The Political Economy of Peacebuilding: What opportunities exist for ‘new’ approaches to post-conflict reconstruction in Africa?

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Introduction

As we approach 2015, end date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, it is the moment for taking stock of the study and practice of development in all forms, including in post-conflict environs. This research project interrogates the political economy of peacebuilding with a focus on attendant implications for the conceptualization and practice of post-conflict reconstruction in Africa in the post-2015 era. It addresses a strong need to challenge dominant and failing approaches in order to provoke new thinking and policy advances on post-conflict reconstruction as an important element of peacebuilding. The project considers whether there are real ideological differences between the dominant approach of liberal peacebuilding and alternative approaches and the implications that this presents for thought and praxis.

Although the incidence of interstate and intrastate wars has been on the decline, there remain many contexts that are described as being “neither at peace nor at war”. Most recently this has been characterized by a range of insurgencies against states from Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya in the North, increasingly Kenya in the East, Central African Republic in the centre and Nigeria in the West. This is significant given the well-established negative impact of conflict and insecurity on economic development in Africa from depleted physical and human capital to the non-productive use of resources (Barro and Sala-i-Martin 2004; Sachs 2005; Nkurunziza, 2008; Collier and Hoeffler, 2008; Ndikumana and Boyce, 2008).

There is a sense of failure at mitigating these challenges perhaps most evidenced recently by the poor coping of post-conflict health structures in West Africa with the 2014 Ebola crisis. In addition the failure of economic diversification and poverty

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reduction policies as well as the domination of foreign capital in post-conflict contexts and lack of agricultural and industrial development in Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, East Timor and the Niger Delta-Nigeria are telling of the shortcomings of recent reconstruction practice (WFP, 2010; Richmond and Francks, 2008; Cramer and Goodhand, 2002; Byrd, 2005:119; World Bank, 2013; Ushie, 2013).

This Working Paper serves as background to ALC Research Project on the political economy of peacebuilding in Africa, which will involve:
Research objectives

This project proposes a new lens through which to consider developmental transformation in post-conflict societies: developmental post-conflict reconstruction. It does so by examining peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction and developmental statehood with particular focus on the interaction between the state and the private sector in addressing economic development in the aftermath of conflict. This is novel as despite widely acclaimed developmental success alongside security challenges in the developmental states of East Asia, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan over three decades from the 1960s (1930s for Japan) there is limited analysis of transferable lessons to the Global South (example: Barbara, 2008). It is also timely as the proposed post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals suggest a stronger role for industrialization in developmental pursuits, which is very much in line with the Developmental State Paradigm (DSP).

This project responds to four distinct research questions:

- How significant are state-private sector interactions to historical and contemporary understandings of post-conflict reconstruction in Africa?
- What is the developmental legacy of post-conflict reconstruction in conceptual and policy terms in Africa?
- How significant is the „centrality” of structural transformation of the economy to post-conflict reconstruction across time?
- What has influenced the choice and utility of post-conflict reconstruction and developmental policy frameworks and how have these impacted on developmental processes and outcomes?

The project proceeds with two identifiable approaches to post-conflict reconstruction in Africa. The first one draws on the conceptual framing and analysis of empirical experiences of reconstruction in post-colonial/post-independence Africa within the context of a strong role for the state in development and dominance of development planning as a policy tool as with the Biafran civil war (Second Development Plan, 1970-1975). We also analyze efforts towards developmental transformation through development planning in the aftermath of the Mau Mau uprisings in Kenya (First Development Plan, 1965/66-1969/1970- revised). There was emphasis on a strong
role for the state alongside engagement with the private sector (with vibrant participation from foreign capital) as part of a wider development planning process.

The second one draws on empirical experiences in the post-structural adjustment period within the context of mainstream arguments for the reduced role for the state in development in the early responses to the present-day conflicts in the Niger Delta (2009-), Boko Haram-affected North Eastern Nigeria (2014-) and Post-Election violence in Kenya (2007). This second approach is most clearly identifiable as reconstruction within the liberal peacebuilding framework as exemplified by the mandate of the UN Peacebuilding Commission (Olonisakin and Ikpe, 2012). These approaches are emblematic of Moore’s (2000:12) suggestion that post-conflict reconstruction is caught in tensions between neoliberal and more interventionist visions of development in general.” This project investigates the implications of these tensions on the conceptual development and practice of post-conflict reconstruction. In doing so it contributes to providing new guidance to policy and practice where current approaches fall short.

**Analytical framework**

In this research project we utilize conceptual perspectives of post-conflict reconstruction with reference to a set of relevant frameworks that have enjoyed popularity in particular periods: developmental statehood and (liberal) peacebuilding. These are important and significant tools of analysis within the fields of security and development but they have not been collectively employed in the study of the African context thus far. Deployment in this way also ensures that inter-disciplinarity is at the intellectual centre of this research project.

Narratives of successful economic transitions in East Asian developmental states: Japan, Taiwan and South Korea (1930s-1990s), have been fundamental to the DSP. Their experiences of rapid and sustained success based on infrastructural investment, structural transformation and industrialisation have been at the helm of well-established studies of successful, sustained and rapid development. This concept is of particular analytical utility to this study given that conflict and insecurity (among others) have been accorded explanatory value in the political school of DSP (Fine, 2006; Vartiainen, 1999; Cheng, 2001; Okuno-Fujiwara, 1991).
The DSP is deployed in the construction of a notion of developmental post-conflict reconstruction through the in-depth examination of the influence of conflict and insecurity-related factors on developmental processes and outcomes defined by public investment in physical and social infrastructure, employment generation and industrialization in the post-colonial/post-independence period. This era is acknowledged as one where African states acted like developmental states as they were driven by „nationalist-cum-developmentalism ideology for both nation building and development” (Mkandawire, 2001:295). The tendency to usurp reconstruction in broader developmental agendas (much like the 1948 European Recovery Plan) that hinged on modernization and structural transformation is a central consideration as is the singular use of developmental plans by developmental/developmentally-minded states in this period (Ike, 2014; Kasahara, 2013, Mkandawire, 2001). An important factor to be borne in mind concerns the challenges that ensue with the subordination of governance and social factors to economic developmental priorities.

Peacebuilding is laden with different meanings that are reliant on positioning along the ideological spectrum of subscription to the normative goal of liberal peace thesis. Its most dominant interpretation, liberal peacebuilding is heavily contested with much questioning about how it is understood and the impact this has on peacebuilding practice across the world (Curtis, 2013; Krogstad, 2012; Richmond, 2006). Nonetheless its dominance ensures that contemporary post-conflict reconstruction is anchored on the „transformation of war economies to liberal market democracies” (Rugumamau, 2009).

This liberal peacebuilding lens will be engaged in the advancement of a notion of developmental post-conflict reconstruction through a critical analysis of its influence on contemporary reconstruction discourse. This requires an interrogation of the dominant state-market dichotomous approach that has encouraged the ideological stance of a minimal role for the state and the public sector vis-à-vis prioritization of the private sector and minimizing public expenditure and the attendant impact of that on social and physical infrastructural investment in reconstruction. Poverty reduction strategy papers and widely used International Development Assistance disbursements criteria, country and policy and institutional assessments as well as post-conflict performance indicators, evidence this. This analysis is employed for the Niger Delta (2009-), Boko Haram-affected North-Eastern Nigeria (2014-) and Post-Election violence-affected Kenya (2007).
This research project deploys these analytical tools in the following ways:

In response to first question, the project deconstructs the state-market dichotomy approach that is central to liberal peacebuilding, alongside neoliberalism, and its resulting assumptions of „crowding out“ of the private sector as a result of state interventionist approaches and associated challenges. It does so by using the DSP to examine the strong and intimate productive interactions between the state and the private sector as essential to development agendas in the post-colonial/post-independence period (Wade, 1990: 217-220; Amsden, 1989:63-64; Schatz, 1977: 5; Ikpe, 2013).

In response to the second question, the project links „developmental statist“ approaches as well as liberal peacebuilding approaches to attendant reconstruction processes and outcomes. It thus fills the gap of distinct analysis of reconstruction over the post-war period and thereby provides holistic analysis of post-independence post-conflict reconstruction in Africa. It provides historical analysis alongside a deepened conceptualization of reconstruction. This allows reflection on other parts of the Global South that have achieved celebrated transitions against the background on conflict. This provides an excellent framework for South-South comparative analyses.

In response to the third question, the project builds a notion of developmental post-conflict reconstruction that draws on classical principles of structural transformation and industrialization, especially in light of the revival of these debates as part of post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals framework. Drawing on a range of experiences this offers explanatory analytical value and potential policy themes that are relevant to current post-conflict contexts. It requires critical reflection on developmental statehood and accompanying reconstruction processes and outcomes with attention to time, space and issue (including the seeming neglect of governance- and poverty-related issues) factors.

In response to the fourth question, the project analyses the dynamism of conceptual „advancements“ in the field of post-conflict reconstruction as a result of the dominance of particular ideological patterns and how these inform and are informed by empirical experiences globally. The power structures that underlie these dynamics, especially with regard to knowledge production and development finance, and their channels of influence are also considered with reflection on the impact of
changing global thought and policy around peacebuilding, reconstruction and development in domestic spaces.

**Research Design and Methods**

The research project employs a country case study research design. We focus on periods: 1965-1970, 1970-1975, 2007-, 2009- and 2014-. These periods coincide with the aftermath of post-conflict reconstruction policy interventions. The study utilizes both the embedded and descriptive case study approaches. The embedded case study approach comprises sub-units of analysis. For this study, sub-units of analysis are representative of the policy intervention frameworks employed to address the three conflict contexts being investigated.

A descriptive case study relies on a reference framework that has directed the data collection. For this study, data collection is pursued in the noted units of analysis in line with the earlier mentioned developmental challenges of conflict namely: poverty levels; agricultural development; industrial development; macro-economic stability and economic diversification; as well as social and physical infrastructural investment levels, i.e. stocks and flows at national and subnational levels.

For national-level and historical data the study will utilize secondary quantitative and qualitative data from both domestically-generated and globally-established policy documents and databases including National Development Plans, National Bureau of Statistics database (Kenya and Nigeria), Central Banks of Nigeria and Kenya Statistical Reviews, National and Human Demographic Survey, African Development Bank Database, UN Economic Commission for Africa Database, IMF Financial Statistics, FAOSTAT, World Development Indicators, Human Development Indicators and UNCTAD Statistics. For subnational data the study will draw upon secondary and primary sources. Secondary data sources include African Development Bank Database, UN Economic Commission for Africa Database, National Bureau of Statistics database, Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Reviews and National and Human Demographic Survey. These data are used to estimate the expected and actual economic impact of conflict in all five units of analysis across the noted themes of development challenges that result from conflict. They are also be used to assess the economic impact and outcomes of reconstruction initiatives, with attention
to the roles of the public and private sector as well as the relative significance of structural transitions to address the noted development challenges.

Primary qualitative data will be obtained through in-depth and semi-structured interviews with experts based at: University of Port Harcourt-Department of Political and Administrative Studies, Ahmadu Bello-Department of Political Science, University of Nairobi- Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi-Institute for Diplomacy and International Studies, Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis, Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, Ministries of Agriculture and Rural Development, Health, Education, Trade, Industry and Finance at federal and state / national and regional government levels, National Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning, National Development, National Poverty Eradication Programmes, Ministry of the Niger Delta, Niger Delta Development Commission, UN Economic Commission for Africa- Governance, African Development Bank- Fragile States Facility. These will be organised around the units of analysis: The Niger Delta, North Eastern Nigeria and Post-Election Violence-affected Kenya (focus on the Rift Valley region). These data are used to establish the estimated and actual economic impact of the conflict and the impact and outcomes of the reconstruction initiatives from 2008 onwards. Attention is paid to the iteration between public and private sector actors as well as the influence of global developmental policy on the domestic sphere, vis-à-vis past domestic experiences of post-conflict reconstruction.

Some methodological challenges will need to be overcome: comparisons across differing time periods and regions and aggregate fallacies with comparisons of national and subnational interventions. The challenges with the diversity of comparators are mitigated as these are incorporated, as significant contextual characteristics that have contributed to the reconstruction processes and outcomes, as such these will be attributed explanatory value. In fact these properties serve to strengthen deep empirical examination of how reconstruction has „evolved” over time and the conditions that have influenced these changes and provide an indication of important considerations for the future. With regard to national and subnational comparisons, it is notable that the national government has consistently remained at the helm of all policy regimes thus making it possible for this dynamic to be examined consistently across levels.
**Expected outputs**

These following outputs will generate impact in African and global academic and policy communities through original academic contributions, knowledge transfer through professional training and enabling debates across academic and policy communities.

- Background paper on Political Economy of Peacebuilding in Africa
- Research report on the dominance of liberal peacebuilding approaches and the financing of peacebuilding
- Research reports that will be baseline studies for country cases
- Research report on the utility of development planning as a post-conflict reconstruction tool in Africa
- Peer-reviewed journal article/s on lessons from post-conflict reconstruction in the aftermath of the Biafran War and the Mau Mau uprisings (with or without Africa focus)
- Peer-reviewed journal article/s on the utility of development planning as a policy tool for post-conflict reconstruction submitted to a political economy journal.
- Peer-reviewed journal article/s on responding to current conflicts in Nigeria and Kenya with contemporary lessons for wider continental and global contexts submitted to a journal focused on developing societies.
- Collaborative monograph on peacebuilding policy with a focus on post-conflict reconstruction experiences in Africa.
- Professional training courses on developmental post-conflict reconstruction that will derive from the research findings that will target public officials in Africa delivered in collaboration with UN IDEP.
The formulation of a „political economy of peacebuilding: post-conflict reconstruction in Africa“ working group of academics and practitioners based in Universities in Africa, including, University of Nairobi, University of Port Harcourt, University of Abuja, Ahmadu Bello University, African Union and the Economic Community of West African States, East African Community and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. The working group mandate will be to engage critically the concept and practice of post conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding with an examination of recent and historical experiences in Africa. These participants will be engaged against the background of ongoing research on Security and Society in Africa (PI is a researcher on this project). UNECA will be engaged against the background of an ongoing research project on security in the Sahel region (the PI is a researcher on this project).

Engagement with a new generation of academics and policy researchers through the forums of the African Leadership Centre Alumni Network and the African Peacebuilding Network training programme for young African scholars.

- ALC MSc/PhD Fellows will write their dissertations on the Kenya and Nigeria and other selected case studies of contemporary approaches to peacebuilding.
- ALC MSc/PhD Fellows will write dissertations on the interactions between the dominance of liberal peacebuilding approaches and the financing of peacebuilding.
- ALC MSc/PhD Fellows will write dissertations on the utility of development planning as a post-conflict reconstruction tool in Africa.
- ALC PhD Fellows will produce dissertations that consider how lessons from historical experiences in Kenya and Nigeria and other selected case studies inform contemporary conceptual debates on policymaking in peacebuilding with particular attention to the politics of knowledge production and therein the dynamics around the place of African voices.

Three public roundtable debates on the future of post-conflict reconstruction on Nigeria (to be held in Nigeria), Kenya and Africa (to be held in Nairobi).
• There will be annual presentations to the African Peacebuilding Network research training for doctoral candidates on the mechanics of the research project as part of a training programme for early-career African scholars.

• Bi-annual briefings on the research project to all partners for regular dissemination of research progress and findings.

• Media engagement to disseminate project findings through print, radio and television.
References


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