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Building Peaceful States and Societies: A Critical Assessment of the Evidence

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Summary Findings

- Overall, the evidence that has emerged since 2010 continues to support the key aspects of the model.
- The direct effects on peace and stability of “core state functions” and “political settlements” are arguably more important than their indirect impact on better state-society relations and legitimacy.
- Evidence for the potential tensions between different parts of the model is not reflected in the PBSB policy.
- The evidence raises the question whether objective 1 (addressing causes and consequences of conflict) should remain an overall lens on statebuilding activities, or be elevated to its own distinct set of activities. The current role in the model underplays the contribution of dedicated conflict resolution activities, and risks underplaying the potential tensions between state- and peacebuilding.
- There is little attention to the sub-state level, and to informal actors, the importance of which is increasingly highlighted in the evidence.
- There is little attention to the role of the international and regional environment, including factors such as illicit financial flows, migration, or other transnational dynamics.

Purpose

This Evidence Review focuses on the broad causal claims about the sources of and pathways to stability that underpin the *Building Stability Overseas Strategy* (BSOS), and the DFID *Building Peaceful States and Societies* Practice Paper (BPSS). It systematically examines the evidence landscape underpinning the Peace- and Statebuilding framework outlined in both papers, evaluates how it changed over the last 5 years, and identifies some of the implications of this.

The paper proceeds in three steps. First, drawing on BSOS and BPSS, it briefly outlines the peace- and statebuilding model, and critically examines some of the key assumptions underpinning the model in light of the current evidence landscape. Second, it identifies and evaluates research evidence published since 2010, which pertains to the four guiding objectives of the BPSS framework: addressing causes and consequences of conflict; inclusive political settlements; development of core state functions; and responsiveness to public expectations. The final section outlines the changes in the evidence landscape for peace- and statebuilding, and their implications for PBSB policy.

The Model: Building Peaceful and Stable States and Societies

BSOS and BPSS rely on a common understanding of stability and the conditions that make for an effective state (that is a state which is capable, accountable, and responsive), and have a similar understanding of how such conditions can be fostered by external actors. In BSOS, this is framed in terms of *upstream prevention*: "work[ing] to address the causes of conflict and fragility; support an inclusive political system which builds a closer society; and strengthen the state's own ability to deliver security, justice and economic opportunity." (DfID 2011, p. 24).

In BPSS, it is framed in terms of state- and peacebuilding - building the capacity, institutions, and legitimacy of the state, addressing the grievances underlying conflict, and building institutions that can manage social conflicts in a non-violent manner (DfID 2010, pp-13-14). BPSS breaks down the model into four objectives, all of which are also reflected in the BSOS notion of upstream prevention: addressing causes and consequences of conflict; promoting inclusive political settlements; developing core state functions; and responding to public expectations. While BPSS treats the first objective as an overarching (peacebuilding) lens through

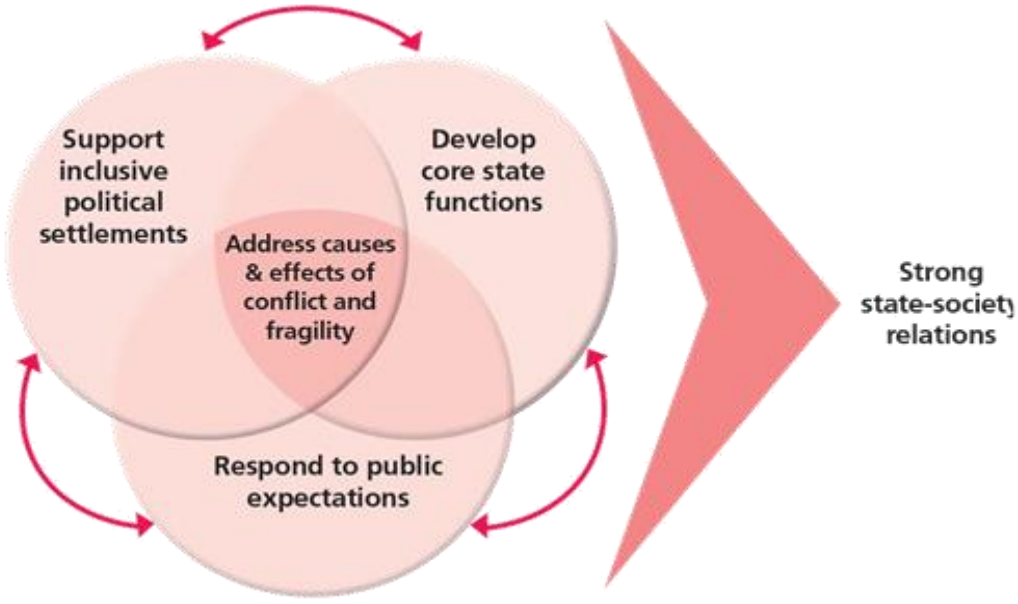
which statebuilding activities under the other three should be evaluated, the remaining three all have different theories of change that underpin them (Box 1).

Box 1: PBSB Objectives and their Theories of Change:

Promoting Inclusive Political Settlements: the inclusion of competing elites into a political settlement can reduce the risk of violent challenges to the existing political order, as they give them voice and a role in shaping the rules governing economic relations and resource allocation. Rival elites abstain from challenges either because they perceive the new order to be legitimate, or because they now have a material interest in its continuity.

Developing core state functions: increasing the capacity of the state to provide core functions such as security, the rule of law, and sound macro-economic policies increases popular trust, facilitates the provision of public services, and strengthens state legitimacy. This reduces the risk of violent challenges to the state, and strengthens the capacity of state institutions to manage such challenges. Strengthened core functions can also have a direct effect on stability, e.g. through stronger security forces.

Responding to Public Expectations: The provision of public goods and services expected by the population from the state strengthens state legitimacy, and reduces the risk of violent opposition to the state.



There are two other aspects of BPSS that are worth highlighting before reviewing the development of the evidence underpinning the model. The first is the central (if largely implicit) assumption that these different objectives all reinforce each other – that "all good things go together" (Acemoglu and Robinson 2012). While this assumption is prominently reflected in Acemoglu and Robinson's *Why Nations Fail* (2012), recent evidence largely challenges this assumption. Instead, it points to the way in which inclusive elite settlements, for example, can prevent the development of core state functions as powerful parts of the elite maintain an interest in a weak rule of law, or a degree of insecurity, as they facilitate their accumulation of private wealth, and sustain their bargaining power (Putzel and Di John 2012, Berdal and Zaum 2013, Khan 2010, Keen 2011). This evidence suggests that there are often trade-offs between these different objectives.

Second, while the model brings together both peace- and statebuilding, it remains largely silent on the different possible relationships between the two:

- Peacebuilding efforts, for example mediation or the negotiation of a peace agreement, can *precede* statebuilding, opening the opportunity and creating the environment within which donors can start to engage in statebuilding efforts.
- State- and peacebuilding can have a causal relationship, but one that runs the other direction: statebuilding activities, e.g. through building the capacity of institutions to manage conflicts non-violently, and by addressing core grievances, contribute to peacebuilding.
- The relationship between the two can be inherently conflictual: state-building, like state formation, which at its heart still has the formalisation and centralisation of political authority (and the establishment of the monopoly of force) can be violent and undermine peacebuilding efforts (Parks et al. 2013; Berdal and Zaum 2013).
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BPSS largely focusses on the second (effective statebuilding contributing to peacebuilding), and in particular plays down the potentially violent character of statebuilding and the consolidation of political authority.

State of the Evidence

1 Methods

Evidence for this paper was identified in several ways:

- Keyword search of key bibliographic databases (Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar) for evidence published after 2010
- Review of citations in relevant research studies published after 2010 ("snowball search")
- Review of publications of relevant DFID funded research programmes (esp. Crisis States Programme, JSRP, and SLRC)
- Reliance of the research team's knowledge of the existing literature

Given the limited time and scope of this paper, the quality of individual studies was not formally evaluated, instead the team formed a view of the overall strength of the evidence on the basis of the whole reviewed corpus, based on the focus of the identified studies, the quality of the data they use, and the appropriateness and quality of their methods in light of the research questions they pose. Further information on search strings and the number of studies identified is provided in the different sections.[1]

2 Support inclusive political settlements

> *Political settlements are the expression of a common understanding, usually forged between elites about how power is organised and exercised. They include formal institutions for managing political and economic relations, such as electoral processes, peace agreements, parliaments, constitutions and market regulations. But they also include informal, often unarticulated agreements that underpin a political system,*

[1] This systematic approach was used with regard to two of the BPSS objectives: strengthening core sate functions, and responding to public expectations. The political settlements evidence review draws on a parallel paper work commissioned by DFID, which has used a similarly systematic approach. As the objective "addressing the causes and consequences of conflict" is treated as a lens on statebuilding rather than its discrete set of activities with an underlying theory of change, less systematic search methods were used.

> *such as deals between elites on the division of spoils. Political settlements establish the basic rules governing economic relations and resource allocation* (DfID 2010, p. 22).

Political settlements have been identified as central to processes of building stable and effective institutions, not only in BPSS but also in the wider donor and academic literature, which emphasises their importance for understanding both the factors that contribute to the development of effective institutions, and to minimising violence. Overall, the political settlements debate has been largely conceptual (e.g. Laws 2012, Elgin-Cossart et al. 2012, Parks and Cole 2010). Existing case study work (e.g. as part of the crisis states programme) has mainly helped to refine the concept, rather than examining causal claims about the impact of settlements (there are exceptions though, such as Lindeman 2008, 2010). DFID reviewed the evidence supporting Objective 2 of BPSS, and found it by and large supported by the evidence base as it existed in 2010 (Evans 2012).[2]

2.1 Inclusive Settlements

In the context of the peace- and statebuilding model, two theories of change inform the emphasis on inclusive political settlements. Inclusive settlements are said, first, to reduce grievances by including relevant elites into the settlement, and thereby giving them a stake in maintaining the settlement, making the settlement legitimate in their eyes, and encouraging participation in the supporting peace- and statebuilding processes. Second, settlements that are "vertically inclusive" of non-elites (or "open" to non-elites) are said to foster growth and economic development, providing the state in the long run with the wherewithal to sustain its core functions and meet pubic expectations, thereby legitimating and stabilising the state.

As has been pointed out Elgin-Cossart and Jones (2012), the typology of political settlements used in BPSS is problematic, as the different types of settlement outlined are not mutually exclusive but strongly overlap, as they are distinguished either by their degree and nature of inclusivity, or their process of genesis: an engineered settlement, for example, could at the same time be an informal elite pact, while an imposed settlement could be highly inclusive (at least at the formal level). A more useful distinction might be a model that distinguishes according to the degree of

[2] CHASE has commissioned a separate review of the evidence on Political Settlements, conducted by Alina Rocha Menocal in spring 2015. This section draws on the findings of an earlier draft of this paper.

inclusion, and the degree of institutionalisation (e.g. Levy 2014).

The "two-level game" character of political settlements (involving bargains between different elites, and between elites and non-elites) raises further questions about inclusivity, in particular whether horizontal inclusivity (of different elites) or vertical inclusivity (empowering non-elites) is more important for containing violence or for making institutions growth-enhancing and developmental? In some of the work, there is a hidden assumption that horizontal inclusion of elites also brings their followers into the settlement (and makes them indirect beneficiaries of it), but the distributive consequences for rents, and the consequences of non-elite access to and responsiveness of institutions remains largely unaddressed. The difficult relationship between horizontal and vertical inclusion is highlighted by research of the Crisis States Programme (CSP). It suggests that that a settlement can be resilient, but non-developmental. One reason for its resilience is its horizontal inclusivity. However, this also makes it more difficult to change such a settlement, as the broad inclusion of elites creates many potential veto players who have a stake in the status quo and would risk losing access to rents if the order is opened up vertically (Putzel and DiJohn 2012, De Waal 2009). While there is strong theoretical support for the importance of vertical inclusion for a more developmental order (e.g. North et al. 2009; Acemoglu and Robinson 2012), Khan and CSP's work also points to an important trade-off between horizontal and vertical inclusivity: pushing vertical inclusion too far can push a political settlement beyond the minimum level of stability required for a settlement, and result in violence and crisis (Khan 2010). The recognition that horizontal inclusion is important for stability (Call 2012), but is also an obstacle towards a more open and developmental order is also reflected in the wider power sharing literature (Hartzell and Hoddie 2007; Jarstad and Sisk 2008).

2.2 Changing Political Settlements

While a range of macro-level accounts of political settlements (e.g. Acemoglu and Robinson 2012; North et.al. 2009) outline broad processes of their transformation, the literature is generally weak on the central question of how countries transition from one political settlement to another – both on what generates the incentives for ruling elites to "open up" a settlement, and on how such change can be facilitated by external actors.

One key insight from the political settlements literature is that if the distributive consequences of formal institutions are at odds with the distribution of power underlying a settlement, or if they are insufficient to maintain a settlement, informal

institutions will adapt the distribution of rents to reflect the character of the settlement and the balance of power (e.g. Khan 2010; Putzel and DiJohn 2012). Change in the nature of political settlements is therefore unlikely to come from tinkering with the form and function of formal institutions. Khan's (2010) work further suggests that the impact of institutional change on power balances can open the way for further changes to the settlement, though the ways in which it changes bargaining processes, or empowers particular actors. If institutions – both formal and informal – are increasingly recognised as constitutive parts of a settlement, important questions arise about how institutions and institutional change affect power balances over time.

North et. al. (2009) identify two conditions for change: first, elites need to feel relatively secure, providing incentives for institutionalisation and the formalisation of power relationships (but this does not open up these relationships, and does not facilitate access to power for previously marginalised groups). Second, groups excluded from access to institutions need to be powerful and vocal enough to demand an opening of the system, and pose a credible challenge to ruling elites so that it is less costly for elites to surrender some of their power rather than risk conflict and being overthrown. The immediately obvious problem this raises is that these two conditions do not naturally go together.

Levy identifies two pathways for different types of settlement. In environments with weak institutions where decision-making is centralised under a cohesive elite, development towards a more open settlement proceeds from strengthening the bureaucracy and state institutions, inducing growth which can lead to the strengthening of the private sector and civil society who demand greater openness (e.g. South Korea, Indonesia). In countries with weak institutions where cohesion is weak and decision-making contested (e.g. Bangladesh), growth (coming from "islands of effectiveness") stimulates a strengthened bureaucracy and a growing private sector/civil society, which can then stimulate greater openness and the rule of law. What is obvious from this rough sketch of the process is that such a transition is highly contingent on contextual factors.

Finally, both Pritchett and Werker (2012) and William Reno (2011) suggest that societies transition from what the former has termed "deals to rules" (Pritchett and Werker 2012) Both suggest that political settlements underlie the "deals" between elites that provide a degree of stability, and raise questions about the processes through which societies transition to "rules": what are the conditions under which such transitions are made within societies or certain sectors, like Angola's oil industry (Soares de Oliveira 2011) or Rwanda's and Ethiopia's "developmental neo-

patrimonialism" (Kelsall and Booth 2010)? These observations and arguments offer analytical access points for theorising and theory testing, but on their own not a robust evidence base.

2.3 Assessment

In summary, there is strong empirical support for the claim that elite inclusion is important for resilience against violent conflict (but at the risk of entrenching a non-developmental order), and for the broad claim that open political settlements facilitate economic growth and development. However, evidence on the transition processes, and on mechanisms through which donors can support such transitions, remains weak.[3]

3 Develop core state functions

> "There are some functions that the state must be able to perform to govern its territory and operate at the most basic level. Evidence suggests that three are indispensable: security; law and justice; and finance and macroeconomic management. But without a clear focus on improving accountability within each function, there is a risk that the state will exert control without responding to the population's needs, creating a strong but potentially repressive state" (DfID 2010, p. 27).

For a state to be considered functional and to have any direct impact on its population, it requires the capacity to fulfil some basic functions. BPSS focusses on three in particular:

- the capacity to provide a degree of security
- the provision of the rule of law to resolve inevitable social conflicts
- and a degree of financial and macroeconomic management to provide for the financial wherewithal to sustain the state.

It is difficult to par down the list of core functions further than that, and their centrality is reflected in the wider literature on the state (World Bank 1997, Weber 1978).

[3] The weakness of this evidence was also established in the scoping process for a DFID funded RPC on political settlements, which has been commissioned and which aims at strengthening the relevant evidence.

How does the ability to fulfil these core functions contribute to state- and peacebuilding? Several theories of change inform this objective. On the one hand, greater capacity of the state (e.g. to coerce challengers or to resolve conflicts and local grievances) reduces the risk of violent conflict. On the other, the ability to perform these core functions increases the legitimacy of the state, increases compliance with its demands, and reduces violent challenges to it.[4]

3.1 Strengthening Security

There is robust evidence for a close relationship between improving the coercive capacity of the state through strengthening the capacity and presence of police and military, and reductions in armed conflict. Lee et al.'s (2014) cross-national study shows that the state's monopoly of force has a positive impact on security (in terms of lower levels of violence), a finding that is confirmed by a number of single country case studies, e.g. of Nepal (Crozier and Candan 2010), Colombia (Elhawary 2010), and Afghanistan (Koehler and Gosztonyi 2014).[5]

The BPSS claim that stronger state capacity – especially coercive capacity – needs to be accompanied by greater accountability, is similarly supported by the research evidence. Strengthening coercive capacity can exacerbate tensions and fuel in particular sub-national conflict: by exacerbating perceptions of marginalisation and exclusion that fuel grievances (Mehler 2012, Knight 2012, Crozier and Candan 2010, Gippert 2015); by fuelling elite competition; by forcing rebels to resort to force to counter-act the extension of state capacity and legitimacy; or because the deliberate strengthening of the coercive capacity of the state is used to change the dynamics of a conflict and seek victory rather than a settlement (Parks et al. 2013).

3.2 Law and Justice

There is robust evidence for a correlation between the strengthening of justice systems and reductions in violent conflict. The literature identifies two related mechanisms.

[4] Evidence was identified through searches in SCOPUS, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. Search terms that were used included the terms statebuilding, peacebuilding, security, rule of law, peace, civil war, legitimacy, tax, trust, stability, resource curse, resource management, scarcity, governance, security dilemma, grievances, greed, opportunity, and feasibility. The terms generated 1354 hits in Scopus, 86 hits in WoS, and 17,400 hits in Google Scholar. 220 articles were selected on the basis of title and key words, and this was further reduced to 50 following abstract reviews. 30 articles were identified through snowball searches and from other review papers.

[5] It should be noted that Lee et al. (2014) also find that the relationship does not hold in several Latin American countries in particular, where substantial coercive capacity has not reduced high rates of homicide.

First, the lack of functioning justice institutions, or the lack of access to such institutions, means that grievances, especially local level grievances, remain unaddressed (e.g. Allen et al. 2013, Desai and Sage 2011, Friedman 2012). This raises the risk that these grievances fuel violent conflict – a finding that chimes with the growing evidence for the importance of local dynamics and causes of violence (e.g. Autessere 2010, Kalyvas 2006).

Second, poor access to and corruption in justice institutions undermine perceptions of state legitimacy, fuel grievances and raise the likelihood of armed resistance against the state (Coburn 2011; Desai and Sage 2011).[6] The literature also highlights the complex relationship between formal and informal justice mechanisms, and in particular the use of the latter to bolster the legitimacy of the former (Coburn 2011, Bennett et al. 2010, Charley and M'Cormack 2012). This raises interesting wider questions about the relationship between formal and informal institutions, and the role of informal institutions in the statebuilding policies of donors, which are firmly focussed on formalising political authority.

3.3 Financial and Macroeconomic management

A capacity for fiscal and macroeconomic management is essential if a state wants to be able to finance is operations, and participate in the global economic system (World Bank 1997). BPSS highlights several aspects of this core function: tax collection and revenue management, and policies to ensure macroeconomic stability. The framework also mentions natural resource management – an issue that has been increasingly highlighted in the literature over the last decade, mainly because of growing interest in the governance consequences of the so-called "resource curse".[7] The evidence review therefore focusses on taxation and natural resource management.

Tax collection is thought to impact on peace- and statebuilding in three ways (Rao 2014, Pritchard 2010, Everest-Philips 2010). First, it provides resources to fund core state functions and respond to public expectations through the provision of public services – thus contributing to state legitimacy. Second, improving tax collection has wider benefits for state capacity: tax collection is demanding, requires states for example to develop a capacity to register citizens and businesses, to monitor them to be able to collect tax – practices that have wider implications for other state functions. Finally, taxation increases expectations of those taxed (be they

[6] See also the discussion on corruption and state fragility below.
[7] See for example Aslaken 2010; Brollo et al. 2010; Busse and Gröning 2013; Tsui 2011; Vincente 2010.

citizens or businesses) towards the state, and pressure to respond to these expectations.[8]

New evidence with regard to the role of taxation in state building is limited, but generally supportive of some of these claims. A range of studies finds evidence that more effective tax collection has increased expectations towards the state, expectations which are also voiced by citizens and businesses. (Martin 2013, Moore, Mascagni and McCluskley 2013, Pritchard 2010). There is some evidence that better tax collection correlates to overall improvements in state capacity from a quantitative cross-country analysis (Pritchard and Leonard 2010), however, these effects seem to have declined over the last decade, and whether there is a causal link or whether they are co-determined is not clear, as the authors acknowledge. With regard to improving tax collection, research examining the impact of ODA on tax collection suggests that it has at best no effect, and at worst a negative effect on local taxation. (Benedek et al. 2012, Morrisey et al. 2014).

Mechanisms to manage access to and use of natural resources can reduce violent conflict by reducing grievances of groups excluded from their use, by managing conflicts over the use of resources such as land or water, and by limiting the opportunities for armed groups to use natural resource income to finance their use of force. These theories of change rest on arguments about governance effects of the "resource curse", and the growing "opportunities" literature on civil war (Blattman and Miguel 2010).

While there is robust evidence for a link between natural resource abundance and aspects of weak governance, especially corruption (Aslaken 2010; Brollo et al. 2010; Busse and Gröning 2013; Vincente 2010), there is only limited evidence for a causal relationship between resource abundance and armed conflict (Cuvelier et al. 2013). In their review of the evidence, Cuvelier et al. criticise the literature for its focus on macro-level analysis, and too little attention to micro-level factors (a criticism also voiced by Autesserre (2010), including local socio-political processes and varying geographic implications of natural resources.

With regard to resource management mechanisms, there is limited but quite robust evidence that the impact of mechanisms geared towards the sharing of resource wealth have little or no effect on the risk of violent conflict (Maehler et al. 2011, Binningsbø and Rustad 2012, but see Barrow 2010), Binningsbo and Rustad's limited quantitative analysis of 254 post-conflict periods of peace finds that only land

[8] See also Joanna McGowan, *Tax and Poverty Reduction*, Chief Economist Office Background Paper, DFID, April 2015.

reform has a statistically significant correlation with peace.

3.4 Assessment

Overall, recent evidence supports the strengthening core functions objective of BPSS, only the growing focus in PBSB discussions on natural resource management finds little support. The evidence reviewed here suggests that strengthening core state functions mainly contributes to peace- and statebuilding directly (e.g. thorough strengthened coercive capacity), and works indirectly through enhancing state legitimacy mainly in the longer term. The evidence also supports the emphasis in BPSS on enhancing accountability as well as capacity, and confirms the risks to peace- and statebuilding of “unrestrained” states.

4 Respond to public expectations

> Respond to public expectations: States need to meet public expectations in order to maintain legitimacy and stability. International actors should be careful not to make assumptions about the expectations of different groups in society, and must recognise that public goods are often delivered in ways that maintain an exclusionary political settlement. Public expectations that are a high priority in many fragile contexts include jobs and growth, delivery of basic services (including security and justice), human rights and democratic processes
> (DfID 2010, p. 7).

Assessing the evidence for the importance of a state’s (and donors’) responsiveness to public expectations is complicated both by the diversity of public expectations both across and within fragile and conflict-affected societies, and over time, and by the fact that research in this area is rarely framed in terms of public expectations, but in terms of the importance of service delivery, especially for legitimacy. While this objective is often reduced to the role of service delivery, it is important to recognise that BPSS frames this objective more broadly, focussing on inclusive growth, job creation, and basic services such as health, education, social protection, and water and sanitation. The paper also notes that alternative service providers (such as non-governmental organisations) may exist alongside the state (DfID 2010), though it does not further outline how various different service providers might interact with each other.

The theory of change underpinning this objective suggests that meeting public

expectations strengthens the legitimacy of and trust in the state, increasing compliance with and reducing resistance to it. Against this background, this section evaluates the evidence on the relationship between responding to public expectations and state legitimacy. It identifies the core principles of this link and asks whether the provision of public services forms a key component of state legitimacy. It is beyond the scope of this paper to evaluate the specific ways in which this relationship works and can be enhanced, and to provide specific evidence for particular approaches or tools for improving state legitimacy in this way (but see Mcloughlin and Scott 2014 for some reflections on this question).

The literature search identified 29 articles.[9][12] The majority of contributions were literature reviews and conceptual papers (partially combined with case studies), comparative and multi-case studies. The search identified a small number of quantitative studies. This structure of the evidence reflects the nature of the research problem: the implementation, the providers and recipients of public services vary strongly across different sectors and countries, making cross-sector and cross-country comparisons difficult.

4.1 Responding to Public Expectations Matters for Legitimacy…

In general, the evidence continues to support the claim that service delivery forms a key component of state legitimacy, especially in conflict-affected states (e.g. Baird 2010, Batley and Mcloughlin 2012). States have a strong incentive to deliver a service which has historically been a key source of legitimacy for the state, and elites' calculations of political returns can lead to improved service provision. Therefore, available resources alone do not determine the outcome of service delivery, but also the political processes surrounding the implementation of services.

The literature also supports BPSS's focus on ensuring equitable access to public services to avoid exacerbating existing inequalities (Rolleston, James and Aurino 2014). Walton (2012), for example, demonstrates how women and minority groups are further marginalised in regions that are under-serviced. Inclusive and

[9] The following keywords were used for SCOPUS and Web of Science: service delivery AND peacebuilding; job creation AND peacebuilding; job creation AND state legitimacy; service delivery AND state legitimacy; service delivery AND state responsiveness; inclusive growth AND state legitimacy. As Google Scholars offers a full-text search, the search was carried out with a combination of three keywords to narrow the results. The keywords used are: service delivery, state legitimacy AND statebuilding; job creation, state legitimacy AND statebuilding; and state legitimacy AND state responsiveness AND conflict-affected. Following the initial search, additional literature was identified from the citations within Google Scholar as well as using the snowball system. Only evidence published from 2010 onwards was considered.

equitable service provision is therefore considered as a crucial mechanism to enhance social cohesion, diffuse conflict and build the grounds for sustainable peace, especially when local governance actors are involved in the process (Jaervinnen 2013). Within all sectors, equitable access is seen as a key factor to address and possibly overcome existing inequalities. In addition, more inclusive service delivery may also enhance the positive perception of the state in the public eye (Practical Action, Save the Children & CfBT Education Trust 2011).

Recent evidence, however, also qualifies the assumption of a causal link between satisfying public expectations and state legitimacy. Sacks (2011), for example, finds that subjective perceptions of satisfaction with services are only weakly correlated with objective measures of delivery. Possible explanations are that citizens reward or punish relative improvement/deterioration of service provision, but not the overall level; or that they only recognise an improvement in service delivery when it directly impacts on their personal livelihood; or that citizens simply do not attribute service provision to the government (Mcloughlin 2014). In Uganda, for example, improved local satisfaction with health clinics did not translate into overall improved perceptions of the state (Bukenya 2013). Citizen's expectations towards the state may generally be low, thus making the alignment of service delivery with citizen's expectations difficult (Stel 2011, Stel and Abate 2014, see also Mcloughlin 2014); and expectations may change over time (Practical Action, Save the Children & CfBT Education Trust 2011), not least as a consequence of the actual experience of service provision The involvement of international actors can further decrease the visibility (and perceived legitimacy) of state actors in providing public services (Cometto, Fritsche, and Sondorp 2010).[10]

… but little evidence on how.

However, whilst there seems to be a consensus that service delivery matters, there is less agreement on *how* it matters and what the determinants of successful service delivery are, especially across various sectors. As there is both diversity with regard to the observed impact of service delivery on state legitimacy, and the possible causal pathways across different sectors (e.g. health, education, water), it is not possible to generalise on the basis of the existing evidence (Practical Action, Save the Children & CfBT Education Trust 2011). Furthermore, whilst there is some

[10] Preliminary research findings from the DFID-funded Secure Livelihoods Research consortium (SLRC) similarly suggest that the link between public service delivery and perceptions of state legitimacy is complex, based on the first round of a longitudinal multi-country household survey.

evidence demonstrating that inadequate service delivery contributes to low legitimacy and possibly violent conflict (Brinkerhoff, Wetterberg and Dunn 2012), empirical evidence for the reverse is limited. The majority of studies cannot explain *how* service delivery might enhance legitimacy (Mcloughlin 2014). The inconclusiveness of the evidence in this regard is also fuelled by the wide variation in the quality and availability of data.

Finally, there is also little evidence that focussing on strengthening overall state capacity results in improved provision of public services. In a cross-national analysis of over 150 states, Lee et al. (2014) find little evidence for a strong relationship between state capacity and service delivery. This challenges the notion that building state capacity directly contributes to the reduction of grievances, if the willingness of states to address these grievances is not also increased. Overall, the evidence review suggests that there is no single pathway from service delivery to state legitimacy, and that the involvement of local and non-state actors can affect trust and legitimacy negatively and positively.

4.2 Promoting Inclusive Growth

Inclusive economic growth, which generates employment across society and which transforms the structure of the economy enabling productivity to rise, is considered central to promoting stability. In addition to the investment and right regulatory environment that promotes growth, *inclusive* growth depends on the right type of political settlement with the appropriate distributive effects, on mechanisms supporting reasonably equitable and open access to natural resources (including land), and on low levels of corruption.

It is widely accepted that there is a clear correlation between economic growth and stability, and it is prominently reflected in Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler's work on the economic correlates of conflict (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). There are different causal mechanisms that might underpin this relationship:

- Economic growth provides states with resources (through taxation or other forms of extraction) to strengthen their capacity for coercion and for providing public goods
- Economic growth can reduce societal grievances if its benefits are widely distributed
- Economic growth provides employment opportunities and thereby increases the opportunity cost of selecting to fight over other economic activities.

Given the focus of BPSS on *inclusive* growth, the focus of the evidence review here is not on what generates economic growth, but on factors promoting inclusivity. As the evidence around inclusive political settlements and around natural resource management are examined in earlier sections of the paper, the focus here is on job creation and on corruption.

4.3 Job creation

Employment growth is a key characteristic of inclusive growth. Its alleged contribution to stability rests mainly on reducing the opportunity cost of engaging in armed conflict. An evidence search identified 25 studies, including one systematic review.[11][14]

The quality of most of the studies is low: many of the papers are largely descriptive, and the case studies are chosen opportunistically, with their wider relevance largely unclear. Other problems include a lack of evidence supporting the conclusions, little data (and little clarity about its provenance and reliability), or a focus on "lessons learned" without much focus on the relevant causal mechanisms. Many of the weaker studies assert rather than evidence the (largely positive) outcomes of employment interventions they describe. The stronger qualitative papers and the experimental studies on the other hand often find no discernible robust causal relationship, or are more nuanced in their assessment of the impact of such interventions.

The quality of the evidence is inherently limited by the quality of data – a problem in particular of large-n studies that rely on national unemployment data that, as the 2011 World Development Report highlights, is problematic in many conflict environments (World Bank 2011). Many macro-level studies of the relationship between unemployment and conflict therefore work with problematic proxies for employment and the opportunity cost of participating in violent conflict, e.g. the level of education (as criticised by Cramer 2006, and Keen 2012). The intervention-level studies captured by this evidence review often also suffer from data problems, but of a different kind: many of them provide little data in support of their claims. In terms of research design, they often focus on measuring outputs (e.g. training delivered)

[11] The search employed the following terms: Employment AND peacebuilding OR peace-building OR peacekeeping; and "Cash for Work" AND peacebuilding OR peace-building OR peacekeeping. This searches in Scopus and Web of Science identified 15 *(Scopus) and 9 (WoS) for the first term, and 2 (Scopus) and 1(WoS) for the second. In addition, searches with the same key words in Google Scholar resulted in 41,500 and 463 hit respectively. 22 papers were selected on title, and this was reduced to 12 following a review of abstracts. An additional five papers were review articles, and a further 8 were identified from other articles, yielding a total of 25 studies.

rather than outcomes (e.g. reductions in violence; or greater social cohesion). Some studies, while methodologically robust, have no cross-country coverage, and it is not possible to easily generalise from their findings (e.g. Blattman et al. 2014, Iyengar et al. 2011).

From a macro-level perspective, the studies engage with the general view in the wider literature that unemployment, especially youth unemployment, increases the risk of civil war (for a critical review, see Cramer 2010 and Justino 2010). The evidence challenges a common view on the literature (and one of the assumptions underpinning much economic peacebuilding work) that unemployment, especially youth unemployment, increases the risk of armed conflict. Not only is the empirical support for a direct causal relationship between unemployment and violent conflict very limited; to the extent that such a causal relationship exists, it is clearly complex and cannot be reduced to the notion of reducing the opportunity cost of conflict. It suggests that a mere uplift in the number of jobs – be it through economic growth in the long term, or through dedicated employment programmes in the short term – has an uncertain impact on the prevalence of violent conflict.

At the micro-level, the focus of many of the studies identified in the evidence review is on the opportunity cost of violence (e.g. examining whether employment programmes reduced the likelihood of former combatants to be recruited as mercenaries);[12]and on the impact of employment programmes on grievances and social cohesion (Blattman et al. 2014). Generally, these studies have not found a clear relationship between employment generation schemes – e.g. cash or training programmes on risks of violence or conflict, supporting the argument made by Cramer and others that any existing causal relationship between unemployment and conflict is complex. One exception is an independent impact evaluation of employment development programmes by different US military units in Iraq, suggesting a positive correlation between spending on such programmes and reductions in armed violence (Iyengar et al. 2011). Importantly, some of the qualitative work has also highlighted the risk that employment or cash for work programmes can fuel grievances and perceptions of bias and preferential treatment, and in that way possibly fuel violence (e.g. Fishstein 2011).

4.4 Corruption

A recent DFID evidence paper on the causes and effects of corruption demonstrates

[12] Blattman and Anan 2011; Fishstein 2011; Gompelman 2011; Gordon 2011.

that the latter has an independent effect on the delivery and quality of public services, and on government legitimacy. It finds strong evidence that corruption is negatively correlated with levels of confidence in public institutions, but also that the causal direction between corruption and low confidence is unclear, and the relationship is dynamic. (Anderson and Tverdova 2003). Increased levels of corruption undermine social trust (Seligson 2002), which in turn might increase the likelihood to engage in corrupt practices (Morris and Klesner 2010).

Despite prominent claims that corruption fuels and exacerbates conflict dynamics in fragile states (Rotberg 2009, Chayes 2015), the evidence paper highlights that the evidence is mixed, with some of it pointing to increases in the risk of violence (Le Billon 2003, World Bank 2011), whilst others find that corruption can function as enabling or contributing factor when forming political settlements (Zaum 2013). It should be noted that most of the research reviewed in the evidence paper precedes the period covered in this assessment.

4.5 Assessment

Generally, the evidence supports claims that responding to public expectations can contribute to peace- and statebuilding, and to strengthening stability. While the evidence suggests that responding to pubic expectations (largely framed in terms of service delivery) can help to bolster legitimacy, it also nuances the claim and the underlying theory of change by highlighting the complex relationship both between service delivery and legitimacy, and between legitimacy and stability. The evidence for the impact of inclusive growth is weaker, with contested findings as to the causal impact of job creation on violent conflict, and conflicting impacts of corruption on stability.

5 Addressing causes and effects of conflict

Addressing the causes and effects of conflict is described as “core business” for DFID in BPSS (p.20), and as an objective is super-imposed as a lens on the others, rather than developed as its own separate sphere of activities. BPSS highlights the complex (and multiple) causes of conflict (see also World Bank 2011), focussing in particular on grievances (e.g. ethnicity based exclusion), opportunities (e.g. availability of natural resources to fund armed activity), and feasibility (e.g. difficult terrain facilitating rebel activity, or weak security forces that might oppose them). To

the extent that this conflict lens informs the other objectives in BPSS, their focus is largely on reducing grievances and, through the emphasis on increasing state legitimacy, on reducing feasibility. They focus on the character of the political settlement, the capacity of the state to provide public goods and services, and the relationship of state institutions to different social groups.

Very few of the model's statebuilding efforts aim at reducing opportunities – an interesting contrast to the literature on civil war which has been strongly focussed on opportunity and the opportunity cost of engaging in armed conflict, rather than grievances.[13]The focus on grievance-related causes, however, is supported by a growing literature in recent years offering systematic, and robust, evidence for the importance of grievances as a cause of violent conflict (Cederman et al. 2013; Stewart 2010). According to this growing body of work, violent conflict is a response to the exclusion of groups from access to important public goods and services, the selective denial of key rights (often linked to identity – e.g. language rights or rights of religious expression), or from economic opportunities. It could also be the consequence of a general inability (rather than selective and targeted unwillingness) of a government to fulfil the expectations of large parts of its population, fuelling discontent and grievances with the government that escalate into violent conflict.

While there is strong evidence for the role of grievances in causing violent conflict, this does not necessarily mean that addressing these original grievances is an effective path to peace. As Woodward (2007) has highlighted, armed conflict is transformative: the grievances that caused violent conflict in the first place might not be what sustained it over the years, and incentivised elites to eschew a settlement. Other scholars, such as Keen and Cramer, have similarly highlighted the functional logic of violence in many developing (and developed) countries, in particular the degree to which it enables particular groups to exercise political power and to privately benefit economically (Cramer 2006; Keen 2012).

5.1 Alternative explanations for violence and armed conflict

In addition to grievances, opportunities, and feasibility, additional sources of violent conflict have been emphasised in public and policy discourses in recent years, in particular the role of religious extremism and the role of transnational organised crime.

There is a growing body of evidence on the causal relationship between religion and conflict, and it generally finds that religion (or religiosity) on its own does

[13] For a good summary of the literature, see Blattman and Miguel 2011.

not explain the onset of armed conflict, but also suggests that religion in conjunction with other factors plays an important role. As a study by the Institute for Economics and Peace of 35 armed conflicts in 2013 suggests, religion was one of multiple causes in 21 of these conflicts, but always I conjunction with other causes (Institute for Economics and Peace 2014).

A range of studies (Finke and Harris 2012; Finke and Martin 2012, Dowd 2014) trace violence that is attributed to religion back to other grievances. In these cases, religious affiliation acts as an identity along which rebels mobilise excluded communities against a government. As Basedau et al. (2014) confirm, the overlap of religious and other (especially ethnic) identities in cases of discrimination and exclusion increases the likelihood of armed conflict. Both Dowd (2014) and Canetti et al. (2010) emphasise the instrumentalisation of religion by potential rebel leaders to mobilise against a state. Overall, religion and religious extremism are best considered as particular dimensions of the grievances and opportunities dimensions of the literature on violent conflict, rather than a distinct logic of conflict or state fragility.

While organised crime is highly correlated with state fragility and violent conflict, there is currently no strong evidence that it causes violent conflict, but a stronger link between organised crime and state fragility. The evidence highlights the role of organised crime in financing conflict (e.g. Taylor 2013), and the way in which organised crime can undermine state capacity and legitimacy (e.g. Cockayne 2011, Kavanagh et al. 2013). Overall, this literature is very small and underdeveloped, and provides no sufficient basis for substantially changing the current peace- and statebuilding model.

5.2 Directly addressing conflict dynamics

Considering objective 1 as merely a lens imposed on the other PBSB objectives, however, risks underplaying the importance of a focus on mechanisms of conflict resolution. A separate scoping exercise examining responses to conflict identified a wide range of conflict resolution and prevention interventions, and responses to armed conflict, that go beyond the statebuilding interventions covered by BPSS.[14] These include the promotion of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, DDR measures, peace education, working with victims of displacement, community level (and national level) dialogue and mediation, sanctions, and peacekeeping. While

[14] This exercise was conducted in 2013/4 in preparation for a conflict –focussed research programme. It encompassed a literature review, a focus group, and a survey of DFID conflict and governance advisors.

some of these efforts are at times closely integrated with wider state- and peacebuilding efforts (e.g. peacekeeping operations), others can run in parallel (e.g. sanctions regimes) or precede peace- and statebuilding mandates (e.g. mediation and peace negotiations). While it is beyond the scope of this paper to evaluate the evidence for all of these, a brief assessment of the evidence for three of them – third party mediation, sanctions, and peacekeeping operations – highlights the limitations that the current understanding of objective 1 imposes on the peace- and statebuilding approach outlined in BPSS.

5.3 Third Party Mediation

Mediation is commonly understood as 'a process of conflict management, related to but distinct from the parties' own negotiations, where those in conflict seek the assistance of, or accept an offer of help from, an outsider to change their perceptions or behaviour, and to do so without resorting to physical force or invoking the authority of law' (Bercovitch 2009:343). In the literature, mediation is used to refer both to inter- and intrastate conflicts, although conflicts can be both, local and international in nature (Kalyvas 2006). Some distinguish between mediated and negotiated settlements (Bercovitch and Jackson 2001).

Reagon and Aydin (2006) find that mediation is the most common form of diplomatic intervention (compared to, for example, the limitation or termination of diplomatic relations or the use of international forums such as the UN) and can reduce the duration of civil conflicts. According to Greig and Diehl (2010), there has been an increase in the mediations efforts since the 1990s, whilst Kreutz (2010) shows that there has also been an increase in peace settlements since 1989 which may suggest that the increase in mediation efforts has led to a higher number of peace agreements (Hoeffler 2014).

As Wallenstein and Svensson (2014) point out, one of the challenges to mediation research is that the literature uses a variety of definitions for their success, with some defining the mere occurrence of mediation as a success and others the termination of violent behaviour. Another distinction is made between short-term and long-term outcomes of mediation efforts.

DeRouen and Moller (2013), for example, carry out a quantitative analysis of low-intensity civil wars from 1993 and 2004 and find that direct forms of mediation (face-to-face) are most likely to achieve short-term success for de-escalation. In another study, DeRouen et al. (2011) find that mediation efforts can be successful (defined as reaching an agreement, ceasefire, partial settlement, full settlement and

process arrangements) in managing intrastate conflicts. However, there is also some evidence that mediation efforts are not the most successful path for lasting peace. Bercovitch and Gartner (2006) find that international disputes that receive mediation are less likely to result in peace agreements, and mediated agreements are more likely to fail. It therefore remains unclear whether mediation efforts can contribute to *long-term* peace. However, as Hoeffler (2014) points out, mediators are often deployed in conflicts that are difficult to solve which may skew the results in one direction. Empirical studies (De Rouen et al. 2011) confirm that these are often conflicts with a high number of fatalities which have gone on for a long time. The literature suggests that there are trade-offs between short-term and long-term peace and that whilst mediation helps to agree on a settlement, in the majority of cases these tend to be fragile (Beardsley 2011).

4.4 Sanctions

The evidence regarding the effectiveness of sanctions is mixed. On the one hand, Hufbauer et al. (2007) find that a third of cases they investigate are successful with regard to the policy change they seek (e.g. the release of a prisoner), and Petrescu (2012) shows that sanctions can deter countries from engaging in a future conflict. On the other hand, a range of scholars highlight the negative impact of sanctions: on the human rights situation in targeted states (Wood 2008), on corruption and the criminalization of the state (Andreas 2005), on democracy (Peksen and Drury 2010), and on stability (Marinow 2005).

This in turn has led many to emphasise the need for smart (or targeted) sanctions, such as travel bans (Wallensteen, Staibano and Eriksson 2003, Allan and Lektzian 2013). There is, however, no robust evidence as to whether smart sanctions are indeed more effective than 'traditional' sanctions (Gordon 2011, Drezner 2011). The evidence thus suggests that overall, sanctions are likely to induce only modest policy change (Hoeffler 2014).

The evidence on the particular impact of economic sanctions on the risk and duration of civil war is contradictory. Regan and Aydin (2006) find no evidence that economic sanctions decrease the duration of civil war, and Regan and Meachum (2014) show that economic sanctions are uncorrelated with outbreaks of conflict. Escriba-Folch (2010), however, finds that the duration of economic sanctions is associated with shorter intrastate conflicts. The study also shows that economic embargos are the most effective measure to increase the likelihood of a military and negotiated termination of conflict, whilst international arms embargos reduce the

likelihood of military victory. Strandow (2006), in contrast, finds that implemented arms embargos have the highest likelihood of positively influencing the parties of move towards conflict resolution. Both findings should be treated with caution, as they only account for a small number of cases and may overlook the possibility that economic sanctions are often applied in cases where they are likely to succeed (Carayannis et al. 2014). The fact that this evidence review does not bring up extensive empirical research may also be a consequence of sanctions not being a conflict resolution tool themselves, but rather an instrument in a wider conflict resolution process, and contributing to this process in an indirect way (Griffiths and Barnes 2008). In addition, UN sanction regimes are analysed with a view to their specific objectives and measures (for example Charron 2011), but without a subsequent analysis of the effects on the conflict.

4.5 UN Peacekeeping

There is general agreement in the literature that peacekeeping helps to reduce the risk of conflict recurrence. Doyle and Sambanis (2006), using a variety of statistical methods, find strong evidence that the duration of peace is longer and wars are less likely to recur with the deployment of peacekeeping missions. Collier et al. (2008), Fortna (2008) and Mason et al. (2011) confirm these findings. Beardsley (2011) moreover shows that the deployment of peacekeepers can contribute to help to contain the spread of conflict. Furthermore, the success of UN peacekeeping is *not* endogenous: Peacekeepers are not just sent to situations that are 'easy to solve' (Gilligan and Stedman 2003; Mason et al. 2011). This effect is also confirmed for other UN interventions, such as mediation and sanctions, with Beardsley and Schmidt (2012) observing a close correlation between crisis severity and UN involvement, albeit their data only accounts for international crises.

Following Hultman (2013), the likelihood of peacekeeping operations is higher in situation where the warring parties target the civilian population. However, even when missions include a clear protection mandate, it has been noted that capacities to do so are still underdeveloped (Bellamy 2009). Moreover, it remains unclear which measures are best suited to deal with violence against civilians, as research has shown that only robust mandates or specific mandates to protect civilians are effective in reducing violence (Kreps and Wallace 2009). This is confirmed by Kathman and Wood (2014) who show that a larger number of peacekeeping troops reduces violence against civilians and, in contrast, larger numbers of UN observers are positively correlated with violence.

Doyle and Sambanis (2006) also suggest that multidimensional peacekeeping operations – which are now the norm – are more effective than traditional forms of peacekeeping in increasing durable peace. Similarly, Hultman et al. (2015) find that as the number of UN military troops (as opposed to unarmed personnel) employed increases, the chance of recurrence of civil war decreases. However, some authors find potential trade-offs of military engagement. Beardsley (2012), for example, shows that UN peacekeeping decreases the chances of one warring party to achieve victory, but also decreases the chance of compromise.

6 Changes in the Evidence Landscape – Implications for Building Peaceful States and Societies

Overall, this assessment suggests that the research evidence as it has developed since 2010 broadly supports the objectives of the peace- and statebuilding framework as outlined in BPSS:

- Evidence on promoting elite settlements is robust, as is evidence that in the long run open settlements are developmental. However, evidence also points to tensions between the two, and provides little with regard to the transformation processes.
- Evidence supports the model's focus on strengthening core state functions, with the exception of natural resource management. However, it also highlights tensions between strengthening state capacity and peacebuilding. While these are acknowledged in BPSS, the evidence suggests that their implications need to be developed further.
- Evidence broadly supports the emphasis on responding to public expectations, but provides little evidence on how improvements in service delivery contribute to state legitimacy. While the model rests strongly on the role of legitimacy, the evidence suggests that the relationship between service delivery and legitimacy is complex, and poorly understood.
- Evidence supports the identified main causes of conflict and fragility, and does not support independent alternative causes. The evidence raises the question whether the current role of objective 1 in the model as a lens rather than an independent set of activities underplays the contribution of dedicated conflict resolution activities, and risks underplaying the potential tensions between state- and peacebuilding.

- This review thus supports the overall direction of the peace- and statebuilding model, it also highlights that there are substantial gaps in the evidence, as well as gaps and tensions in the model.

The evidence gaps are largely about the how: we know that inclusive political settlements matter, but know little about how to promote and support them; we are confident that responding to public expectations contributes to peace- and statebuilding, but often struggle to identify interventions that make governments more responsive. In addition, the evidence nuances some of the often bold assumptions of the model. In particular, it suggests that we need a more nuanced understanding of legitimacy, how it is generated in state- and peacebuilding contexts, and how it translates (if at all) into greater stability.

In addition to gaps in the evidence, the review highlights gaps in the model: as it currently stands, the model does not systematically account for the role of informal actors exercising public authority; and for the regional and international environment on fragility. With regard to the former, the literature increasingly highlights the role of informal actors in exercising public authority and providing public goods and services – be they markets, a modicum of justice, education, or basic infrastructure. The way the peace- and statebuilding model frames two of its key dimensions, core state functions and responding to public expectations, however, has arguably encouraged a focus on formal state institutions. With regard to the latter, international factors are largely absent from the model, despite a greater focus in recent years in the analysis of fragility on the role of issues such as migration, illicit financial flows, dynamics and structures of international trade, and the role of transnational ideologies.

The evidence review also highlights two important tensions in the model. The first is between state- and peacebuilding. While BPSS assumes that the relationship between them is not only unproblematic but mutually reinforcing, the evidence review suggests that not only peace- and statebuilding objectives can conflict, but also different statebuilding objectives (e.g. inclusive settlements and more responsive state institutions). This tension was also identified in an accompanying operational stock-take of the use of BPSS by country offices.

The second tension in BPSS is between an explicitly political approach to state- and peacebuilding, reflected in particular in the emphasis on political settlements, and a more “technocratic” approach reflected in the focus on strengthening state capacity and the common framing of “responding to public

expectations" predominantly in terms of service delivery. Again, this is a tension identified in the operational stock take. A technocratic approach is also reflected in the focus of the model on state institutions at the expense of the sub-state and local level, and the relationships of institutions at these levels with state institutions. Given that in terms of analysis (e.g. through the CPRD) and programming, DFID is deeply engaged at the sub-state level (including with peace- and statebuilding programming), actual practice has outpaced the existing formal policy framework.

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