

Chapter 5: The Principle of Local Ownership as a Bridge between International and Domestic Actors in Peacebuilding

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Introduction

Regarding the task of exploring “indigenous methods of conflict resolution and peace building,” this chapter is not directly aimed at identifying examples of useful indigenous methods for conflict resolution and peacebuilding.¹ Rather, it is intended to provide a conceptual foundation for the need for such methods in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Indigenous methods are required, not necessarily because they are by definition technically superior to any other methods. Indigenous methods are always important, because conflict resolution and peacebuilding ought to be solidly rooted in local society; otherwise, we are destined to end up having superficial short-sighted approaches to conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

The international community correctly recognizes this need. International organizations and donor countries repeatedly emphasize the importance of local ownership,² when they provide any assistance to post-conflict countries. It is true that they simply do not want to be regarded as interventionary forces. Their mention of local ownership is sometimes quite superficial. The idea of respect for ownership may be utilized even to authorize illegitimate regimes in volatile nations or hypocritical intervention by foreign forces. However, it is also true that there is a widely recognized importance in the principle of local ownership from the perspective of operational

¹ By “indigenous methods” this chapter means social methods rooted in traditional cultures or customs of society.

² By “local ownership”, this chapter means the state of affairs in which stakeholders of local society are willing to take responsibility for activities concerned. See Hideaki Shinoda, “The Difficulty and Importance of Local Ownership and Capacity Development in Peacebuilding”, *Hiroshima Peace Science*, vol. 30, 2008, pp. 95-115.

strategies of conflict resolution and peace building. Rather, it is an expression of the international community's intention to incorporate the issue of indigenous methods in the strategy of peacebuilding. The principle of local ownership is a conceptual channel officially recognized by the international community to introduce indigenous methods to the framework of conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

This chapter argues that the principle of local ownership is rather a bridge between international and domestic actors who need each other in peacebuilding. International actors as interveners require a solid foundation in domestic society to sustain long-term peace as a crystallization of their own efforts. Domestic actors as recipients require additional external resources to empower themselves to sustain long-term peace as a fruit of their own efforts. Both need the principle of local ownership from the opposite sides. Indigenous methods would be bought out by domestic actors and supported by international actors in the framework of local ownership as a principle of peacebuilding strategies.

This chapter seeks to illustrate the difficulties and necessities of looking for indigenous methods of peacebuilding by highlighting the gaps between the assumption of contemporary peacebuilding based on the theory of the modern sovereign nation state and indigenous practices of actual local societies. Then, the chapter goes on to examine how the international community tries to tackle such difficulties by providing a conceptual framework of the principle of local ownership as a bridge to fill in such gaps. The chapter also briefly categorizes various examples of indigenous methods in actual peacebuilding activities by suggesting that such practices are the record of efforts to fill in the gaps within the balanced framework of the principle of local ownership.

1. The Principle of Local Ownership as a Bridge between International Standards and Indigenous Methods

Despite the obvious importance of introducing indigenous methods, it is not so

common to introduce what we can clearly identify as indigenous methods in mainstream peacebuilding activities. It is because practitioners identify difficulties in applying indigenous methods to peacebuilding activities. The gap between mainstream practices of peacebuilding and indigenous practices in local societies is often perceived as quite wide. The presuppositions of mainstream peacebuilding in its institutional settings or behavioral attitudes have international or Western origins and are apparently different from indigenous circumstances in post-conflict societies where peacebuilding activities take place.

It is evident that while local ownership is widely recognized as a principle to coordinate the relationship between the international community and local society, such a principle does not necessarily promise cultivation and application of any indigenous methods. Theoretically speaking, it is possible that international actors adopt certain kinds of indigenous methods without involving domestic actors or local ownership. It is also possible that domestic actors secure local ownership without resorting to any kinds of indigenous methods. While the international community does not necessarily negate indigenous methods, what it really seeks to secure is the principle of local ownership.

It is fair to say that one essential value of adopting indigenous methods should be the power of their appeal to local populations. Once local populations welcome methods of conflict resolution or peacebuilding as their own approaches, it is likely that they find peacebuilding activities more acceptable. The more local people find peacebuilding activities as acceptable, the more such activities have a chance of success. In this sense the utility of adopting indigenous methods is highly relevant to the utility of promoting the sense of ownership among stakeholders. But this argument may be highly manipulative and inclined toward a donor-oriented perspective.

The issue of indigenous methods is much deeper than the acceptability of peacebuilding activities. We know that most contemporary armed conflicts have been occurring in newly independent states in Africa or Asia. The contemporary tendency is that internal armed conflicts take place within national boundaries caused by reasons concerning domestic governance. Most conflict-ridden states are products of the wave

of decolonization in the latter half of the twentieth century. Thus, despite their geographical origins, they often struggle with legacies of colonial periods in the process of nation-building. Nevertheless, in terms of implementation of international assistances, construction of domestic political society, etc, peacebuilding efforts in such states are deeply rooted in the Westernized way of thinking (Paris, 2004). It is partly because such states inherited institutions of colonial periods. It is also because our contemporary world is standardized in the Western way of thinking and tends to impose it upon non-Western societies (Yasuaki, 2010).

In the first place, the modern sovereign nation state system is a product of modern Western political philosophy, which was developed in the historical evolution of modern European international society. Even in Europe the modern notion of the state was unknown until the modern age. Absolutism was based upon the presupposition that absolute sovereignty was a possession of individual kings. Political societies were organized upon the understanding that the sovereign rules subjects; the human relationship between the rule and the ruled was a structural pillar of political society. It was only after the gradual development of constitutionalism in Great Britain that depersonalized the system of political governance and the American and French Revolutions that led to the spread of national sovereignty. In short, the sovereign modern state is a product of European civilizations in the modern age (Shinoda, 2000).

It is the framework of this modern sovereign nation state that contemporary international donors and planners rely upon. There is a mistaken myth that sovereign nation states appeared in the seventeenth century and have been dominating the world for centuries. The fact is that only after the process of decolonization did we start a grand project of dividing the entire world into sovereign nation states. The project has not been completed yet; it rather requires continuous enormous efforts in the forms of peace operations, humanitarian or development aid. In the face of difficulties in the way of such efforts, we may sometimes be tempted to ask a question about the validity of our assumptions. Are our assumptions that the entire world ought to be divided and organized by a few hundred sovereign nation states really feasible? Are they really realistic and effective in Africa and Asia? How much should we base our peacebuilding

strategies upon such assumptions? These questions may look practically or diplomatically absurd, but contain significant implications. Once we start questioning our theoretical assumptions, we must start discussing our peacebuilding activities at the very fundamental level of presuppositions of peacebuilding.

Do we discuss indigenous methods in order to entirely question fundamental presuppositions of ongoing contemporary peacebuilding activities? Are there any realistic indigenous methods that radically go beyond the internationally common framework of peacebuilding? These are really deep fundamental questions which we would not be able to answer easily. But they would be worth asking, since we all know that there are gaps between our theoretical assumptions based on the framework of Western political philosophy and actual realities of conflict-ridden societies in non-Western areas (Sriram et al, 2011; Paris & Sisk, 2009).

The so-called issue of the “neo-patrimonial state” prevalent in Africa is often mentioned in the discussions of contemporary tendencies highly relevant to wars in the region (Takeuchi, 2009; Medard, 1982). It is true that political leaders not only monopolize public sectors but also exploit state resources for their own private gains. The informal tendency of respect for “the Big Man” creates political governance too much dependent upon personal charisma. It is almost like an African tradition that Presidents continue to remain in office for decades regardless of constitutional settings, while many Asian countries used to have similar political cultures. This personalization of state mechanisms betrays the institutional assumption of the modern state based on the idea of rule of law. “Neo-patrimonial states” are the hotbed of repeated armed conflicts, since they often worsen social tensions and stimulate violent struggles for resources in a state.

Some armed conflicts especially those in West Africa are often described in the context of the “youth.” The widely recognized observation is that underprivileged youth tend to join rebel groups against the existing power structure and social systems dominated by elders. Peacebuilding strategies in the region thus usually address the issue of the youth as one of the most pressing themes (United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, 2007). But traditional African societies have social customs of elderly

rules in the form of chieftdom or more informal styles. Raising voices of youth might run the risk of challenging traditional social behaviors. At best, the youth issue is highly related to the problem of excessive urbanization of capital cities full of job-seeking youth as well as deteriorating poverty levels in stagnating rural areas. It is a challenge to revitalize rural social lives by making adjustments in traditional social customs and values.

The peacebuilding strategy of the rule of law in the context of state-building sometimes faces informal challenges behind the scenes. Rules of indigenous rituals, religions, secret societies and witchcraft work against the aim of the rule of law to establish a modern state. These indigenous social rules do not usually challenge the attempt of creating a modern state in a visible form. However, they affect people's minds and behaviors regardless of official requirements of the rule of law. International peacebuilders have conversations with local intellectuals on rule of law terms. But it is often likely that behind such official scenes indigenous social rules and practices exercise enormous power over the course of society. They may maintain "irrational" social rules in the eyes of modern state builders. They may solicit tensions among various social groups or even violent reactions by young gangsters with guns.

These gaps between the assumptions of the modern sovereign nation state and indigenous social phenomena are not inevitable. This chapter does not insist that indigenous approaches in Africa are by definition contradictory to the framework of the modern sovereign nation state. In a way every society has such gaps as in the cases of well-governed societies like Japan. However, it is also true that simplistic adoption of Western institutional assumptions does not automatically promise peace, stability and development in societies where complex indigenous social values and practices are significant. Peacebuilding strategies must fact such gaps, instead of ignoring them, in order to identify the way peace is better pursued in conflict-ridden societies.

It is practically too radical to propose to abandon the modern sovereign nation-state framework, even when we find a history of peaceful society before modernization. In the twenty-first century, it is so hard to be isolated and risks of such isolation are apparently so high. Peacebuilding strategies must be pursued in the context of the

actual contemporary world. We do not believe that thoroughly simplistic introduction of alien cultures would lead to long-term sustainable peace. We also do not usually believe that thoroughly simplistic rejection of all foreign elements would contribute to constructive peacebuilding. We need a balance between indigenous and international methods after careful examination of the advantages and disadvantages of both of them. Local ownership is a standard to screen utility of indigenous as well as foreign methods for particular practical purposes like peacebuilding. If a certain traditional custom is discovered to be useful, the principle of local ownership applies to identify it as an effective indigenous method. The ownership principle is expected to function to modify traditions as part of peacebuilding strategies of the society concerned. If a certain foreign intervention is assessed as useful, the principle of local ownership applies to justify foreign intervention and incorporate it in a newly adjusted framework of peacebuilding. The ownership principle ought to function to legitimize interventions as part of the peacebuilding strategies of the society concerned.

This is the reason why respect for local ownership is not really at stake. The crucial point is to foster local ownership so that it will enrich peacebuilding activities (Shinoda, 2008). The principle of local ownership is a bridge between those domestic actors who might bring indigenous methods but lack resources for implementing them and those international actors who might bring resources for peacebuilding activities but lack indigenous methods rooted in local society. Both domestic actors and international actors need such a bridge to compensate for what they lack. Once we adopt the understanding of local ownership in peacebuilding as the principle to be not only respected but also fostered, we are strategically able to examine the roles and functions of external actors for the goal of peacebuilding.

2. International Efforts to Promote Local Ownership

This chapter goes on to look at some characteristic attitudes of international organizations to advance local ownership as a strategic principle of peacebuilding. In

so doing, the chapter illustrates a conceptual channel for the international community to invite indigenous methods. There are numerous ways international donors for development aid approach issues of local ownership from their own distinctive perspectives³ (US Department of Defense, 2007; USAID, Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination, 2004). But it is noteworthy that the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), among others, gives attention to peacebuilding issues. In the context of development effectiveness in fragile states DAC recognizes that fragile states confront particularly severe development challenges such as weak governance, limited administrative capacity, chronic humanitarian crisis, persistent social tensions, violence or the legacy of civil war. Thus, state-building is a central objective to tackle the issue of fragile states. “The long-term vision for international engagement in fragile states is to help national reformers build legitimate, effective and resilient state institutions” (OECD/DAC, 2007).

“The DAC Guidelines: Helping Preventing Violent Conflict” in 2001 stated “Speed and ‘efficiency’ in development operations may sometimes need to be sacrificed to some degree for greater stability and peace, as well as local ‘ownership.’” It also states that “Be transparent, communicate intentions, and widen and deepen dialogue with partners at all levels in order to ensure ownership.” It argued that “External actors – multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental – individually and collectively need to identify and support local capacities for preventing and resolving conflict issues and for finding innovative solutions, even in the most grave conflict or

³ The United States is engaged in capacity development programmes in its own peculiar commitment to nation-building. With regards to its “fragile states strategy”, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) intends to “enhance stability”, “improve security”, “encourage reform”, and “develop the capacity of institutions”, by saying that “in some cases, lack of political will to foster greater effectiveness and legitimacy of government institutions may be driving fragility. Supporting reformers outside the government may contribute to political instability in the short term, but may, in the medium to long term, avoid violent conflict and state failure. Support for economic activities that lead to job creation, improved family incomes, and better functioning markets can, in most cases, contribute to greater economic stability”. Other donors include Canada, United Kingdom, & Germany. Numerous NGOs are engaged in various activities to enhance local ownership, including the International Centre for Transnational Justice (ICTJ).

post-conflict situations...Donors should give particular consideration to understanding and, where appropriate, supporting indigenous and customary peace-building capacities and other potential connectors, such as women's organizations with the potential to play bridging roles. These can have a major impact on building solidarity and boosting local confidence and capacity" (OECD/DAC, 2001).

The OECD/DAC sets up the "10 Fragile States Principles" or "Fragile States Principles (FSPs)." Principle 7 says that "Align with local priorities in different ways and in different contexts." According to the OECD/DAC, Principle 7 means that "Where governments demonstrate political will to foster development, but lack capacity, international actors should seek to align assistance behind government strategies. Where capacity is limited, the use of alternative aid instruments—such as international compacts or multi-donor trust funds—can facilitate shared priorities and responsibility for execution between national and international institutions. Where alignment behind government-led strategies is not possible due to particularly weak governance or violent conflict, international actors should consult with a range of national stakeholders in the partner country, and seek opportunities for partial alignment at the sectoral or regional level. Where possible, international actors should seek to avoid activities which undermine national institution-building, such as developing parallel systems without thought to transition mechanisms and long term capacity development. It is important to identify functioning systems within existing local institutions, and work to strengthen these" (OECD/DAC, 2007).

The OECD/DAC suggests that when there is will on the side of national governments, the international community should concentrate upon fostering their capacities. When governments are inappropriate to be prioritized, the international community should seek partial alignments with a range of national stakeholders as well as sectoral or regional partners. Furthermore, the international community should avoid undermining national institution-building and strengthen existing local institutions. All these have a coherent logic to coordinate aid activities; what is most crucially important is to strengthen local capacities for peacebuilding.

Regarding the other principles, we can observe some characteristic attitude of

the international community toward “fragile states”⁴. First, there is a significant recognition that the international community must respect local society and adjust their policies in accordance with local circumstances. Principle 1 of the FSPs, “Take context as the starting point,” symbolizes the recognition that fragile states are all distinctive and the international community must respect contextual approaches. Even at the level of typology of “fragile states,” the DAC emphasizes the need to distinguish between post-conflict/crisis or political transition situations, deteriorating governance environments, gradual improvement, and prolonged crisis or impasse. Principle 2, “Ensure all activities do no harm,” represents cautiousness to first avoid negative impacts of international assistance. Respect for local contexts is one the fundamental philosophical element of the international donor community. “Principle 4: Prioritise prevention” “will also include sharing risk analyses; looking beyond quick-fix solutions to address the root causes of state fragility; strengthening indigenous capacities, especially those of women, to prevent and resolve conflicts; supporting the peacebuilding capabilities of regional organizations, and undertaking joint missions to consider measures to help avert crises.” Namely, it is local and regional sources, not international intervention, which constitute a foundation for prevention.

Second, there is a great emphasis upon the recognition that peacebuilding must be comprehensive. Principle 5, “Recognise the links between political, security and development objectives,” most clearly represents the understanding, since the “challenges faced by fragile states are multi-dimensional.” And the political, security, economic and social spheres are inter-dependent.” “Principle 6: Promote non-discrimination as a basis for inclusive and stable societies” as well as “Principle 10: Avoid pockets of exclusion” indicates desirability of inclusiveness as regards diverse social groups in the peacebuilding approach. “Principle 8: Agree on practical coordination mechanisms between international actors” points to the need for inclusiveness on the side of actors. “Principle 9: Act fast ... but stay engaged long enough to give success a chance” implies broadness of peacebuilding activities in time.

⁴ For the other principles, see http://www.oecd.org/document/12/0,3343,en_2649_33693550_1_1_1_1,00.html.

This demand for comprehensiveness requires international actors to keep flexibility to cope with the complex difficult circumstances of fragile states.

Third, despite the respect for divergent domestic actors and demand for flexibility, the OECD/DAC believes in “Principle 3: Focus on state-building as the central objective.” In the first place, by definition, “States are fragile when state structures lack political will and/or capacity to provide the basic functions needed for poverty reduction, development and to safeguard the security and human rights of their populations.” That is the reason why “International engagement will need to be concerted, sustained, and focused on building the relationship between state and society, through engagement in two main areas,” namely, “supporting the legitimacy and accountability of states by addressing issues of democratic governance, human rights, civil society engagement and peacebuilding” and “strengthening the capability of states to fulfill their core functions.” State-building is the key factor of peacebuilding in the framework of the FSPs.

What kind of local ownership can the OECD/DAC promote through this attitude? One indication can be seen in the monitoring process of the implementation of the FSPs, which is organized through a voluntary survey based on national consultations. Given the nature of the principles, the OECD/DAC concentrates upon quantitative assessments through dialogue with host countries by using only a limited number of indicators for illustration⁵. All the FSPs are not directly addressed to the issue of local ownership. But the fact that the FSPs lead to the overall consultative process between national stakeholders and the international donor community indicates the understanding that fragile states requires extra care for actively cultivating local sources.⁶ The “International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding” provides a forum for policy discussions⁷.

⁵ See “Monitoring the Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations”, <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/35/63/42326410.pdf>, 17 April 2009, p. 4.

⁶The process is facilitated by the “International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF)” as a sub-organ of DAC founded in 2009 is a “unique decision-making forum which brings together diverse stakeholders to support development outcomes in the world’s most challenging situations”.

⁷ “International Dialogue”, at http://www.oecd.org/document/44/0,3343,en_2649_33693550_42135084_1_1_1_1,00.html.

On 9-10 April 2010 the conference on peacebuilding and state-building was held with the representatives of developing countries and regions, bilateral and multilateral partners and civil society. They discussed common tasks for peacebuilding and state-building, for instance, by setting the following goals; Foster inclusive political settlements and processes, and inclusive political dialogue; Establish and strengthen basic safety and security; Achieve peaceful resolution of conflicts and access to justice; Develop effective and accountable government institutions to facilitate service delivery; Create the foundations for inclusive economic development, including sustainable livelihoods, employment and effective management of natural resources; Develop social capacities for reconciliation and peaceful coexistence; Foster regional stability and co-operation”⁸.

It can be observed that the OECD/DAC, respecting divergent domestic actors by keeping flexibility to cope with them while prioritizing state-building, attempts to secure local ownership by promoting consultation processes with governments and other local sources of fragile states. It is evident that the OECD/DAC does not necessarily seek to cultivate “indigenous methods of conflict resolution and peace building.” It does not talk about “methods.” Instead, it rather appears to seek smooth implementation of international assistance.

The United Nations, conducting numerous international peace operations, has multiple functions to foster local ownership in conflict-ridden societies for the purpose of peacebuilding. The UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) was established in December 2005 with peacebuilding as its main task. Its organizational committee is composed of 31 member states and its country-specific meetings discuss Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau. The PBC is a forum-style organization and does not implement programs by itself. But its role to recommend strategies of peacebuilding should not be underestimated (Shinoda, 2007). The PBC, as mandated by the UN Security Council and the General Assembly, emphasized that the national government has primary responsibility for peacebuilding strategies while “ensuring national

⁸ International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, “Dili Declaration: A new vision for peacebuilding and statebuilding”, 10 April 2010.

ownership of the peacebuilding process”. This was stated apparently for the purpose of indicating that PBC should not interfere with national jurisdictions⁹. The Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) is intellectually committed to better implementation of peacebuilding strategies. In addition, the Peacebuilding Fund appears to be an important tool to achieve policy goals for peacebuilding.

The UN Peace Operations including peacekeeping missions as well as political and peacebuilding missions have particular roles in fostering local ownership with its special functions. The missions contribute, first of all, by implementing operations to reform domestic institutions including Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration (DDR). Second, the missions usually help domestic actors implement the peace/political processes, which is expected to strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders. Third, when the missions take administrative responsibility, they significantly get involved in capacity development of local personnel. Peace operations are sometimes channels for local people to obtain knowledge and skills to develop human resources.

In the field of peace operations by the United Nations, the importance of local ownership is well recognized. For instance, the “United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines” or the so-called “Capstone Doctrine” stipulates that “promotion of national and local ownership” is one of the crucial doctrines of peace operations. “National and local ownership is critical to the successful implementation of a peace process. In planning and executing a United Nations peacekeeping operation’s core activities, every effort should be made to promote national and local ownership and to foster trust and cooperation between national actors. Effective approaches to national and local ownership not only reinforce the perceived legitimacy of the operation and support mandate implementation, they also help to ensure the sustainability of any national capacity once the peacekeeping operation has been withdrawn” (UNDPKO & DFS, 2008).

The PBC, as the organ to emphasize “national ownership,” has been trying to

⁹ See General Assembly Resolution A/RES/60/180, 20 December 2005 and security Council Resolution S/RES/1645(2005), 20 December 2005.

create peacebuilding strategies to solidify peace by promoting “national ownership”. The PBC set up “country-specific meetings” to discuss peacebuilding strategies on specific “countries under consideration”. Since the PBC is a forum of diplomats, it also invites representatives of countries under consideration to secure at least participation of national governments in the process of consultations of the PBC. The countries which applied to and were selected by the PBC are Burundi, Sierra Leone, Central African Republic, and Guinea Bissau. Here, this chapter picks up and concretely highlights one of the examples, the PBC’s engagement with Sierra Leone.

One major product of PBC’s engagement with Sierra Leone is “Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework” of 3 December 2007¹⁰. The Republic of Sierra Leone and the Peacebuilding Commission “determined to strengthen the partnership and cooperation between Sierra Leone and the Peacebuilding Commission” aimed to propose “integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery.” They recognized that “peace consolidation in Sierra Leone requires full national ownership and the participation of all relevant stakeholders, such as the central and local governments, civil society, the private sector and international partners.” “The Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework is based upon the following principles; national ownership, mutual accountability, and sustained engagement. Here, according to the PBC, national ownership means that “the primary responsibility and ownership for peace consolidation and the development of a prosperous and democratic Sierra Leone rests with the government and people of Sierra Leone.” Then, the government and the PBC jointly prioritize several strategically important issues like youth employment and empowerment, justice and security sector reform, consolidation of democracy and good governance, capacity-building, energy sector, and sub regional dimensions of peacebuilding.

On 12 December 2007 the PBC and the Government of Sierra Leone adopted the “Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework,” which is one of the primary engagement and partnership instruments between the Government of Sierra Leone and

¹⁰ Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework”, 3 December 2007, Peacebuilding Commission, Second Session, Sierra Leone configuration, UN Document PBC/2/SLE/1.

the international community. Progress in the implementation of the Framework is reviewed every six months by a formal country-specific meeting of the PBC on the basis of a report jointly prepared by the Government and the PBC. The review meeting encouraged the Government of Sierra Leone to make progress on national dialogue, truth and reconciliation commission, aid coordination, youth empowerment and employment, energy sector, food security, anti-corruption efforts, illicit drug trafficking, etc.¹¹

“The Political Parties’ Joint Communiqué” was an agreement signed on 2 April 2009 by the two leading parties of Sierra Leone: the All People’s Congress and the Sierra Leone’s Peoples Party, as a result of facilitation by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL). The PBC promoted the consensus among international actors that the Communiqué ought to be incorporated into the overall framework of peacebuilding strategy including the way the international donor community assists the country.

The PBC also intends to incorporate the “Government’s Agenda for Change,” which is the second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2009-2012) launched by the government of Sierra Leone in May 2009, into the overall framework of peacebuilding strategy. “The Peacebuilding Commission calls upon its member States and all international partners to accept the Agenda for Change as the core strategy document that will not only determine the future work of Sierra Leone’s national institutions but will also guide all future work of Sierra Leone’s international partners. Alignment of all international support with the Agenda for Change will be an important step in streamlining and refocusing the various separate strategies that have been developed over time and will lead to increased national ownership and the effectiveness of international development assistance”¹².

What these efforts of the PBC show is that the international community desires

¹¹ “Conclusions and recommendations of the second biannual review of the implementation of the Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework”, peacebuilding Commission Third Session Sierra Leone configuration, 16 December 2008, UN Document PBC/3/SLE/2.

¹² Outcome of the Peacebuilding Commission High-level Special Session on Sierra Leone”, Peace Building Commission Third Session Sierra Leone configuration, 12 June 2009, UN Document PBC/3/SLE/6, para. 4 (g).

to invite domestic sources to making peacebuilding strategies. It may be because they want to refine their strategies more by absorbing indigenous methods. It may be because they want to let domestic actors take foremost responsibility of peacebuilding. Whatever the context is, PBC signifies the international community's wish to combine domestic sources of peacebuilding strategies with international ones under the fundamental guiding principle of local ownership.

3. Examples of Introducing Indigenous Approaches in Peacebuilding

It has been observed that the international community has been seeking indigenous approaches through the principle of local ownership. It means that indigenous methods are not welcome for their own sake; they are so only when justifiable in accordance with the principle of local ownership. Thus, the record of introduction of indigenous methods in peacebuilding is not straightforward; it contains ambiguities and compromises. Nevertheless, it is also true that methods and policies inspired by indigenous practices have occasionally emerged to make peacebuilding more effective.

The foremost category of such examples is the introduction of indigenous methods in the process of political dialogues. A famous example is the organization of "Loya Jirga" in Afghanistan. Loya Jirga is the large conference of representatives of local districts throughout Afghanistan (Otfinoski, 2004). It was traditionally convened when vital national matters were discussed. After the collapse of the Taliban regime and the enactment of the Bonn Agreement in 2001, a renovated form of "Loya Jirga" was convened in 2002 to legitimize the political process set out by the Bonn Agreement and to further discuss future political agendas. Another version of Loya Jirga was convened in May 2010 in the name of "a National Consultative Peace Jirga" in the face of ongoing crises in the country. The Loya Jirga of 2002 seemed to be successful in the sense that it satisfied the desire of many Afghan people to participate in the new political process on the way for reconstruction after the war. It functioned to legitimize the peace process at that time and somehow strengthen stability in the

country. Nevertheless, in the period between 2002 and 2010 the situation of Afghanistan seriously deteriorated due to not simply resurgence of the Taliban forces, but also diminished trust in the Karzai government and the entire process of peacebuilding and reconstruction. The Peace Jirga of 2010 does not seem to produce any tangible result to contribute to long-term peacebuilding (Melegoda, 2011).

The formal governmental system may incorporate consultative process with indigenous elements. Parliament in Sierra Leone has 12 seats reserved for paramount chiefs.¹³ This is an attempt to bring together traditional social governance models in the formal framework of the modern state. Chiefs are expected to represent traditionally regional circumstances so that state mechanism can absorb what political parties do not represent. In Sierra Leone the boundaries of chiefdoms constitute formal administrative districts with clear intention that state-building should be designed as an attempt to establish a modern sovereign nation state based on traditional social conditions to a necessary and useful extent (Fanthorpe, 2006).

The recent case of the agreement between the two political parties in Sierra Leone exemplifies a new initiative to alleviate modern political institutions in the context of local society. The All People's Congress (APC), incumbent president's governing party, and the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), former president's main opposition party, signed the Joint Communiqué in 2009 to end the sudden outbreak of political violence and intolerance concerning tensions between supporters of the two parties (APC & SLPP, 2009). Party politics is a challenge in Africa and many post-conflict states fail to maintain or develop party politics to be called "neo-patrimonial states." It is quite often because political parties tend to obtain their political bases according to tribal/ethnic or geographical lines regardless of standpoints of political ideologies. It is true to say that political parties are not usually constitutional institutions. American federalists like James Madison and Alexander Hamilton rather abhorred the dominance of sectionalism of party politics (Madison, Hamilton and Jay, 1987). While the modern ideological struggles consolidated the practice of party

¹³ Parliament of Sierra Leone, "Overview of the Sierra Leone Parliament" available at <<http://www.sl-parliament.org/>>.

politics in Western countries, otherwise it is still true to say that party politics inherently has the danger of sectionalism. In this sense it is no wonder that many of the newly independent states in Africa either avoid party politics or fall into sectional struggles of party politics divided by indigenous social group lines. The attempt in Sierra Leone is a kind of indigenous method, which is rather alien to Western political practices, to overcome the predicaments of party politics in Africa by resorting to a more consultative approach to institutionalize the relationship between political parties.

While the justice sector has central importance of state-building, it is often difficult to create a judicial system at the standard level of the modern state in the volatile environments of post-conflict societies. Thus, Rwanda's attempt of *gacaca* has critical importance. *Gacaca* literally means "lawn" standing for discussions among people sitting on the lawn to resolve problems in local community. It has been a traditional conflict resolution system in Rwanda. The government of Rwanda after the 1994 genocide introduced a state-oriented version of *gacaca* to deliver judgments on thousands of genocide suspects detained after the genocide, which overwhelmed capacity of normal judicial courts in the country (Takeuchi, 2008). Since the introduced version of *gacaca* is a state-led mechanism of extra-judiciary functions, it remained controversial. In the first place, the real traditional *gacaca* do not deal with criminal law issues. The standard of human rights protection is not at the level of the normal modern criminal justice. The speed of *gacaca* trials was outstanding due to the pressure from the central government upon local districts. Still, it would be also true to say that the resort to some kind of traditional conflict resolution system created a sense of ownership among local residents over the process of criminal justice on genocide, thus, it would be correct to say that *gacaca* contributed to advancement of peacebuilding in Rwanda in its own way.

Reconciliation is the most emotional and sensitive issue in peacebuilding, so it tends to require down-to-earth indigenous approaches. But outright resort to indigenous reconciliatory approaches might be controversial in the eyes of the modern state framework. It is widely said that after the end of the conflict in Mozambique, local rituals were many a time used to purify former combatants. No matter whether

such exercises had actual impact upon the course of peacebuilding, it had elements of reconciliation in the direction of social integration of those who otherwise would be excluded from communities as sinful persons. This is an extraordinary form of resorting to an indigenous method outside of the sphere of the modern state framework. More institutional attempts of reconciliation include various kinds of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions. A wide range of TRCs in countries like Timor-Leste, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and South Africa, signify their importance in terms of incorporating local indigenous elements into recognizable, if not legally, initiatives of peacebuilding. TRCs are usually not state-owned processes, but have some linkages with state-building activities, although sometimes in dubious ways as in the cases of controversies of demands to governments on accepting recommendations of TRCs in countries like Sierra Leone and Liberia.

4. Conclusion

This chapter is still a preliminary work to further develop the idea of local ownership as a bridge between international and domestic actors in the field of peacebuilding. It does not simply argue that local ownership should be respected by the international community or advocated by domestic actors. It is a fundamental principle of strategies of peacebuilding for both international and domestic actors.

Indigenous methods are not automatically proved to be useful in peacebuilding, while their possibilities must be pursued with foremost efforts. Pursuit of indigenous methods would not be simplistic glorification of traditional customs of non-Western societies or thorough rejection of Western modernization. What should be done is to correctly identify the importance of indigenous methods of conflict resolution and peacebuilding and systematically incorporate them in the framework of peacebuilding strategies with local ownership as the overall indispensable principle.

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