



“Inside Out: Insider’s Perspectives on Post-Conflict Statebuilding”

Workshop held July 2 – 3, 2007

Graduate Center of the City University of New York

Summary Report

By: Jennifer Mueller

I. Introduction

This is a report on the workshop held at the Graduate Center, City University of New York, to discuss six ‘Inside-out’ studies. This conference was part of a larger project on the study of post-conflict statebuilding, and was focused on ownership of the statebuilding processes. The goal of the meeting was an increased knowledge base, in particular, knowledge from within countries undergoing statebuilding, with the additional object of sharing this information with policy makers. The invitees were both authors of articles describing the experience of post-conflict state-building from an insider’s perspective, and scholars and practitioners who were invited to comment on and discuss the articles with the goal of producing a book, which is currently in the process of being edited.

The questions tackled in this workshop were:

- In what way do these articles challenge current conventional wisdom?
- Are there multiple views from within?
- In a post-conflict environment, is there a battle of the interpretation of these views?
- Is there a distinction between conflict and post-conflict?
- What does it mean to be an insider, or an outsider? Why are the insider perspectives different? Do outsiders make things worse or better?

This report is in summary form, raising questions discussed during the workshop, some of which highlight new directions for the authors and their articles.

II. Initial Comments from Participants about Post-Conflict State-building in General

This session began with general comments about statebuilding, peacebuilding, economic reconstruction, the role of the state, and outsiders.

- Economic reconstruction
 - Differences between economic reconstruction in post-conflict environments, and economic development programs in peacetime.
 - Connections between post-conflict emergency steps, and long-term growth.
 - Pattern of growth vs. rate of growth—which prevails?
 - Links between economic reconstruction and transition and political transition.

- Role of the state
 - What should the role of the state be in the post-conflict environment?
 - What is the role of the outsider in developing possible new roles for the state?
- Role of outsiders
 - Variance in level of impact of the role of outsiders from country to country
- Models
 - Imposed externally or developed from within?
 - Which models are available?
 - Economic growth, poverty reduction, greed vs. grievance, power-sharing.
- Ownership: is the problem with ownership, or lack thereof, a problem of the dominance of a particular vision?
- Peace agreements: may redefine conflicts, but do they end them?

III. Economic Policy

This session focused primarily on Mozambique, and the article by Carlos Castel-Branco, on Mozambique: *Aid Dependency and Development: A Question of Ownership? A Critical View*.

- Economic reform in Mozambique seen as an ongoing process, not strictly a post-conflict process. Problems include dependency on aid, currently Mozambique is highly dependent on aid, accounting for 45% of GDP, with 75% of private investment coming from FDI; few industrial linkages; low tax revenue, partly as a result of high tax breaks to encourage foreign investment; low ownership, with outsiders driving the technical and financial aid decisions; unequal power relationship between donors and the government.
- Is it useful to distinguish between what types of aid Mozambique is receiving, from which donors, to determine aid effectiveness?
- Mozambique generally termed a post-conflict success story: but how is success defined, and by whom?
- Can or should aid and liberalization policies be distinguished for further analysis?
- How important is how aid is spent—in Mozambique aid is spent on social services, and consumed, therefore not productive.
- How can states create mechanisms to check donors (using Liberian experience as an example)?

IV. The Question of the State

This session focused on three countries: Timor L'este, Macedonia, and Sri Lanka, with presentations by Joaquim Fonseca (*Timor L'este: The Making of a New Nation*), Biljana Vankovska (*Macedonia's Statebuilding Dilemma: Success Story or State at Risk?*) and Jayadeva Uyangoda (*Possibilities and Limits of State Reform in a Protracted Civil War: An Account by an Activist-Participant in Sri Lanka's Peace Process*).

Timor L'este

- The question of ownership was complex—the UN, with dual personalities as administrator with authority, and neutral UN body with no organic relationship with the Timorese confused the issue. There was no prior experience of statehood—only of leadership, which had remained apart from institutions, a pattern continued into the nascent government structures.

- How can statebuilding efforts be distinguished from democracy promotion efforts?

Macedonia

- Like Mozambique, Macedonia is also considered a success, but the definition of success is from outsiders. How does that impact behavior and understanding within Macedonia? The political structure is an empty shell—how can that be a success?
- The power-sharing structure (imposed from outside) removes politics from the political sphere, and citizen participation is seen as undermining the status quo.
- How does Macedonia redefine the question of statehood when the Macedonian identity is in question?
- Was Macedonia really a failed state that required the level of intervention it received? Is it more of a failed state now, post-peace process?

Sri Lanka

- Are there two nations within the state, and how will this be resolved? Violently or through a civil process? Is what is happening state-building or nation-building?
- What was the role of the Norwegians in the peace process? What alternative would have been better?
- Is there a need for space to allow local actors to play out their roles without outside intervention? The international political environment still plays a significant role in determining the process of change.
- What is statebuilding? Is it merely applying lessons learned and blueprints developed from other cases, with little or no relevance to the country in question? How can this be resisted? Is it time to stop asking 'what works best'? Academics may be comfortable with this approach, but practitioners still need to design strategies, and need to know which lessons to draw on.

V. Social Embeddedness

In this session the social embeddedness of the statebuilding process was discussed with reference to two countries, Mozambique and Sierra Leone, with presentations by Terezinha da Silva (*Building Peace in Mozambique*), Ismail Rashid (*Contentious Reconstructions: Interpreting Social Conflict and State Reconfiguration in Sierra Leone, 1990-2002*) and James O.C. Jonah (*Rescuing a Failed or Collapsed State—from Inside with Outside Assistance*).

Mozambique

- Mozambique followed an unusual path to deal with post-conflict reconciliation, eschewing formal methods, such as Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, and dealing with reconciliation on a local, community level. Traditional methods were followed, with perpetrators of violence admitting to their deeds to the community directly, and being forgiven by the community as a whole.
- How much can be learned from different experiences of reconciliation and reintegration? Why are war crimes tribunals sometimes held during a peace-process?
- What was the role of outsiders in the process in Mozambique?
- The reconciliation and reintegration processes in Mozambique were distinct: soldiers protested their demobilization for years. Was the demobilization process driven by outsiders?

- Gender distinction: why were women ignored in the reintegration process?

Sierra Leone

- The process of state-formation and reconfiguration in Sierra Leone was an on-going process, with pressures developing from within. By focusing on outside actors, it is easy to miss the importance of civil society in resisting regimes, and the social embeddedness of the conflict.
- Three competing visions of state-building were going on in Sierra Leone at the same time:
 - IMF structural adjustment
 - Popular movement to make the government more accountable
 - Violent project by the rebels
- Conflict changes a society and the state so that at the end of a conflict 'reintegration' is into a completely different environment.
- How did the reconciliation process affect the statebuilding enterprise in Sierra Leone? Is the TRC a way of reconciling different perceptions of the war?
- How did the different views of the war influence people's different policy perspectives?
- Can reconciliation and reintegration be seen as an economic issue? How can demobilized soldiers be reintegrated into a stagnant economy? Is this a security problem, a political problem or a development issue?
- If there was an on-going process of state reform, did the outsider imposed structure (UNAMSIL) get in the way?
- Are there different categories of insiders which interface with the outsiders?

VI. The Role of Aid and External Assistance

- What are the roles that external assisters can play? Are there positive rather than negative roles? What needs to be achieved?
- What is the role the UN should assume? Should it insert itself in each case?
 - Stabilization
 - In Sierra Leone the UN was critical in establishing a more secure environment
 - Rebuilding of a degraded state
 - Help the security sector regain authority
- Is there a way that external actors can determine what types of statebuilding local actors want?
- What is the correct sequencing of actions by external actors, including international financial institutions?
- How can the local governments have a larger voice in determining the aid expenditure and priorities? Establishment of specific governmental departments?
- How do outsiders have an impact on the establishment of the right environment for the private sector to flourish?
- Does the insider perspective of the problems facing each country, post-conflict, lead to better solutions? How can this work with the unequal power relationship?
- How important are the concepts (and implementation) of inclusion, participation and involvement?
- How can categories of insiders and outsiders be defined? Anyone with an agenda becomes an insider of a sort. There are also multiple insider perspectives—who

determines which one to listen to? Insiders are all jockeying for positions and power as well.

- For the articles: how much of the personal experience should be included? What is the right balance between the insider voice and either explanation or analysis?

List of Workshop Attendees

Chapter Contributors

Carlos Nuno Castel-Branco, Associate Professor of Economics, Eduardo Mondlane University, and Director, Institute for Social and Economic Studies (IESE), Maputo, Mozambique

Terezinha da Silva, National Coordinator, Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA), Maputo, Mozambique

Joaquim Fonseca, Human Rights Advisor to Prime Minister of Timor Leste (until the end of August 2007)

James O.C. Jonah, former United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, former Minister of Finance, Sierra Leone, and currently Senior Fellow of the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies, The Graduate Center, CUNY

Ismail Rashid, Professor of History, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York

Jayadeva Uyangoda, Professor of Political Science and Head of the Department of Political Science and Public Policy at the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka and Member of the Council of Management for the Social Scientists' Association

Biljana Vankovska, Professor of International Relations and Security Studies, University of Skopje, Macedonia

Commentators & Participants

Jason Aplan, Acting Deputy Director, Office of Transition Initiatives, Agency for International Development, United States Department of State

Eva Busza, Team Leader, Asia and the Pacific, Bureau for Crisis Prevention & Recovery, United Nations Development Programme

Graciana del Castillo, Managing Director, Macroeconomics Advisory Group (MAG)

Stephen del Rosso, Program Director, International Peace and Security, the Carnegie Corporation of New York

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