worldviews put their mark on the process. In addition, the material could help us understand if the role of the local government mostly relies on processes put in place by institutional arrangements or if individual acts of agency, possibly moving peace beyond externally defined processes and including local variations, are crucial for local governments’ possibility to contribute to a deepened peace.

Collecting empirical data from local governments in Lebanon during the spring of 2015, the PhD project will take its point of departure from the eight conditions of how local governments can contribute to deepening peace. However, the data collection will leave space for exploring other conditions possibly emerging in the material as well as disputing the importance of some of the already identified conditions. With the finalisation of the study the aim is to contribute to existing knowledge by exploring in what contextualised ways Lebanese local governments may have contributed to furthering peace. See box 1 below on the analytical process of the study.
Box 1: Analytical process of defining local government contributions to furthering peace.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data collection exploring local government contributions to local peace</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data will be collected from a few local governments in Lebanon</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Analysis of empirical material</th>
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<tr>
<th>Review of conditions that have been found in the empirical material</th>
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<tr>
<th>Discuss the relevance of found conditions in relation to current literature on the local turn</th>
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</table>

Eight conditions have been identified in the literature on the effective local turn in peacebuilding*:

1. Sub-national leadership strives towards peace and coexistence
2. Central – sub-national relationships are harmonious and strive towards the same goal
3. Local governments provide service delivery which is inclusive and efficient
4. Economic resources are justly redistributed and local economic development is promoted through autonomous and capable sub-national governments
5. Multi-level governance allows for citizen – state interaction as well as bargaining over distribution in sub-national governments that are stable, and have autonomy and capacity to address local issues
6. Sub-national government fosters inclusion and broad participation
7. Local governance increases accountability and transparency both upwards and downwards
8. Local governance increases legitimacy both for state and sub-national governance level

*Sources: Bland, 2007; Brancati, 2006; Brinkerhoff, 2011; Hartmann & Crawford, 2008; Jackson, 2013; Kälin, 2004; Schou & Haug, 2005; Siegle & O’Mahony, 2010

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