Outliers in Peacebuilding

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www.africanleadershipcentre.org

ALC WORKING PAPER,

01 September 2013:

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Introduction

Peacebuilding has become one of the top priorities of the international community since the 1990s. The United Nations began to extend its peacekeeping operations into multi-dimensional peace operations as exit for peacekeepers became impossible without institutionalizing self-sustaining peace, and it became apparent that instituting durable peace is only possible under multidimensional interventions. The move to a multi-dimensional peace operation has been accompanied by an upsurge in scholarly literature on the problematic of peacebuilding. In both the scholarly problematization, and the actual peacebuilding interventions on the ground, certain issues could be classified as mainstream peacebuilding and others as outliers. This Working Paper provides some background to an ongoing study at the ALC on the outliers of peacebuilding.

Mainstream peace building literature has several features, two of which distinguish it from outlier issues. First, it is primarily concerned with bringing a peaceful political order in the aftermath of major violent conflict, mainly intra-state conflicts, that are concluded through negotiated settlement. The protracted nature of most intra-state conflicts necessitated multidimensional UN peace operations to oversee the transition process. Such operations include peacebuilding as an additional agenda without which peacekeeping operations have to remain endless. Second, the mainstream literature and actual conduct of peacebuilding are largely dominated by the idea of the liberal peace. Liberal peacebuilding is based on the assumption that once liberal democratic

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institutions are crafted and a market economy is instituted a self-sustaining peace will be a natural outcome. It views war as an aberration that emanates from the lack of liberal democratic institutions and the failure of a nation`s economy, which, in the main, arises from market distorting policies.

The debate on the successes and failures of the liberal approach to peace building has gone a long way. In general the Achilles heel of the liberal peace is its failure to address the root causes of a conflict. The peace it builds and the institutions it crafted engendered the very causes that generated conflict and necessitated peace building at the outset. This notwithstanding, its defenders staunchly argue that there is no alternative to the liberal peace or a modified version of it (Paris, 2010). However, critiques argue that the liberal peace is indeed a good example of how not to build peace and that there are a number of alternatives to this liberal notion of peace building (Cooper, 2007; Cooper, Turner and Pugh, 2011; Barbara, 2008). Some pointed to the experience of countries that recovered autonomously, while others indicate the experience of countries that followed an illiberal approach to post-conflict recovery. Good examples in this regard are countries like Angola, Rwanda and Ethiopia that followed an authoritarian, interventionist state building as a precondition to peace. However, the approach to peace building that these countries pursued has also essentially sustained the exclusionary nature of the state that is the major driver of armed conflict and its moral legitimacy is questionable if not outrageous.

Generally, the mainstream peacebuilding discourse and practice is largely oriented by liberalism as a solution for the reordering of society, which to a large extent is reliant on institutions. There are a number of issues this mainstream peacebuilding literature and policy practices do not cover or even when it tries to cover, it does so only in a particular way. Topics such as gender, reconciliation, post-conflict justice, and leadership are some of the issues that are not properly addressed by the mainstream peacebuilding literature and hence they are outliers in peacebuilding. However, that they are outliers in peace building does not necessarily mean that they are of little relevance for building peace in conflict-affected societies. Conflict is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that

includes in the word of Johan Galtung (1995) certain contradictory goals, their attitudinal manifestation in the form of emotions and cognitions and the manifest violent behaviours. And, once a conflict starts it generates its own contradictions, polarizing and dehumanizing emotions and cognitions, and behaviours that further sustain the conflict or contribute to its re-emergence. Hence, peacebuilding and conflict transformation essentially involve not only transforming the original contradiction in goal seeking and the attitude and behaviours embedded in conflicting parties, but also the layers of issues that are caused by the conflict itself.

More specifically, interventions need to be directed at the three components that are embedded in a given conflict. Assessed this way, mainstream peacebuilding tends to be more concerned with institutions that if entrenched would shape attitude, emotions and relationships without directly addressing these issues. Even when it attempts to address such issues like transitional justice initiatives and gender, it approaches them from a particular perspective, mainly liberal perspective, thereby precluding a fuller understanding of these phenomena. Hence, these outliers in peace building need to be explored in detail so as to address the dearth of materials in this regard. The research on which this Working Paper is based, aims to address these outliers in peace building and by so doing, it hopes to advance our understanding of the phenomenon of peacebuilding, its requirements, and the solution thereof.

Aims, Scope and Content

This research project presents a range of outliers in peace building, demonstrating how the mainstream peacebuilding literature approached such issues, and sketches alternative conception and approaches to these issues. The outliers included in this study are either not covered by mainstream peacebuilding or are not given sufficient attention in that they are approached in a particular way and hence they need a nuanced analysis. These issues include leadership and peacebuilding, reconciliation, translation and peacebuilding, gender and peacebuilding, theatre and peacebuilding and peace education. Along these themes the study aims to show: how a given theme

has been an outlier in peace building; how a given issue area is approached (if it is approached at all) in mainstream peace building; how this is problematic; why a nuanced analysis is needed; and how a nuanced approach advances our understanding of peacebuilding in general and its practice in Africa in particular. In so doing the study aims to indicate that issues that are overlooked in the mainstream peace building discourse and practice might be no less relevant for advancing peace and stability in countries that are affected by conflict. This has significant implication in lieu of the debate regarding the failure of the liberal peace thesis to usher in peace and stability across the developing world.

Methodology

The study combines theoretical and empirical approaches in analyzing the outliers themes in peacebuilding. The researchers of each theme have selected cases as deemed appropriate for their theme. How the mainstream peace building literature approached (if it does so) these outliers in peacebuilding will be presented and alternative conceptions will be suggested. To this end, the study employs a descriptive-analytic method of analysis. Researchers also draw from findings of research undertaken in particular contexts.

Indication of disciplines and relevance

This study will be an interdisciplinary one in its contents and approach. It will fall across the disciplines of Political Science, Peace and Security Studies, Conflict Resolution, Development Studies, Art and Performance Studies, and Translation Studies.

In supplementing the mainstream peace building literature, the study will be useful for those working in the area of peace building and conflict transformation. It will help peace practitioners by widening the menu of alternatives they can choose to contribute in the reconstruction of societies recovering from war. The study also helps to bring to the fore of attention, issue areas that are not given due attention in academic circles. Hence, it will be relevant for NGOs working in the area of peace, security, and development,

scholars engaged in the study of peacebuilding and various national, regional and international organizations that stand for the cause of peace and justice.

The study will make an important contribution to existing knowledge on peacebuilding by bringing to the fore issues that have been relegated to the background. It will indicate how certain themes are not given adequate attention in the literature, why it is important to give them due attention from the perspective of peacebuilding, and how these themes might contribute to peace in no less than those ascribed central importance. Hence, the study adds to the scholarship on peace and conflict studies on how and why certain issues get wider currency to the detriment of others, and how that affects the peacebuilding enterprise.

Relation to existing literature

The study builds on the literature from various fields and synthesizes them with the literature on peace and conflict. It will use the insights of other fields of study to the study of peace and security and in doing so it contributes to the literature on peace and security. Though the study is about peace building, the themes it raises and the angle from which it looks at them set it apart from the mainstream peacebuilding literature. It raises themes that are not given adequate attention by building on scholars that pinpointed the necessity of doing so.

Summary of themes examined in this study

Leadership and Peacebuilding

This part of the study presents how leadership has been treated in the mainstream peacebuilding and argues for an alternative understanding of leadership in peacebuilding by showing how leadership is a process unfolding in a certain context, and hence debunk the personality oriented analysis of leadership prevalent in mainstream peacebuilding literature.

A case study of leadership and peacebuilding: Cote d` Ivoire

Building on the theoretical presentation on leadership and peace building, we explore how the leadership issue has been central in the origin of the crisis in Cote d` Ivoire, and indicate why leadership is also important in the peacebuilding process.

The language of Reconciliation in Post Conflict Peacebuilding

We present how reconciliation has been understood in the mainstream literature and how its meaning and the instruments of its achievements are rendered ambiguous often deliberately. While arguing for a particular understanding of reconciliation, this study indicates how reconciliation, as deployed in peace agreements, is the result of contestation and struggle among a range of national and international actors.

Gender and peacebuilding

This part of the study discusses gender and peacebuilding as an outlier issue and pushes for a particular understanding of gender issues in peacebuilding. It argues for a

move beyond issues of protection and participation to an exploration of strategies for transforming structures that underline gender inequity.

Peace education and peacebuilding in post conflict situations

This part presents peace education and its potential for enhancing peace in post conflict situations. It will explore the existing approaches to education in post conflict context and argue that peace education deserves adequate attention as an important instrument for lasting peace.

Translation as a tool for peacebuilding and women's empowerment in (trans)national contexts

This theme argues that translation can be a double-edged sword in that it can either aggravate intolerance and violence or peace and women's empowerment depending on how it is used and for what end it is deployed. It illustrates through a range of cases, how translation has been used to promote peace and hence indicates how it could be judiciously employed to advance peace and security.

Theater and peace building

The art, this part argues, is an important instrument at the disposal of peacebuilders to build peace. The fact that theater attracts many people renders it an important instrument to generate mutual interaction and sympathy among groups that were previously locked in bitter conflict. The work draws on the example of the use of theater in conflict resolution and peacebuilding in a particular context.

Overall, the major themes, issues, concerns and insights emerging from the study, will shed some light on the extent to which these outliers issues are marginalized in the mainstream literature on peace building.

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