Entry Points for Programming across Urban Safety and Peacebuilding

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As a contribution to help craft solutions to the rapidly increasing risk of conflict and insecurity in urban settings, this paper explores entry points for programming across urban safety and peacebuilding practice. The key entry-points for such programming are as follows.

Sharing research, data and practical experiences is a key bridge builder between urban safety and peacebuilding professionals that still largely operate in separate silos.

1. **Process design:** Process design should take into account the heterogeneous nature of urban conflicts and the context in which they are inserted, as well as promote programmes which are bottom-up and inclusive. The specific issue of "difficult actors", in terms of mediation and their engagement, is also pivotal and underlines an interesting opportunity for collaboration between both sets of practitioners.
2. **Capacity building, training and learning:** Capacity building between multiple stakeholders improves local urban leadership and local institutions, increasing the legitimacy of projects and prospects for long-term violence prevention.
3. **Violence reduction and prevention:** Both the peacebuilding and urban safety community have significant experience in violence reduction and prevention. In addition, urban safety and urban peace reinforce each other when sustainable projects are implemented. It is important to have access to all the relevant actors and achieve local ownership of violence reduction and prevention projects.
4. **Security sector reform (SSR):** SSR covers a set of key urban safety issues, including civilian control of armed forces and community-based policing, with potential knowledge sharing and cooperation in distinct forms.
5. **Constitutional review:** Post-conflict constitutional amendments or the development of city pacts could be aided by the mediation and negotiation expertise. However, amendments should not be externally imposed or follow state-centric practices which may be ill-suited for urban environments.

6. **Transitional justice:** Transitional justice mechanisms such as truth commissions could be helpful for the reintegration of former combatants or gang members into society to both prevent a 're-ignition' of the conflict and / or to start a reconciliation process.
7. **Monitoring and accountability:** Both peacebuilding and urban safety communities struggle to present policy 'outcomes' for donors, creating an incentive to pursue short-term violence reduction schemes. There is potential to harmonize monitoring and improve institutional accountability at the local, national and international level, through developing common research methodologies and sharing experiences between cities.
8. **Urban planning:** Urban planning can contribute to the prevention of conflict through careful design, as well as to the promotion of post-conflict reconciliation through offering public space for debate. Additionally, public spaces are places of memory and thus play an important role in sustainable peacebuilding.
9. **Regional and local cooperation:** Horizontal and vertical cooperation between stakeholders and municipalities fosters exchange of knowledge and practices. Regional cooperation and increased South-South relations present an opportunity to reduce the reliance on the Global North for the diffusion of security norms and practices, as well as technical assistance.

The paper also highlights three overall findings with respect to the confluence of urban safety and peacebuilding practice.

- **Cooperation between peacebuilding and urban safety practitioners can assume many different forms.** This is based on the assumption of heterogeneity of urban violence, as different root causes of violence require different solutions and thus the composition of actors involved varies significantly. Regardless of the nature of cooperation, considering possible partnerships when conceptualizing safety schemes on the urban level is a promising step towards an integrated approach to urban peacebuilding.
- **Space and urban planning play an important role in both preventing and resolving conflict in cities.** This necessitates the involvement of non-traditional actors in peacebuilding projects such as architects, urban planners and city-level or municipal policy-makers.
- **Sharing research, data and practical experiences is a key bridge builder between urban safety and peacebuilding professionals that still largely operate in separate silos.** This can yield new approaches within the two individual fields, but also open up room for joint projects and integrated methodologies for studying urban peacebuilding.

The paper draws on a systematic review of literature from academic, policy and practitioner sources in the fields of peacebuilding and urban safety that was part of a 12-month research project of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies and the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform. Due to the wide variety of literature present in the field of peacebuilding, the authors focused on articles which specifically tackle urban peacebuilding. This approach significantly narrowed our literature base, and yielded a Latin American- and African-centric lens to our research. In order to avoid this regional bias, the authors conducted case studies in Mitrovica (Kosovo) and Beirut (Lebanon), to broaden the geographical horizon and provide a more diverse range of possible entry points. Semi-structured interviews were used as an additional complement to our findings and allowed analysis of areas not addressed in the literature. The identification of entry point for programming have also been guided by the progress of the Technical Working Group (TWG) on the Confluence of Urban Safety and Peacebuilding Practice (see more information at the end of this paper).

Background

For the first time in human history, the percentage of the world's population living in cities has crossed the 50% threshold, and is expected to rise to 75% by 2050 (Grimond 2007). Growing populations increase pressure on basic service provision, as well as heightening inequality and levels of violence. Given the increasing size and economic importance of cities, as well as the transboundary nature of urban crime networks and cross-country weapon flows, urban safety is increasingly becoming relevant for agents of security at the national, regional and international level. The intensification of urban conflict also signifies a shift in the appearance and nature of safety issues, demanding the use of different mechanisms and solutions.

Despite this strategic picture and the corresponding need of city administrations to expand their capacity to tackle issues of rapid urbanization and urban violence, there has been minimal sharing of expertise between peacebuilding and urban safety practitioners. The perceived threat of large, uncontrolled urban populations has prompted heavy-handed responses from national and municipal governments, in some contexts even in the form of military 'pacification' interventions and armed surveillance. Although such strategies can reduce violence in the short-term, they tend not to address the underlying causes of urban violence and can even enforce societal divisions.

While city contexts, urban safety approaches, and peacebuilding practice can differ enormously, the research has found three overacting themes that seem to serve as overall guiding assumptions for programming on urban safety and peacebuilding at the city level.

Heterogeneity of urban violence: Urban conflict and violence usually cannot be simplified as a two-sided conflict. In fact, there can be a hugely diverse set of actors involved. Some can be inaccessible via state channels, meaning that the peacebuilding professionals need to have extensive knowledge of local urban dynamics and communities. Urban safety practitioners usually have better knowledge of the local situation and can provide peacebuilders – especially when these are coming from outside – with valuable information and access to informal actors. There is no simple template for solving urban conflict, and each situation has to be studied in-depth before offering a solution.

The importance of bottom-up approaches: Given the importance of local knowledge and access, it makes sense to promote bottom-up approaches, in stark contrast to the top-down *mano dura* tactic (the heavy-handed military approach often observed in Latin American cities). While the latter can increase animosity between different actors, approaching urban conflicts at the community level increases legitimacy and encourages the engagement of affected actors and perpetrators of violence. Our research underlines the importance of learning from local practices in order to avoid negative unintended consequences of state-centric peacebuilding practices, which can be amplified due to the diverse dynamics of the urban environment. In short: peacebuilding in urban settings is not about high-level handshakes, but about the collaboration and co-existence of 'normal' people.

Cities are not unitary actors: Cities are not unitary actors as they are often treated in the literature. Scott Bollens makes a good case for this not being so. The city is neither unitary, nor static: there are differences within the city government and also variations in how policies and ideas are implemented. Bollens talks of the vertical and horizontal differentiation of interests: horizontal differences exist between different branches of policy making, for example in health,

housing, development or others (Bollens 2012: 223, 224), and vertical differences are present between the different levels of governance (national, regional, city level), depending on the degree of autonomy of city decision-making, which influences opportunities and constraints decisively (Ibid., 224, 225).

Entry-point 1: Process design

The first proposed entry point on the confluence of urban safety and peacebuilding practices - process design - highlights important thematic issues which concern all the entry points analyzed in this section. Process design is situated within the scope of a post-conflict grassroots approach to peacebuilding. When designing interventions, it is crucial for peacebuilding and urban safety practitioners, as well as researchers and local and national governments, to consider the heterogeneity of urban environments. A comprehensive understanding of urban (and not just local dynamics) is required for any project to provide long-term, durable and feasible solutions for urban safety issues. This understanding has to take into account not only the heterogeneous nature of urban safety, but also its mutable characteristics. Indeed, "violence undergoes a dynamic transformation over time and space, as reflected in changing methods, objectives, and perpetrators of violence" (Frost and Nowak 2014: 2).

Projects must therefore be context-specific, and the categorization of actors often must take into account a plethora of socio-economic conflicts, as well as ethnic and historical divisions all within a small space. Urban violence is rarely characterized by a two-sided conflict, and thus poses new challenges for the peacebuilding community. Oversimplified categories should thus be avoided. For example, labeling a city as "divided" does not mean that a common solution can or should be applied for all cities that fit in this description of inter-group conflict. Policymakers should work with the "knowledge that strategies would necessarily be different between cities" (Bollens 2001: 1-2, 8).
Accordingly, Bollens highlights the importance of bottom-up approaches, which allow projects to adopt strategies which complement local practices: "Peace-building in cities seeks not the well-publicized handshakes of national political elites, but rather the more mundane, yet ultimately more meaningful, nods of respect and recognition of ethnically diverse urban neighbors as they confront each other in their daily interactions" (Bollens 2012: 228).

Indeed, urban safety programmes that promote the inclusion and ownership of local actors, for example favoring the devolution of policing duties to the municipal rather than military level, can increase long-term effectiveness (Zarghani et al. 2014: 35). Such measures would demand cooperation between municipal and national actors, and peacebuilding practitioners who have experience in leading police training sessions, who could potentially establish joint training schemes in security sector reform.

An example of a mediation project designed to promote inclusion can be found in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. Ex-drug dealers and former convicted criminals play a role in different communities in an attempt to minimize clashes between gangs, residents and official forces, and work with local youth in groups such as AfroReggae (Ramos 2006: 423). On a number of occasions, projects that cooperate with unofficial mediators function as a link between the government and the local community, using their knowledge and leverage to aid the design of policies. Mediation, access and engagement with "difficult actors" is an issue found in both urban safety as well as in peacebuilding practices, regarding the legitimation of processes through strategic design. (TWG First Meeting Report 2015: 5-6). For this reason, it is often argued

that any peacebuilding expertise relevant to urban safety should be transferred to the level of small-scale interventions, by funding grassroots local political leadership and thereby fostering legitimate local ownership. High-profile projects are unlikely to be appropriate due to irregular spatial distribution and community-specific issues of violence within cities (Milliken 2013).

Entry-point 2: Capacity building, training and learning

Another entry point proposed by the TWG and highlighted in the literature is that of capacity building, training and learning. Unlike some other entry points, capacity building is not specific to a particular community, being an integral part of any strategy against violence as well as in the wider realm of sustainable development in general. The new dynamics brought about by burgeoning urban populations and inequality in cities require a network of practitioners, civil-society representatives and legitimate local leaders, which can effectively share information and experiences to better tackle urban safety issues. Practitioners and researchers should thus prioritize developing capacities and linkages in the urban communities they serve or study. Yet the flow of capacity building and learning must not be considered unidirectional. Given the importance of local actors and experiences in maintaining urban safety, practitioners and researchers must also learn from the existing practices of all relevant actors, formal or informal, as this will enhance the legitimacy of future projects.

A recent study in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) undertaken by peacebuilding organization Interpeace and its partner Indigo Côte d'Ivoire exemplifies this approach: researchers engaged over 750 residents from three different municipalities, with varying social backgrounds, in a participatory programme which encouraged to citizens to reflect on their experiences and discuss ideas for violence prevention (Interpeace and Indigo Côte d'Ivoire 2015). The use of focus groups and reflection allows researchers to learn about informal urban safety structures, tensions and channels of communication, and residents have the opportunity to cooperate and build networks in a violence-free environment. Allowing residents to participate in shaping their own safety systems can improve general perceptions of safety within a community and strengthen confidence in local institutions.

Within this framework, partnership and network building between relevant peacebuilding and urban safety actors can also enhance urban safety. For example, consistent leadership from the state government and the promotion of popular participation between multiple stakeholders in Lagos (Nigeria) has led to partnership building with the private sector and local governments in all sectors of development (Filani 2012: 6). Moreover, forging partnerships between municipalities and the private sector can lead to the allocation of financial resources for urban development projects and renovation, as well as fueling entrepreneurship and engaging marginalized populations who often work in informal sectors prone to violence (Filani 2012: 39). Such resources are potentially of great use, however municipal officials should be wary of the possibility of private sector cooperation benefitting richer suburbs and further polarizing urban society.

Our research implies that building long-term partnerships is a cornerstone of long-term stability. For this reason, the increased involvement of peacebuilding practitioners in the realm of urban safety would greatly benefit from joint training schemes, involving all actors relevant to a particular urban setting (i.e. government, police forces, community groups, academia, NGOs, economically marginalized people). The United Nations Institute for Training and Research

(UNITAR) has offered a free course on urban risk reduction and implementing resilience actions, which is open to city and local government officials, disaster management professionals and representatives from academic institutions working on disaster risk reduction.[1] Clearly, the sharing of expertise on urban safety could benefit institutional development in areas lacking technical or educational resources, where retaliative violence may be the primary tactic used by state-level or municipal governments to respond to disturbances. In 2014, UN-Habitat Safer Cities Programme (SCP) and the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform (PPP) proposed the establishment of 'City Labs', an urban space for locally-led innovation which aims to prevent and reduce violence, as well as building relationships between people and authorities in urban settings (UN-Habitat et al. 2014: 2). Certainly, the inclusion of marginalized communities in training programmes can help to build local security structures, which transform agents of violence into agents of security. However, establishing and participating in such training schemes can be expensive, and this cost can exclude the poorest actors. Moreover, international organizations (IOs) typically possess greater technological, organizational and funding capacities for establishing multi-level training schemes. Thus such programmes may be designed through the lens of external actors of the Global North, without a thorough knowledge of the local environment. These actors may also seek to establish training programmes with the aim of reproducing them in other cities, which does not fit well with need to address the heterogeneity of urban violence.

Yet capacity building is a broad and important concept, which in fact relates to most of the entry points discussed in this section. In many interventions and areas of cooperation, from SSR to process design, adopting inclusive approaches permits multiple actors to cooperate and learn from each other's experiences. Thus it should not be dismissed on the basis that it is costly or that it may be overly-influenced by external actors. We should not limit ourselves strictly to thinking about capacity building and learning in the form of training schemes, but rather as an ongoing process in all sectors of urban development.

Entry-point 3: Violence reduction and prevention

There is not a single one-size-fits-all solution regarding violence reduction and prevention. It is, however, necessary to highlight the commonalities between reduction and prevention approaches to show the possible points of exchange for the practitioner communities. Both communities have been dealing with violence reduction and prevention for a long time and possess relevant experiences in these fields.

In both cases, the condition for success is access to the relevant actors. Some of the people involved might be hard to reach through official channels (gangs, organized crime groups), and thus demand local knowledge and legitimacy. On the other hand, peacebuilders are often trained in the necessary techniques to reach a favorable agreement. Therefore, it is important to combine local leadership and inclusion with the transfer of practical mediation and negotiation skills. This provides mediators with the necessary legitimacy required to engage 'difficult actors' in effective short-term violence reduction schemes (for example, ceasefires), as well as equipping urban safety practitioners with the required capacities to initiate successful long-term violence prevention projects. Such a strategy will only be successful if the ceasefire or the long-

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[1] See https://www.unitar.org/event/urbanrisk

term social, legal and economic reforms to prevent violence are accepted and owned by the affected actors and the community.

Regarding violence reduction, the peacebuilding community has rich experience in mediating ceasefires, while gang truces are part of the repertoire of urban safety personnel, especially in Latin American countries (TWG Report Corregidora 2015: 5). The report of the TWG states: "An important shared concern is how to advance ceasefires or truces amid ongoing violence" (TWG Report Corregidora 2015: 5). A crucial part of violence reduction is lowering crime levels. Crime does not necessarily need to be violent, but increased criminality can influence the real and perceived feeling of safety decisively, as the example of Johannesburg shows (see Grob et al 2016). Crime reduction falls mainly into the responsibility of urban safety practitioners, such as police and security guards.

For violence prevention, it is important to distinguish between structural and situational prevention measures (TWG Report Corregidora 2015: 5). Structural approaches tackle the underlying root causes of violence, such as inequality, high levels of crime or the prevalence of ethnic, religious or ideological tensions, whereas situational approaches try to limit the opportunities to commit violence, which can be done through urban planning or gun regulation. An interesting case for situational measures is Johannesburg (South Africa), with the Jo'burg City Safety Strategy (see Grob et al 2016). Moreover, the community surveillance approach of Treichville in Abidjan (Ivory Coast), is another case of innovative violence prevention. Moreover, another relevant point is that post-conflict peacebuilding does not merely translate to the reconstruction of people, but also regenerating and maintaining capital and culture (Pellegrin 2013: 33). However, it is important to dissociate community policing and surveillance from "vigilante justice", which has recently spread in Brazilian cities, with lynchings happening at a daily rate and groups claiming themselves as the "Imperial Klans of America Brasil", in a reference to the Ku-Klux Klan (Huffington Post Brasil, 2015; Diário do Centro do Mundo, 2015).

To sum up, both the peacebuilding and the urban safety communities have experience in violence reduction as a more short-term approach to conflict resolution, but closer cooperation could benefit these applied strategies. In violence prevention, it is important to not only tackle immediate opportunities for criminal and violent offenders, but also to address the root causes. This might involve not only police and other law enforcement actors, but also different parts of the government and local community, as underlying reasons for violence can be economic, political, social, religious, ethnic, or others, and thus demand a holistic approach.

Entry-point 4: Security sector reform

Stemming from peacebuilding and statebuilding practices, SSR is central to the urban safety and peacebuilding discussion within the TWG's work. As stressed by the 2015 TWG Report, current SSR issues such as civilian control of armed forces, community-based policing and neighborhood surveillance indicates a focus on the local community and therefore parallels many approaches we have discussed so far (TWG Report Corregidora 2015: 5).

Policies focusing on a heavily militarization and short-term violence reduction adopted primarily in Latin America have been heavily criticized for failing to involve the local community and for not significantly reducing levels of violence and crime (UNDP 2013). More recently, the

government of El Salvador publicly branded *mano dura* security policies as inefficient, which have been in vogue in the country for the past two decades, proposing a shift to a more locally-based approach, with violence prevention and reforms to the criminal justice system (InSight Crime 2015).

The previously-mentioned emphasis on capacity building from the bottom up creates a large potential for joint security sector training schemes including peacebuilders, state-level and urban-level enforcement forces, especially regarding the police. Importantly, this can improve the effectiveness and coordination of national and local-level security forces, establishing trust with the local community and incentivizing participation in wider urban safety projects. Police training schemes between grassroots and top-level policy-makers and actors can invest higher-level security forces with knowledge of multiple urban crime networks, which could span numerous cities within a country or region.

Thus for SSR, integration of activities at various societal levels is vital. At the same time, practitioners must be aware that policies targeted at harsh repression might foment the anger of victims of violence and their families (Milliken 2013: 5). In this sense, police training to approach security issues should address questions such as human rights provisions and local actor inclusion, as well as the understanding of further social and urban aspects related to the area of their work. Researchers in both communities should therefore focus on developing capacities and linkages in the communities they serve at the same time as recognizing their inherent complexities.

The example of Mitrovica, as well as other Northern Serbian Municipalities in Kosovo, exemplifies the need of a balanced approach in SRR, with civil policing gradually adopting the security role played by NATO forces through KFOR (Kosovo Force), whilst a civil and local framework for policing simultaneously enables the operation of informal structures (see Grob et al 2016).

The case of Rio de Janeiro also demonstrates how the implementation of public security policies and grassroots initiatives can be improved. The armed building peace approach of the Pacification Police Units (UPPS), can only be effective with the inclusion of the local population and especially local leadership based on the prevention of violence and crime (Rodrigues 2014: 11).

Entry-point 5: Constitutional review

Peacebuilders have valuable experience facilitating constitutional amendments in conflict-affected states, due to their involvement in civil wars and political transformation processes (TWG First Meeting Report 2015: 5-6). This entry point is therefore clearly associated with post-conflict, statebuilding and peacebuilding practices, representing an area not really touched upon in urban safety studies. Indeed, constitutions usually refer to the state level. Yet increasingly in the urban safety realm, practitioners and researchers are developing constitutional-style documents, or 'city pacts', as a framework for violence prevention. For example, the Pacto do Rio (Brazil) creates a framework within which international organizations (including UN-Habitat), the public sector, private sector, academia and nonprofit organizations can collaborate to achieve secure and sustainable urban development.[2] The pact has a broad range of goals,

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[2] see: http://www.pactodorio.com.br/

including the provision of public services, the integration of federal and state government actions, cooperation with civil society actors and the private sector, as well as the promotion of collaborative data collection. These strategies aim to facilitate the secure and sustainable economic and social development of the city.

The experience of the peacebuilding community in facilitating the review of official state documents presents an entry point for deeper cooperation between these two groups. Particularly in situations where documents are drafted within a political transformation process, ethnic divisions or historical rivalries can lead to deadlock and rekindled tensions. Here, peacebuilders could act as third-party mediators, facilitating discussions for peace negotiations and urban redevelopment schemes, as well as promoting the inclusion of marginalized actors and preventing one party from being hegemonic in negotiations.

However, there are reasons to be cautious with such an approach. 'Liberal' peacebuilding practices, such as reunification processes, tend to be based on state-centric approaches (Björkdahl 2013: 210). Peacebuilding practitioners must be aware that the installation of Western liberal ideals into a constitutional document may not be suitable for complex urban environments. In Mostar (Bosnia), for example, the externally-imposed state-centric practice of shared governance has actually cemented existing ethnic cleavages and led to political deadlock and security threats, which are more pronounced at the urban than the state level (International Crisis Group 2009). Although this point concerns shared governance and not constitutional review directly, it seems that the heterogeneous nature of the urban environment could actually intensify the unintended consequences of liberal peacebuilding interventions. Naturally, discussions on expertise-sharing for constitutional amendments should consider this issue.

Our research suggests that this type of intervention should not aim to diffuse global norms of liberal democratic peacebuilding or adopt externally-dictated benchmarks, implied superiority and reproduced hierarchies (Björkdahl 2015: 276). In fact, such tactics have the possibility to provoke resistance from local populations, which gives weight to the argument that peacebuilding assistance is sometimes unwanted and indeed worse than no cooperation at all. Thus despite the scope for deeper cooperation between urban safety and peacebuilding practitioners, peacebuilders must be cautious of the unintended consequences of practices embedded within liberal norms.

Entry-point 6: Transitional justice

Peacebuilders have been working with mechanisms of transitional justice, and have been involved in processes in many countries all over the world, especially in African and South American countries. A definition of transitional justice is: "the set of judicial and non-judicial measures that have been implemented by different countries in order to redress the legacies of massive human rights abuses. These measures include criminal prosecutions, truth commissions, reparations programmes, and various kinds of institutional reforms. Transitional justice is not a 'special' kind of justice, but an approach to achieving justice in times of transition from conflict and/or state repression" (International Centre for Transitional Justice 2009).This specific entry point could be interesting for urban practitioners dealing with gangs, organized crime networks and in cities with segregated societies. The proposed channels by which transitional justice could benefit urban safety were "gang engagement, youth programming or urban safety

initiatives in conflict and crime affected regions" (TWG First Meeting Report 2015: 5). An important question is how to reintegrate former combatants into the community, especially keeping in mind the density of the city as a potentially conflict-igniting factor. Here, the knowledge of transitional justice processes of peacebuilders can be of interest. How can former adversaries encounter each other without starting (another) cycle of violence? We find that transitional justice projects from the national level could inform more local-level urban safety strategies.

Regarding youth programming, there is an interesting baseline study by the NGO Search for Common Ground, about Conakry, the capital of Guinea, and its problem of youth violence. The paper explores the possibility of integrating marginalized youth to both prevent and reduce violence. The authors of the study focus on the pull of rap music, which could be helpful in spreading the message of non-violence, without taking agency away from the young people (Philipps and Grovogui 2010: 6).

Transitional justice is closely interrelated with the concept of memory and remembering, be it through personal recollection or collective memory of a specific group. In the context of the city, where space is limited and exchanges between people are frequent, clashes of different memories become evident and can even become 'battlefields' of their own. While this might happen before and during the conflict, it is especially in the aftermath when transitional justice measures lend themselves to post-conflict reconstruction. So far, truth commissions, reconciliation efforts and judicial measures have been used for national issues. However, the city, with its tight web of relations and exchanges, might be another level where such transitional justice projects can offer channels for conflict resolution and reconciliation. This is not only because of the advantages of local ties, but also because of the need to lower the risk of reigniting conflict, due to the high (and increasing) density within cities. Thus, linking local networks to local peacebuilding initiatives could be a possible tactic to overcome urban safety issues in post-conflict situations.

Transitional justice in the city is also closely interlinked with the use of urban spaces and thus urban planning in conflict-affected cities. A prime example for a city where transitional justice mechanisms could be applied is Beirut, especially given the segregated nature of its population and landscape. Public space is connoted with memories - of the civil war and because of sectarian tensions varying from group to group - and is thus a 'battleground' for contesting narratives. Transitional justice offers a forum for the sharing and discussion of such memories through community-based approaches. However, this does not necessarily mean looking at justice in the national context, but rather concentrating on a local level. Craig Larkin states: "Beirut's vacant center represents not only a physical symbol of Lebanon's lost past, but a blank screen on which diverse memories and narratives can be projected" (Larkin 2010: 423). There are already interesting projects being implemented to start discussions and debates on this part of national history, such as the civil war and its inherent destruction of much of the city center. Larkin also mentions: "environmental advocacy groups, workshops on postwar reconstruction, story-telling, and the increase in novels and autobiographies recalling past times, places and experiences" (Larkin 2010: 421). These projects are especially important in a climate of political deadlock and show the necessity of bottom-up initiatives from the community.

In sum, transitional justice experiences give urban safety practitioners valuable tools to address conflicts and their implications within their community. Peacebuilders with expertise in this field and groups and individuals from the local community can enforce these efforts by lending a

helping hand. Evidence from San Salvador provides an example of successful gang engagement in transitional justice procedures, with the involvement of key civil-society actors such as the Catholic Church in violence prevention and targeting youth groups to stem the proliferation of young gang members (see Grob et al 2016).

Entry-point 7: Monitoring and accountability; developing research techniques

In terms of the monitoring and accountability of projects, entry points could arise from the development of common methodologies for measuring violence and success (Frost 2014). Monitoring, accountability and research techniques are day-to-day occupations within both communities, which are essential to evaluating the impact of violence prevention efforts. Indeed, a problem faced by both practitioner communities is the difficulty of carrying out quantitative and qualitative research in areas with high levels of armed violence. Due to the difficulty of measuring violence and the many factors that contribute to its development, municipal governments often increase police presence, adopt heavy-handed policies and install surveillance posts. Such strategies are visible within a society and can help municipal actors demonstrate progress and 'outcomes' through the quantification of police numbers and short-term reductions in violent acts, which is important for politicians serving limited terms. Many cities have well-established monitoring infrastructures and observatories, which tend to be popular with middle to upper-class citizens, who can benefit from access to increased security services (CISCO 2009: 2). However, for poorer areas with high levels of violence, which are often the target of so-called 'pacification' processes, increased use of force and surveillance can produce negative social and economic externalities. In particular, using military surveillance as the primary monitoring tactic can augment animosity between citizen and state and further impound the social and economic woes of communities, increasing inequality and further augmenting violence issues.

The success of non-surveillance based urban safety strategies, such as community inclusion, is not necessarily easy to present quantitatively. Other useful strategies, such as engaging delinquents in employment schemes, can be politically unpopular due to the negative perceptions of these citizens. For this reason, there is great potential for a lively discussion between both communities on how best to present important research, which is not necessarily quantifiable.

In quantitative research, there have been calls to establish coherent conceptual parameters for measuring violence, which currently take on diverse meanings and consequently hinder hypothesis testing (Muggah 2012: 9). Collaboration between researchers in both communities can also expand the evidence-base of solid data on urban violence, helping avoid the current over-prescription of causality to factors which do not take into account the social and economic failures of governments (Muggah 2012). Increased accuracy and coherence regarding the impact evaluation of projects is crucial to satisfying donor requests and ensuring funding for future projects.

Additionally, there has been little harmonization between monitoring infrastructures within countries and between different states. The absence of a framework for monitoring leaves individual efforts vulnerable to political interference, highlighting an opportunity for deeper cooperation between urban safety and peacebuilding practitioners (TWG First Meeting Report 2015: 6). In many cases, achieving accountability requires the development of institutional

discipline at multiple levels. In West Africa, for example, the porousness of borders contributes to cross-border weapons flows, due to the lack of an appropriate mechanism for monitoring movements and corrupt practices such as bribery (Addo 2006: 1-10). If urban violence perpetrators obtain their weapons from neighboring countries, or if a crime network operates across several cities in different countries, ensuring safety requires the development of transparent border procedures. This translates to cooperation between regional police forces, as well as municipal and state governments, and the rooting out of corruption. Without transparency, those who are meant to be accountable for preventing urban violence actually form part of the problem, the knock-on effect being urban insecurity.

Of course, border practices and regional cooperation are sensitive issues that touch upon state sovereignty. For this reason, it is difficult to envisage how external actors can legitimately assist increasing transparency in this area, representing a practical barrier to cooperation. Perhaps in situations where national and municipal governments wish to improve monitoring procedures, expertise-sharing could take place between cities, which have developed strategies to monitor border flows. Best practices could be transferred to countries struggling with corruption. In addition, increasing border efficiency can contribute positively to a country's economy by increasing trade, reducing rent-seeking behavior and decreasing weapon inflows to urban areas. Perhaps the quantifiability of economic and improvement and violence reduction could serve as a further incentive to fuel cooperation between actors at the urban and national level seeking concrete policy outcomes regarding violence reduction.

Furthermore, peacebuilding initiatives could provide technical assistance for monitoring purposes via the improvement of tax databases, especially for cities with minimal financial resources and large black markets. In doing so, vital revenues for the financing of urban development projects could be obtained (Filani 2012: 6). Creating a database of citizens grants them access to public services and can serve to decrease marginalization, as well providing municipal actors with useful information about their citizens and the distribution of income within a city. Clearly, the establishment of tax bases is also a domestic issue, thus technical and financial assistance could only feasibly be provided in situations where a municipal government is willing to cooperate with external actors.

There is also a demand to bring crucial research on local practices into mainstream policy formation and academia. While peacebuilding organizations and academics standardly diffuse their research through publications, local urban safety practitioners often do not have the resources or academic recognition to fund publications, which can highlight important success stories from low-level initiatives (Boah 2015). Peacebuilding academics and organizations can thus use their academic weight to showcase locally-led, urban-level research.

Finally, it is worth mentioning the emergence of geospatial and big data as a research area in conflict studies. Geospatial research differs from standard econometrics in its ability to adopt methodologies which can analyze individual conflict events at specific moments in time, at varying units of base measurement (i.e. city-level, suburb, street). Such techniques can make inferences without necessarily having to assume linear functions, which is important in heterogeneous environments. For instance, Bhavnani et. al (2014) used micro-level, geocoded data on settlement patterns in Jerusalem to create a computer simulation model, which assesses why intergroup contact sometimes exacerbates violence but also can mitigate it. This geographical precision at the micro-level is clearly advantageous for urban researchers studying cities in which the nature and quantity of violence greatly differs between districts. However as

geospatial software is quite expensive, peace researchers in academia could help transfer knowledge to the local level. In some cities, surveillance camera technology has been combined with GIS. This is done by treating each camera as a sensor with a defined geographical location within a city, between which different sensor measurement can be directly related. This technology has been used for crowd control, and can also be combined with computer simulation models to transform standard surveillance equipment into something which predictive power.

The development of big data research presents governments with access to unprecedented amounts of personal information on behavioral patterns via social media and online consumer preferences. There is an argument that the sheer size of the datasets used and nature of the information can allow security forces to pinpoint increasingly individualistic, small-scale threats, which are difficult to prevent with standard measures. However, there is a worry that advancements in surveillance could lead to an Orwellian form of security, where individual freedoms and privacy rights are sacrificed for increased security. It is beyond the scope of this paper to fully enter this debate, but our analysis suggests that increased state surveillance into private livelihoods does not match the local capacity building and bottom-up strategies, which we have stressed so far.

Entry-point 8: Urban planning and renovation

Access to public spaces is increasingly deemed important, as its inclusion in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) suggests. By 2030, SDG 11.7 aims to "provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities" (Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform 2015). This point is also highly relevant for our discussion of urban peace. Urban planners are not traditionally seen as key actors within peacebuilding. So far, the peacebuilding community has not been in regular contact with urban planners and architects. Therefore, cooperation between urban safety practitioners and the urban planning community has not been extensive.

As already mentioned, public space is not only a location for urban violence and its resolution, but also a screen for memory and narratives. This demands dialogue and mediation and can involve post-conflict transitional justice mechanisms. In this section, we want to focus on the spatial dimension of urban planning and renovation, on the public space as the location of violence and peace in the city, especially in ethnically or religiously divided cities, such as Beirut, Nicosia, Belfast or Jerusalem. Björkdahl (2013: 207) describes the difficulty of peacebuilding in these cities as follows: "Such cities tend to freeze the conflict and remain partitioned regardless of a conflict settlement. Thus the divided city demonstrates the power of place to peacebuilding." She further describes the population in these cities as "socially as well as spatially segregated as temporary barriers have become permanent, and imagined walls have become real" (Björkdahl 2013: 208). A prime example of a situation of deadlock is Beirut's ongoing garbage crisis, where politicians are unable to find a solution for a basic service provision. Yet besides the complication of daily political decisions, the paralyzation of urban life makes normalized exchanges almost impossible and reconciliation difficult.

Where 'traditional' peacebuilding methods might fail, urban planning and renovation - translating roughly to improved infrastructure and the transfer of resources to decaying areas - can be an effective means of reducing the social and economic inequalities that drive

violence. Although urban planning and renovation is not necessarily relevant to peacebuilding interventions in inter/intrastate conflicts, in the urban context it presents a chance for rival ethnic groups and civil-society actors to collaborate, particularly in post-conflict redevelopment and reconstruction. The creation of shared urban spaces - often referred to as 'opening-up the city' - presents an opportunity for the peacebuilding community to transfer expertise in the fields of mediation, constitutional review and transitional justice to aid the shift from conflict situations to locally-owned, participatory urban redevelopment schemes which meet the basic needs of the citizens every-day lives (i.e. health, education). In cities such as Monterrey (Mexico), creating new public spaces in marginalized and conflictive areas has boosted tourism, retail and linked different communities (Hernandez-Bonilla 2008). In this sense, urban planning is closely interlinked with violence prevention. Moreover, it is important that public spaces and urban infrastructure are well maintained. Many slum populations and impoverished cities live within an environment with no waste management, intermittent water and power supply, as well as insufficient drainage and air pollution. Void of a functioning infrastructure, citizens engage in unsustainable environmental practices, in turn furthering deteriorating the living environment and marginalizing parts of a city (Oduwaye 2007). Environmental insecurity can thus lead to insecurity in terms of violence. For this reason, the provision of basic infrastructural services for a livable environment is inextricably linked to urban safety.

The relevance of improved urban planning and renovation to long-term violence prevention and the opportunities this field presents regarding capacity building and promoting participatory systems of urban governance suggest that urban planning must become an integral part of the urban peacebuilder's handbook. Additionally, an extensive knowledge of the dynamics and actors within the native urban safety practitioner community, including urban planners, is crucial regarding realities on the ground. In light of this opportunity, we propose that urban planning and renovation should also be considered as an entry point for a more integrated approach to urban safety and peacebuilding practice.

Interesting case studies that highlight the importance of critical urban planning are Beirut, Mitrovica, Johannesburg and Lagos. The four cities have different historical backgrounds, and thus demand different approaches to open public spaces. While Johannesburg and Lagos have implemented projects that already show signs of success, Beirut is experiencing an opposing trend - the reduction of public spaces. Mitrovica, as an example of a divided city, is using urban planning as a way to promote not only urban safety, but also ethnic reconciliation. While all of those cities have experienced violence in the past, it is necessary to highlight the segregated nature of the Lebanese capital. We elaborate more on this in a further publication (see Grob et al 2016).

Public spaces are not only the cornerstone of city life for cultural exchange or a location for leisure, they also often represent a physical place for dialogue. In a public square, people from all parts of society encounter each other, both as individuals as well as in groups. The possibility of this exchange indicates an openness of the political leadership on the citizen level. When such public space is lacking or, as is many places in Beirut, highly securitized, a subsequent lack of confidence is communicated to the population and suggests mistrust of the government towards its constituency. While this attitude might not directly lead to violence, it can be an indicator of prevalent tension.

Abir Saksouk-Sasso, an urban planner from Beirut, mentions the possibilities that informal spaces present, meaning places that are created by an alternative form of sovereignty (Saksouk-Sasso

2015). Such informal spaces can be helpful if the official, formal channels are blocked (like in the case of Beirut), and conversation only takes place through alternative lanes. Saksouk-Sasso (2015) states: "I do believe in the potential of informal spaces, as spaces created by their users to cater for their direct needs and the ways they go about. I think, as planners and activists, we should be lobbying for supporting such informal efforts, and acknowledging them when planning the city. For instance, these spaces can be preserved as they are if categorized as zones where building activity is not allowed". This also holds true for exchange between the different sects, which is generally difficult to achieve. This exchange, in return can "build trust, among themselves and with the city" (Saksouk-Sasso 2015).

Additionally, these alternative spaces allow the official actors to learn from the city's community and how they interact with each other. Saksouk-Sasso calls this the "managing the city" (Saksouk-Sasso 2015), where the city administration and government can learn from the population.

Björkdahl (2013) argues, that third-party peacebuilders have the advantage of neutrality when it comes to establishing public spaces in the city. They are not supposed to be involved in the political power struggles and can thus act as bridge-builders - quite literally in some cases. However, Saksouk-Sasso argues that the lack of local knowledge and the language barrier are obstacles that make such engagement of international peacebuilders difficult (Saksouk-Sasso 2015).

Entry-point 9: Regional and local cooperation

The last entry point we wish to propose on the confluence of urban safety and peacebuilding practices is regional and local cooperation between actors and cities. Vertical and horizontal cooperation has been important for both peacebuilders and urban practitioners, however in different ways. The new challenges presented in the urban safety realm and the consequent broadening of the concept of security, necessitates a new focus on regional cooperation and South-South relations (Muggah and de Szabó 2014: 1).

Our previous analysis indicates the importance of a networking approach for municipalities and actors in building safer cities. In terms of regional and local cooperation, this translates to: experiences and information exchanges by different stakeholders; dissemination of knowledge and techniques in support of new practices; and creating a suitable environment for the application of better policies. The construction of a network of safer cities is deeply connected with urban planning, where the development of common spaces serves as a pivotal point to the aggregation of basic needs and spaces of exchange.

Security should be considered a multidimensional problem, with a holistic and integrated approach. Thus the opportunity to promote horizontal cooperation between local and regional municipalities, and not simply vertical cooperation between municipal governments, states and IOs, should be stressed. However, the latter approach should not be disregarded, and the case of Johannesburg is a good example of simultaneous vertical and horizontal cooperation (see Grob et al 2016).

The importance of horizontal cooperation can be synthesized in two main arguments. Firstly, given the high concentration of urban safety issues in Africa and Latin America, regional

cooperation presents an important means of avoiding a reliance of the Global South on the Global North for knowledge and resources for designing and implementing interventions. Such a dependence on the Global North poses serious questions regarding the legitimacy and effectiveness of such projects, as local practices can secure the acceptance of projects at the local level. A similar issue is that many Global South actors turn to private security companies in the Global North for technologically advanced solutions for urban violence issues and surveillance. This is problematic, as: a) more expensive technology tends to benefit richer citizens of the Global South in areas with comparatively less violence and where root causes of insecurity are not found; and b) the security policy of the Global South could become increasingly influenced by the priorities of the Global North's private sector, who do not necessarily have a good understanding of complicated urban dynamics (Macalusco 2015).

Secondly, it is essential that municipal forces cooperate to tackle international crime, as urban crime networks frequently span cities in multiple countries. In this sense, this type of cooperation is important for particular problems, such as those involving border controls and is thus connected with the entry point monitoring and accountability.

Particularly in Latin America, regional cooperation has largely centered on the SSR arena. Thus there is perhaps a role for peacebuilders in broadening this practice through knowledge sharing in different relevant fields. Latin America highlights many examples in this area, having focused policies on citizen security and the inclusion of local actors, as well as transnational trends such as organized crime and drug trafficking (Muggah and Szabó 2014, p 3-4). As Muggah and Szabó (2014: 5) point out: "Owing to the economic rise of Latin American countries, donor countries are recalibrating their partnerships away from development and towards political and trade cooperation. Meanwhile, states in Central and South America are also actively seeking to deepen inter- and intra-regional cooperation and exchange of experience and expertise".

Finally, it is important to consider the role of cities within this discussion. Regional cooperation places municipalities as diplomatic actors, which brings to light the concept of paradiplomacy within urban safety. This notion suggests that cities are not only actors inside their national levels and realities, but also international political actors inserted in a global context. This process began in 1996 with the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul and now entails the United Nations Advisory Committee on Local Authorities.

The example provided by Muggah and Szabó (2014) regarding Latin American regional cooperation in the scope of "citizen security" practices, shows that local powerhouses such as Brazil, Colombia and Mexico are exporting experiences and models to neighboring countries that suffer from a similar structural violence issue. This generally happens in the form of exchanges of ideas, experiences and assistance, with a broader thematic found in the citizen security scope. This includes "hard measures" (control of transnational gangs and drug cartels, reduction of arms and human trafficking, money laundry and cyber crimes), and "soft measures" (community based policing, police and judicial reforms, youth and gender violence reduction and protection) (Muggah and Szabó 2014: 2-3).

Thus there is perhaps a role for peacebuilders to play in broadening urban safety practices through knowledge sharing in different relevant fields. In the same way, practitioners at the city level can learn from international techniques as well as benefit from a broader international networking made available through peacebuilders.

Conclusion

The analysis of this paper shows clear examples of the success of bottom-up approaches which include local actors with knowledge of their specific environment, compared to heavy-handed top-down interventions or programmes designed and imposed by external actors. The following points summarize the key lessons for programming across peacebuilding and urban safety practices.

- Interventions and programmes must be perceived as legitimate in the eyes of the local population in order to gain long-term support for projects. Positive perceptions of safety often contribute to overall security. Local leadership and community-based projects should be promoted, as these are often necessary to engage a wide range of stakeholders.
- The unintended negative consequences of liberal peacebuilding efforts may be amplified in the urban environment. Our analysis suggests that peacebuilders should avoid state-centric approaches and externally imposed mandates in city contexts.
- Day-to-day service provision may be politicized in the context of a divided urban community, for example within a power-sharing agreement at the elite level, which can lead to political paralysis.
- Urban spaces represent different memories between communities and can thus be a platform for power struggles. However, they can also be an opportunity for cooperation, for example as a forum for exchange between conflicting parties.
- Both peacebuilding and urban safety practitioners could benefit from the development of common research methodologies and conceptual parameters for measuring violence. Parameters currently take on diverse meanings, reducing the accuracy of hypothesis testing and leading to the over prescription of causality for violence to factors that do not take into account societal elements. Improved techniques could entail a more accurate and coherent analysis of programme outcomes.
- The emergence of big data research techniques grants governments access to unprecedented amounts of private information. Advancements in surveillance should not detract from individual freedoms and privacy rights, as this can reduce perceptions of safety in the long-term. The emergence of geospatial research techniques in conflict studies is exciting, as it has methodologies which do not assume linear functions and can capture multi-causal effects. This is important, given the heterogeneity of urban violence.
- Local and regional cooperation promote information and experience exchanges as well as the dissemination of knowledge and techniques. Regional cooperation presents an important means of avoiding the reliance of the Global South on the Global North for knowledge and resources for designing and implementing interventions.

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About this paper

This paper has been written as part of a research project on the confluence of urban safety and peacebuilding practice. The project was a collaboration between the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform and the Applied Research Seminar (ARS) of the Graduate Institute. The ARS projects partner students of the Graduate Institute with international organizations, NGOs and the private sector to complete discrete research projects for these organisations and provide students with 'real world' research experience. The research project occurred under the supervision of Professor Gilles Carbonnier (Graduate Institute) and Dr. Achim Wennmann (Geneva Peacebuilding Platform).

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About the Technical Working Group

The Technical Working Group on the Confluence of Urban Safety and Peacebuilding Practice brings together focal points on urban safety of cities with peacebuilding, peace mediation and conflict prevention practitioners in order to help craft solutions to the rapidly increasing risk of conflict and insecurity in urban settings. It is co-facilitated by the United Nations Office at Geneva, UN-Habitat's Safer Cities Programme and the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform. For more information see: http://www.gpplatform.ch/pb-city.

About the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform

The Geneva Peacebuilding Platform is an inter-agency network that connects the critical mass of peacebuilding actors, resources, and expertise in Geneva and worldwide. Founded in 2008, the Platform has a mandate to facilitate interaction on peacebuilding between different institutions and sectors, and to advance new knowledge and understanding of peacebuilding issues and contexts. It also plays a creative role in building bridges between International Geneva, the United Nations peacebuilding architecture in New York, and peacebuilding activities in the field. The Platform's network comprises more than 4,000 peacebuilding professionals and over 60 institutions working on peacebuilding directly or indirectly.

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