Local Ownership and Liberal Peacebuilding: From Rhetoric to Practice? Sierra Leone as a Case Study

Oscar Mateos
Lecturer at Universitat Ramón Llull de Barcelona
PhD Candidate, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB)
(9.683 words)

Abstract

"Local ownership" has become probably one the most relevant *mantras* in post-conflict peacebuilding interventions in sub-Saharan Africa. Increasingly, local ownership is seen as a critical aspect to ensure the sustainability and the legitimacy of peacebuilding reforms. Rhetorically, "local ownership" has to do with the degree of control that locals have in the design and implementation of post-conflict peacebuilding reforms. In practice, however, "local ownership" hides several contradictions and tensions that pose important challenges and dilemmas to post-conflict peacebuilding. By analyzing the case of Sierra Leone, the paper pretends to deal with three different issues. First of all, we want to discuss why "local ownership" has become such a relevant concept. Secondly, to analyse the different meanings, perceptions and problems that are underlying in the concept itself. Finally, the paper will discuss if it is possible to go beyond rhetoric and to put in practice any kind of "local ownership" in a country as Sierra Leone. All in all, the paper wants to contribute to a better understanding of how international and domestic political forces interact in post-conflict situations and what relationship between the two is most likely to be conducive to the goal of sustainable peace.

1. Introduction

Post-conflict peacebuilding seeks a radical transformation of developing countries that have been affected by war. In pursuit of this, a huge number of strategies and policies are put in place in three main areas: security, political liberalization or democratization and socioeconomic development (Ottaway, 2002). Many different actors (local, regional and international; public and private; civil and military) are engaged in a process that requires large sums of resources and raises the level of social expectation. This increasing standarised form of intervention has been labeled by some authors as the emergence of a "liberal peacebuilding consensus" (Richmond, 2008). In the last years, the concept of "local ownership", which *refers to the extent to which domestic actors control both the design and implementation of political processes* (Donais, 2009: 3), has become central in the international vocabulary. With this notion, international donors are explicitly searching for a better degree of legitimacy and sustainability in their interventions.

However, as the paper will show in the first part, there are two main problems with local ownership in post-conflict peacebuilding contexts. First of all, there are different views about the real meaning of "local ownership", which makes it a very flexible and subjective concept. Secondly, there are numerous *practical*, but also *structural*,

problems that make very difficult for local ownership to move beyond the level of rhetoric. Therefore, it seems paramount to unpack the notion of local ownership, to understand the complex interaction between insiders and outsiders in post-conflict situations, and to explore the tensions between external imposition and local ownership in peacebuilding processes. By understanding all these things, it will be possible to come close to how sovereignty and post-conflict peacebuilding processes are conceptualized and understood nowadays.

The second part of the paper will focus on the case of Sierra Leone. Post-conflict peacebuilding in this former British colony has been considered as an example of "success". Stability and fair and free elections have been achieved in the last years in a country that had been dramatically ravaged by war during the nineties. We will try to asses if local ownership has been an important concept in all this process and if so, to determine to what extent local ownership has been respected and ensured by external actors. The final purpose of the paper will be to assess the degree of legitimacy and sustainability that this intervention, deemed as an international success, is really enjoying in the field. All in all, we will try to explore possible contradictions and limitations of peacebuilding in Sierra Leone in order to understand this phenomenon (post-conflict peacebuilding in Sierra Leone) in a more complex way and not just as linear and simple transitions from war to peace.

2. Local ownership in Post-conflict Peacebuilding

A background of the concept

The term local ownership has become increasingly central to the vocabulary of the "liberal peacebuilding consensus". There are two main reasons that might explain the rising centrality of this concept. The first reason has to do with the concern of obtaining more ***efficiency and sustainability*** over time in peacebuilding activities. International stakeholders have increasingly expressed that in order to achieve efficiency and sustainability peacebuilding need to be rooted in domestic structures and views. External actors need, wherever and whenever possible, to build on existing institutions and thus to take local context as their point of departure (Sending, 2009). Even though the number of armed conflicts has dramatically decreased in last years, many studies have pointed out that this lack of attention to ownership and context might explain why so many peacebuilding efforts are judged to be ineffective and unsustainable over time (Doyle and Sambanis, 2006). The second reason has to do mainly with ***ethics and legitimacy***. Literature has increasingly criticised the lack of sovereignty that peacebuilding reforms most of the times mean. For critics, peacebuilding in practice would resemble an externally driven exercise imposed and clearly controlled by outsiders (Donais, 2009). The search for efficiency and sustainability, on one hand, and for ethics and legitimacy, on the other hand, has brought international development community to champion the concept of local ownership. Moreover, ownership is

derived from the institution of sovereignty. By implication, therefore, the principle of ownership is more fundamental for peacebuilding than its (changing) substantive content. Ownership concerns the generic procedures through which external actors relate to and interact with internal actors (Sending, 2010).

Nevertheless, the concept is not new at all. Local ownership and similar concepts such as *local participation* or *local empowerment* were widely used by the international organisations throughout the 1980s and 1990s. According to Andersen and Sending (2010), the concept of local ownership emanates from the discourse on development cooperation policies and the crisis of such policies in the 1990s. The term was formally recognized as a key concept for development aid in 1996, when the OECD's Development and Assistance Committee (DAC) called for a comprehensive approach that *"respects local ownership of the development process"* (DAC, 1996: 9). The **DAC** stated that sustainable development *"must be locally owned"* and that development cooperation has to be shifted to a partnership model where donors' programs and activities operate within *"locally-owned development strategies"*. Donors should *"respect and encourage strong local commitment, participation, capacity development and ownership"* (Ibíd.: 14). The DAC linked these positions to a series of specific targets for poverty reduction that formed the basis of the Millennium Development Goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2000 (Pouligny, 2009: 6). The concept was endorsed in the area of peace operations in 2001, when **UN Secretary General Kofi Annan** noted that [sustainable development] *"can only be achieved by the local population itself; the role of the United Nations is merely to facilitate the process that seeks to dismantle the structures of violence and create the conditions conducive to durable peace and sustainable development"* (Annan, 2001). Few years later, the **World Bank** (2005) also emphasized the idea that developing countries *"must be in the driver's seat and set the course"* owning and implementing their development strategies. Both the OECD and the World Bank progressively developed the two notions of *"engaged society"* and *"effective states"* to express the way in which local ownership should be understood.

One of the most relevant documents has been the so-called **"Paris Declaration on Aid Effectivenes"** in 2005, in which major stakeholders emphasized the need to improve ownership, harmonisation, alignment, results and mutual accountability. The Paris Declaration, followed up on the Declaration adopted at the High-Level Forum on Harmonisation in Rome (February 2003) and the core principles put forward at the Marrakech Roundtable on Managing for Development Results (February 2004), highlights that partner countries should *"exercise effective leadership over their development policies, and strategies and co-ordinate development actions"*. At the same time, the Declaration urge donors to *"respect partner country leadership and help strengthen their capacity to exercise it"* (DAC, 2005). The Paris Declaration refers especially to "*fragile states*". According to the Declaration *"the long-term vision for international engagement in fragile states is to build legitimate, effective and resilient state and other country institutions. While the guiding principles of effective aid apply*

equally to fragile states, they need to be adapted to environments of weak ownership and capacity and to immediate needs for basic service delivery" (DAC, 2005: 7).

In the 3rd High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness that took place on Accra in September 2008, stakeholders emphasized once more local ownership as a key element in development aid, pointing out the urgent need to make more progress in this field. The **Accra Declaration** stressed again that *"aid effectiveness principles apply equally to development co-operation in situations of fragility, including countries emerging from conflict, but that these principles need to be adapted to environments of weak ownership or capacity"* (DAC, 2008: 5). In this regard, **the Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations were also agreed**. According to these Principles, *"a durable exit from poverty and insecurity for the world's most fragile states will need to be driven by their own leadership and people"*. Among the ten principles, there are two that specifically stress some elements related to local ownership: to *take context as the starting point* (to understand the specific context in each country) and *to align with local priorities in different ways in different contexts* (DAC, 2007).

The so-called "**Capstone Doctrine**" on principles and guidelines for UN Peacekeeping Operations, lists the promotion of national and local ownership as one of the success factors in the operations. It is stated that: *"national and local ownership is critical to the successful implementations of a peace process"* (UN, 2008). It is further recognized that this must include a strong understanding of the local context, but that tensions will surge between the need for "rapid transformational change" and resistance to change from powerful, national actors. For the sustainability of local ownership, national capacity building is emphasised as the key strategy (Andersen & Sending, 2010). Most other actors in the UN system concerned with peacebuilding emphasize ownership. For example, the **UNDP** has also developed a series of analyses on ownership and technical cooperation. Major bilateral donors and **NGOs** have done the same, sometimes connecting ownership and conditionality as a main theme.

Problematising local ownership in post-conflict peacebuilding

The importance of securing local ownership for peacebuilding efforts have since long been recognized as among the central principles by policy makers, as evidenced by key policy documents on peacebuilding from the UN, the World Bank and the OECD-DAC (Sending, 2009). Nonetheless, the prominence of the concept is not matched by a corresponding depth of analysis, explanation or scrutiny in policy statements. The different agencies have also been slow in translating these commitments into practices and operationalisation (Pouligny, 2009). Local ownership is above all a very ambiguous and controversial concept. When we come to post-conflict peacebuilding contexts (which most of the literature tends to relate with "fragile states" or fragility) this ambiguity is even amplified. Documents and stakeholders recognised openly the need to respect local

ownership, but at the same time consider that this is never anything but a pipe dream, due to the fragility of the local context. What is local ownership supposed to be in post-conflict peacebuilding contexts? What are the main problems that impede or make difficult the real implementation of local ownership in post-conflict peacebuilding contexts?

What is local ownership supposed to be in post-conflict peacebuilding contexts?

Timothy Donais (2008: 3) consider that at its core, the discourse around ownership revolves around fundamental questions of agency: *who decides, who controls, who implements, and who evaluates*. Getting into practical post-conflict reforms as Security Sector Reform (SSR), Laurie Nathan states that local ownership means that *'the reform of security policies, institutions and activities in a given country must be designed, managed and implemented by domestic actors rather than external actors'* (Nathan, 2008: 19). The role for outsiders, in this sense, is *to support and facilitate* local actors in fulfilling their SSR ambitions; while donors can foster and encourage local interest in SSR, control over the broader process, from inception to implementation, must remain in local hands. According to Ismail Olawale (2008), there are two key pillars of local ownership: *participation* (the symbolic, active and effectual involvement of the formal and informal, and legal and non-legal providers, custodians and beneficiaries of peacebuilding reforms) and *capacity-building* (people with the requisite knowledge, expertise and skills and the required material resources, including funds and equipment).

Nevertheless, Simon Chesterman (2007) has stated that when we come to post-conflict reconstruction and statebuilding, the meaning of ownership is rarely being explicitly and coherently defined, and it does not have any formal or literal meaning. As he maintains, local ownership appears to fall somewhere between its development and peace negotiation meanings. In this sense, the meaning is less important than the way in which the term ownership is used. Chesterman distinguishes six distinct senses in which ownership has been used in the context of post-conflict reconstruction: i) responsiveness; ii) consultation; iii) participation; iv) accountability; v) control, and vi) sovereignty. According to the author:

> *Ownership may refer to how a population comes to regard certain policies 'as their own'. Their involvement may be either passive (policies are designed to be responsive to local circumstances, culture, etc) or active (policies are designed through consultation with local actors). Ownership may also refer to decision-making structures. Here it is necessary to distinguish between mechanisms to allow the participation of local actors (making representations to decision-makers, participating in debates), mechanisms to allow local actors to hold international actors accountable (such as an ombudsperson, limitations on immunities of international staff), control by local authorities subject to being overridden by international structures (for example, to enforce a peace*

agreement or protect minority rights), and sovereignty (including, crucially, the power to demand the departure of international staff). (Chesterman, 2007: 9-10)

This categorization, he states, *"is not intended to be exhaustive or definitive* [...] *they are simply intended to demonstrate that the term ownership embraces a range of possible meanings. Indeed, it oftentimes appears that fuzziness is precisely the reason for the success of ownership as a buzzword"* (2007: 9). This loose and flexible interpretation of local ownership clash in somehow with the normative will of all the documents that deal with the significance of the concept. What Chesterman is explicitly admitting is that local ownership is just a rhetoric concept that will be used in different ways according to the interests and views of the different external and internal actors.

Ole Jacob Sending (2010) identifies "three ideal-typical models of local ownership", based on perceptions and understandings held by international as well as local actors:

i) *ownership is a goal or an outcome* of peacebuilding efforts, it concerns getting local actors to internalize the values and goals that underwrite liberal peacebuilding (ownership can be achieved through persuasion, socialization, incentives, discipline, etc.);
ii) *ownership is a right*, a question of domestic sovereignty and thus autonomy and control, and
iii) *ownership is a conditional right* that presumes capacity and responsibility (factors that hamper ownership are here seen as inadequate capacity building, lack of motivation or a lack of will).

Therefore, "local ownership" can be interpreted in many different ways, as consultation, participation, control, accountability or sovereignty, and that, consequently, it can be "respected", "allowed" or "established". International actors will promote local ownership acoording to different factors, including the mandate, perceptions and interests at the headquarters and in the field (Sending, 2010). It is well worthwhile underlining here, as Olawale (2008) does, that most of the times the criticisms fail to recognise that local ownership must inevitably unfold within a context characterised by a diversity of actors, interests and contestations. Certainly, plurality and complexity, also within the outsiders' spectrum, is primordial to understand post-conflict peacebuilding scenarios. Thus, local ownership will not have the same rhetoric meaning for the strongest donors (DfID or USAID) than, for example, for Scandinavian donors or NGOs. However, assimetry of power, also within the external actors' network, is also crucial to understand that there are particular actors in a better position to enforce their views and agendas.

Why local ownership is then more rhetoric than real?

I suggest here that literature that analyses this issue tend to differentiate into two kind of categories, which we can consider as "practical problems" and "structural problems".

Practical problems are related with the difficult and complex interaction between local and external actors. External actors bring a very ambitious and demanding agenda. In a short time, post-conflict peacebuilding is supposed to bring military and political stability, democratisation through elections, economic growth, eradication of poverty and reconciliation, among other things. Local ownership is presented as one of the main terms in the so-called "Peacebuilder's contract" between insiders and outsiders (Barnett and Zürcher, 2008). As we have pointed out before, locals are supposed to lead the design and the implementation of reforms, while outsiders should simply behave as facilitators. Reality on the field is very different and local ownership is afterwards limited by different circunstances. We can find three main "practical problems" (very influenced by perceptions of reality) that explain why local ownership is more a rhetoric concept than a real one: a problem of lack of "local capacity", a problem of dependence of the locals on the externals resources, and a problem of mutual mistrust.

a) ***Lack of local capacity***. One of the main arguments that international actors –and most of the times, internal actors- use to explain the difficulties in respecting local ownership is the huge lack of capacities that domestic actors have in a post-conflict environment. Local ownership will be something desirable but at the same time extremely difficult, since local actors are not ready to carry out such agenda that will demand local actors to organise multiparty elections, a deep reform of the security sector or to develop a process of decentralization in the whole country in a very short time. In a post-war country, this will be something very difficult and will justify a more hands-on approach on the part of external actors to get things done. Subtly or coercively, external actors will tend to lead and control the design and implementation of the different reforms, especially in the first phase. Local ownership rhetoric will be paramount to show that locals are apparently the ones in control of everything. Capacity in the way that is understood by external partners (this means the ability to put in place liberal reforms) will take time to be transferred and build. International and national forums, informal meetings, conferences, educational programmes or workshops will be some of the key "transmission mechanisms" used to achieve ownership in the mid or long-term.

   As many authors have stated, there is a tendency to understand this capacity-building process as a set of technical administrative and mechanistic tasks designed to transfer skills and expertise. This perspective is visible in the indicators used to measure capacity-building: quantities of trainees, training programmes, and resource persons, budgets expended, and experts hired or deployed to partner countries (Olawale, 2008). This "fantasizing" approach is justified, as Chris Cramer (2006) holds, by the belief that a country that comes out of a war is a sort of "blank slate". Liberal peacebuilding is based on the western political way of thinking that takes for granted the existence of states and an international system of states and, starting from this idea, he considers that *"where there are no states, there exists a horror vacui, in which chaos and terrorism rule the country"* (Boege et al., 2008: 16). According to Olawale (2008), this highlights the imperative of transcending

technical perspectives on capacity-building through greater attention to the political-cultural context of capacity-building.

b) ***Dependence on external resources***. A second practical problem with local ownership has to do with the issue of resources. Although locals are supposed to lead the different reforms, they strongly depend on external funding. Indeed, international funds are normally tied to local performance. Conditionality is a way of making sure that locals behave according to the terms that international aid has imposed or agreed on. This makes very difficult the development of local ownership, since the local will tend to 'control' reforms in the way that external actors consider. According to Richmond (2008: 150), *"the rethoric of local ownership, participation and consent is often a disguise for non-consensual intervention, for dependency and conditionality, there being little space for empathy, emancipation or indigeinity in the liberal peace framework"*. This leads to think that, as Abrahamsem (2004) holds, local ownership is *"more that conditionality by another name"*. Nevertheless, Harrison (2004) or Duffield (2007) have pointed out that aid policy in post-conflict states have substantially changed. If structural adjustment programs were concerned in the eighties and nineties with reducing the role of the state, statebuilding is more focused on the nature of state action (involving institutional capacity building, technical assistance, etc.). In this sense, aid policy *"can be said to be post-conditional in that pro-reform elites have internalized international policy requirements and objectives"* (Duffield, 2007: 168). A central aim within post-interventionary societies is having the 'right type' of state interlocutor, that is, those who believe in what they do (Ibid.: 167).

c) ***Mutual mistrust***. Many outsiders often complain about the "lack of good will" of the local Government. Even local civil society organisations use this argument to explain why local ownership is so difficult in a post-war country. Corruption, mismanagement and bad results are pointed out as problems associated with local politics.[1] On the other hand, local authorities frequently complain about pressure and stress that outsiders bring with his agenda of quick results. This generates a growing *mutual distrust* that sometimes can lead to important tensions (Narten, 2008). Here we can find two main explanations: different agendas and cultural clash. The first one means that both sides, mainly external partners and local Government, have their own agendas. External partnets will need to show improvements and results to their creditors in New York or Brussels in order to justify their presence in the field. On the other hand, the Government needs to legitimize and reinforce his position in front of their population. Most of the times, locals are tied to very complex local dynamics of redistribution of power and resources. This clash of agendas is not just political, but also cultural. Outsiders often land in the field for a very short time and with a very arrogant attitude (Sending, 2009). They do not want and most often, they are not able to understand the local complexity that entails different local views, different rythms or different meanings of the social and political aspects. This represents what Ferguson (1990)

has interestingly named as the politics of *regime-survival* (critical to national political elites), and the politics of '*machine'-survival* (critical to the international donor community).

On the other hand, literature has also highlighted ***structural problems***. This means that beyond these practical problems, there are elements transcending the local level that make very difficult or even impossible for local ownership to exist. These elements are mainly two: the moral superiority of the liberal peace project and the problematisation of autonomy in a context of security and development convergence.

a) Moral superiority of liberal peace. One structural problem that explains why local ownership and sensitivity to local conditions is so difficult to implement in practice has to do with the moral superiority that the liberal peacebuilding project has and the moral superiority that the international implementers of this project enjoy. This clearly leads to an important assimetry of power: *"universal templates are privileged, external actors assume the position of experts, and legitimacy is believed to follow from the assumed normative force and universal acceptance of the international standards that underpin peacebuilding"* (Sending, 2009). The constituting substantive elements of the liberal peacebuilding project (free markets, rule of law, democratic elections, etc.) are seen to be non-negotiable principles that, in a sense, stand outside history and above politics. As such, they do not form part of the ongoing debates about and reflection on what peacebuilding is and should be about. Because these are seen as "principles true in every country", there is little room for compromise, adaptation and context-specific approaches, local perceptions are normally seen as potencial misperceptions (Ibid.).

This arises a bigger problem of *lack of accountability* on the side of the external partners: *"there are no rules or institutionalized mechanisms that bestows any rights to the local population to hold the UN accountable. This lack of accountability mechanisms reflects* […] *the built-in assumption that peacebuilding is about advancing allegedly universally agreed upon principles. Because peacebuilders are seen to advance the "right" objectives, and know how to do it, there is no need for elaborate checks and balances, for review and for accountability, of how they go about effort to reform a society's core institutions"* (Ibid.XX). While local actors are forced to learn and implement as quickly as posible the liberal check-list, donors are not keen to learn from the local and the locals. Peacebuilding is conceived as a unidirectional dynamic where locals must be ready to absorb and internalize external parameters. All in all, and as Donais (2008: 7) notes, *"in practice, local ownership in peacebuilding contexts has come to be less about respecting local autonomy and more about insisting that domestic political structures take responsibility for – ownership over – the implementation of a pre-existing (and externally-defined) set of policy prescriptions"*. Similarly, Astri Surkhe has stated in the case of Afghanistan that *"local ownership clearly means 'their' ownership of 'our' ideas"* (2007: 1292).

b) Problematisation of autonomy. According to liberal peacebuilding critics, there is a second structural problem that has explicitly to do with the way that Western world understands the Post-Cold War world and, especially, the Post-September 11th world. The increasing convergence between development and security, as Duffield (2001) has upheld, has led to a general problematisation of the "underdeveloped", "fragile" and "failed" world. In this sense, liberal peacebuilding/statebuilding reforms are also understood as the best prescription and the best way of prevention to face this problem. According to David Chandler (2010), a principal feature of this approach is the "problematisation of autonomy": *"autonomy is the necessary starting point upon which modern liberal democratic forms of government are constituted. However, the paradigm of international statebuilding appears to be one in which the relationship between autonomy and institutions is inversed: autonomy appears to be the problem which requires management rather than unproblematic starting assumption"* (2010: 2-3). As a result, local ownership appears only as a dangerous illusion or idealized goal of external intervention and sovereignty is understood as a capacity to manage autonomy. As Chandler (2006) earlier had highlighted, this fact symbolizes the rise of an "Empire in Denial", in which westerns powers present themselves as "external facilitators" denying overtly any responsibility in leading and controlling statebuilding efforts. International statebuilding thus becomes post-conditional, post-interventionary but also post-liberal, since liberal conceptions of government (where sovereignty is a crucial one) are removed from our understandings (Chandler, 2010: 194). Sovereignty, as Andersen and Sending (2010) also point out, is being governmentalized and sought rendered compatible with, and conducive to, liberal governmental practices as a tool for reconstruction efforts. In other words, and with Elden (2006), *"sovereignty over life within 'ineffective states' has now become internationalized, negotiable and contingent"*. Nonetheless, as Tschirgi (2004) warns, there is a real danger that the character of international interventions in the post-9/11 world is not only moving further away from serious consideration of local ownership issues, but also away from the interests of sustainable peacebuilding in favor of protecting the security interests of the intervening actors.

Practical and structural problems make very difficult the respect of local ownership which becomes more a rhetoric concept than an elementary aspect of the job of external actors (See Annex 1). The most important contradiction is how local ownership is defined in policy documents and how is usually interpreted and unfold in the field. While local actors tend many times to understand ownership as a *right* (above all as a right to control externally initiated policies), external actors tend to understand ownership as a *conditional right* (that depends on problems of lack of capacity or political will) and also as the outcome of a process where the locals must internalize and learn capacities to make ownership a reality. There are two fundamental problems with this approach. First of all, if the concept of local ownership has risen as a mean to overcome problems of efficiency and legitimacy, it does not seem that liberal

peacebuilding operations are influenced by this desire. Local ownership thus is more an end subordinated to external agendas. The instrumental nature of local ownership continues to pose the same problems and challenges. Secondly, local ownership is trying to hide a very assimetric relationship of power between two sides that many times can create tensions and divisions in the local context. As Sending (2009b) notes, these assumptions lead peacebuilders to be both "blind" and "arrogant".

3. Local ownership in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone has been deemed as one of the main "laboratories" os post-conflict peacebuilding reforms.[2] Hundreds of projects, reforms and initiatives have been put in place since the end of the war around the three main reconstruction components: security, democratization and socioeconomic development. The European Union, the United Kingdom or the World Bank have been some of the main donors in all this project. Thousands of millions of dollars have been invested with this purpose.[3] Two general elections and two other local elections have been held in few years. The former UN Secretary General, Koffi Annan, in his last address to the UN Security Council on Friday, 22 December 2006 said Sierra Leone is "one of the success stories of the United Nations".[4] Former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, also deemed Sierra Leone as an "African's success story"[5] and the British intervention in the country as a "foreign policy success".[6] What it is quite undeniable is that Sierra Leone has improved very much its security and political stability. Nevertheless, some reports have noticed that socioeconomic conditions for the bulk of the population are still very dramatic. A decade of reforms after the end of the conflict has achieved security improvements but it is still facing many socioeconomic challenges. Mohamed Salih (2009) has stressed that these tensions between the liberal and the social aspects of the peacebuilding project poses many uncertainties in the future of the country.

Beyond these ambiguous results, Sierra Leone is also a very interesting case of anaylisis due to the intense and controversial interaction between the internal and external actors. Local ownership has also been paramount in the discourses and perceptions of major stakeholders during all these years. The current research starts from three main questions: **to what extent has local ownership been present in post-conflict peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone? To what extent has local ownership been respected in the country? What is the degree of legitimacy and sustainability of post-conflict peacebuilding in Sierra Leone?** We have tried to answer these questions by observing three particular reforms: the security sector reform (SSR), the decentralization process and the Special Court. We have especially focused on the period that went from 2002 to 2007 and the interaction between the Sierra Leone Peoples Party's (SLPP) Government and the donors.[7]

Relevance of the concept

Local ownership has been important in Sierra Leone's post-conflict peacebuilding process. Although some of the most important documents (as the Lomé Peace Accord) do not mention explicitly the need to 'own' the peace process, there have been two ways where we can see that this notion has been a constant feature. On one hand, local stakeholders have been underlining the relevance of local ownership since the very beginning of the reconstruction process, and even before. For example, James Jonah, who played a key role as Electoral Commission Chairman and Finance Minister in 1996 elections, argued that there was a determined effort to make 'ownership' a reality. In his view, *"the international community contributed enormously to the healing of the country, but the local contribution was not only critical, it was decisive in many respects"* (Jonah in Thompson, 2007: XX). Likewise, key actors as ministers, civil society representatives as well as international actors have always mentioned in interviews that local ownership was something important in discourses, conferences and in the daily exchange between local and external actors.[8] This also happened with the foreign presence, especially in the UK discourses. The UK Government and DfID got extraordinarily involved in the reconstruction process. In 2002, the UK Government made a far-reaching decisión, sperheaded by then UK Secretary of State for International Development, Clare Short, to agree to a ten-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Sierra Leone. It bound both parties to a series of commitments until 2012, and was a consequence of the alignment of UK National and development interests. The principle of "national ownership" was at the core of the MoU (Albrecht and Jackson, 2009).

On the other hand, local ownership has been used as a central issue in the three analysed reforms. As Ismail highlights by assessing SSR in Sierra Leone, "the promotion of local ownership, capacity-building, and identification and support for local reform champions are highlighted as strategies for navigating the political undercurrents and complexities of reform processes" (2008, XX). The enhancement of participation and capacity of local actors is thought to promote effectiveness, facilitate more rapid disengagement of donors into support roles, and provide the foundation for sustainability (Ibid.). Despite the strong external presence, especially from UK, "national ownership" was firmly embedded in the SSR, in the Decentralization process and also in the Special Court origins. Most of the documents reflected the need to respect ownership in order to promote sustainability and legitimacy as critical steps for success. However, as we will see, national or local ownership in a context of complex interaction between internal and external actors is not as simple as it was figuring out in documents.

Characteristics of local ownership in Sierra Leone (2002-2007)

There are no elaborated indicators to measure to what extent ownership has been fully respected in a sovereign country. Therefore, ownership is so far something that cannot be empirically analysed. What it seems very useful is the different perceptions that different actors have about the degree of ownership that Sierra Leone enjoyed since the

beginning of the reconstruction process. Although ownership is widely considered as a rhetoric concept, an analysis of perceptions allows us to unpack it and to distinguish slight nuances that need to be mention. There are five main characteristics to understand local ownership in Sierra Leone between 2002 and 2007, namely: i) local ownership is not a starting point but a process; ii) different actors can hold very different perceptions about local ownership; iii) local ownership is mainly a top-bottom and elite-centric process; iv) mutual distrust and tensions reveals that local ownership might hide different agendas, and v) local ownership might be strongly influenced by structural problems.

a) Local ownership is not a starting point but a process

In Sierra Leone, local ownership is considered openly a rhetoric concept by a majority of actors. Rather than being mere facilitators of reforms, outsiders are perceived to be direct engineers of all those processes. This perception, which was widely mentioned by most of the actors, has not really represented a problem of legitimacy, at least in the first years of reconstruction. The reasons to explain this are obvious: there was a huge lack of resources and local capacities. These practical problems were considered as something normal if we take into account that the country had almost collapsed during the nineties. Nevertheless, interviewed actors made some nuances when considering the two main phases of postconflict peacebuilding: design and implementation.

As for the *design* of reforms, there is the perception that these were basically driven by donors and accepted by the Sierra Leonean government. Although there was negotiation on the content and parameters of the reforms local political actors recognized that acceptance of the contents of the reforms and conditionalities were imposed due to almost totally dependence on resources and lack of local capacity to carry out reforms that required high technical skills. At the same time, local actors assured that there was little scope for substantial amendments or changes. For their part, donors believe that local actors actually were able to participate somehow in the design process, although the lack of local capacity provoked that reforms were essentially coordinated and directed by external actors. As regards the *implementation*, most of reforms were also essentially controlled by external actors. Despite the explicitised wish to strengthen the idea of local ownership, donors, through the existence of conditions or through the publication of reports criticising government's management, set the pace and the way to develop them, driven by the need for immediate positive results. However, local actors recognized that there has been a timid but gradual transference of ownership in the implementation process and that external actors –although they have continued to monitor the pace and manner of implementation of the reforms- have enabled a gradual control to local authorities, so we would understand that ownership is more a process that needs gradual internalization than a starting point and a realist discourse that allows immediate control.

When we analyze the different reforms, we can appreacite that the level of local ownership in the Security Sector Reform and in the Decentralization process (especially in the implementation phase) was much higher than in the Special Court. In fact, for most of the local actors, especially for the civil society organizations (SLPP Government admit that they demanded the Special Court to United Nations), the Special Court is an exogenous experiment that is nor understood in the country neither appreciated as an important step for social reconciliation.

b) Different actors have very different perceptions about local ownership

Local ownership can have different interpretations for different actors. As suggested by Ismail (2008), participation can be understood to involve three aspects: *symbolic, active and effectual*. ***Symbolic participation*** speaks to the representational and identity value that comes with the involvement of local actors in reform processes. ***Active participation*** relates to the process of contributing to, and organising, events, debates and policy-making. ***Effectual participation*** consolidates the two other aspects by showcasing how the outcomes of reforms (such as consultations, defence reviews, threat assessments or strategic doctrines) reflect the views, sensibilities and needs of local actors. The three aspects combine to give reform processes de jure and de facto legitimacy, foster the desire for change within local actors, and set the peacebuilding agenda on a path towards sustainability. Participation, then, is both an event and a series of events as well as a process, an objective and an outcome of reforms.

These three different levels of participation can also be observed in the perceptions of local actors. Although there are subtle differences among the three observed reforms (SSR, decentralziaion and Special Court), we can distinguish five types of actors that in one way or another participate in the process of design and implementation: governmental policy makers (those in charge of political responsabilities that normally belong to the ruling party), local technical agents (those that have enough technical capacity to help outsiders to implement reforms, they can belong to the ruling party or not and most of the times they are called from diaspora to carry out these responsabilities), civil society organizations (here, we have to consider especially those that have a very meaningful role in the country), local communities (people that are direct recipients of reforms) and external actors (from international NGOs to bilateral and multilateral donors). When interviewed, these five actors offered different perceptions of their level of participation. It is important to highlight that there was not a monolithical view about local ownership and about the perception of agency. Actors developed and constructed different perceptions of their engagement, according to their role in the local peacebuilding scenario. Of course, we might find some nuances within a same actor (e.g. there are civil society organisations very optimistic with their level of implication in peacebuilding reforms, but generally, most of them are very negative about their participation), but there is a trend that indicates a general perception in each of these actors. Briefly, we can summarize these perceptions as follows:

- For many *SLPP government policy makers*, ownership disguised external domination and imposition of priorities, views and ways of doing. This critical view is mainly due to the increasing tensions that flourished between the donors and the SLPP government between 2002 and 2007. Whereas their participation in the design process was merely symbolic, they admitted that there are some policies, especially SSR, were they could also have an active participation, although never effectual. Local constraints and dependence were too high to try to set the rythm of reforms;
- For *local technical agents*, there was a real control and effectual participation in the design and especially in the implementation of reforms. They were very optimistic about the respect of local ownership in Sierra Leone. They felt that they were brought on board since the very beginning to define the details of the three different reforms. At the same time, they recognized that external expertise has been critical to help them in the process of sustainability of all these reforms, but that these experts are gradually leaving in local hands the real control of peacebuilding;
- For *civil society organizations*, there was no ownership at all. Most of the relevant local civil society organisations were very negative with both the local government and the external partners. According to them, post-conflict peacebuilding reforms have been mainly driven by outsiders, with tha partial collaboration, when consulted, of local elites. They had the perception that civil society organisations had not really been invited to contribute actively in the process, and when they had been invited it was in a very symbolic form, since most of the contributions that they made where not really taken into account.
- *Local communities*' perceptions were grasped by civil society organisations. It is very difficult to get an impression about to what extent local communities have been incorporated in the process of design and implementation. According to civil society organisations, most of the times local communities were not even consulted but just informed or capacitated after the design of the reform. To understand and to adapt reforms to local context particulariries was not really a priority.
- For *donors*, interestingly, local ownership was openly considered as an instrumental discourse and as a conditional right. Most of the donors considered that local actors, even civil society organisations, were invited to the different process of design and implementation of the different reforms. Nevertheless, most of them also recognised that most of the documents and strategies were designed outside the country and, at least at the beginning, driven by them due to the huge lack of capacities and resources. According to them this does not mean that they are interested in driving the process, but that in order to achieve some outcomes, it was necessary to lead the different processes.

This shows that perceptions of the level of participation can be very different according to the level of satisfaction that each of these actors has about the process.

c) Local ownership is mainly a top-bottom and elite-centric process

Local ownership between 2002 and 2007 had a limited nature in terms of the type of actors that were really involved and actively participating. While local political elites were engaged in some way in the design and implementation of reforms, it seems clear that other local actors, especially civil society organizations and local communities, were left out of many consultation processes. While some civil society organizations recognized that at certain times they were consulted in the design and implementation phases, they firmly considered that most of the reforms had been already set and that there was little willingness to enter their raised inputs. Likewise, and as noted earlier, local communities in the field were informed about the implications and outcomes of the different reforms, but very few times were consulted before the design of the reform. SSR seems to be a special case, since different actors admitted that there are some notions of security and justice that were incorporated. This poses a great challenge for the sustainability of peacebuilding, since most of these reforms have not been really rooted in local views and dynamics. International actors did not give greater consideration to enable local civil society to contribute in the process of social change. As the Sierra Leone National Recovery Strategy warned in 2003, peacebuilding strategies failed to establish the 'bottom-up' approach which they felt was needed to build new foundations for local governance (Thompson 2007).

d) Mutual distrust and tensions reveals that local ownership hides different agendas

Local ownership in Sierra Leone suffered from another practical problem. Mutual mistrust was mounting as the date of 2007 elections drew closer. If at the beginning, when Tejan Kabbah arrived to power in 1996, there was a close identity of views on what needed to be done between the new leadership, its advisers and donors, especially DfID, perception of poor results and corruption scandals led to a very tense relationship between both sides. Donors became increasingly frustrated by slow progress on the more difficult governance issues – particularly corruption, public financial management and service delivery. Donors tried a range of methods to accelerate progress including private diplomacy, public statements and conditional aid. According to Cooper (2006), donor influence on the country was extensive: combining the use of old fashioned conditionalities with newer 'post-conditionality' forms of influence via more direct involvement in government". On the side of local government there was also the perception that donors were imposing an agenda of priorities (with special emphasis on institution building) different from its own agenda (that from 2002 on was more focused on the need of strengthening basic services, an aspect that was considered as a key to remain in power). Governmental actors perceived so much pressure on them to obtain quick results. This increasing mutual suspicion was even captured by DfID reports which highlighted that:

> *"a fundamental problem found in talking to a range of stakeholders and Sierra Leoneans, was a lack of confidence and trust between the two parties on occasions. On the one hand, it was suggested that the government and NGOs lacked competence and energy, and on the other hand, that the UK did not take*

into account local considerations or rely on or trust Sierra Leoneans sufficiently to take the lead" (DFID in Thompson, 2007: XX)

This growing tension and mutual mistrust resulted in indirect confrontations (UN reports accusing directly to the Government [9]) or even direct clashes (donors decided to withdraw international aid to the government few months before the 2007 elections took place in order to avoid a potential misuse of these resources). The culmination of this situation took place right after the first round of the general elections and after the final results, leading top SLPP official to even insinuate that the UN had contributed to rig the elections.[10] As noted before, these tensions revealed the existence of different political priorities, but also different cultural perspectives.

For Barnett and Zürcher, this highlights a very complex strategic interaction between insiders and outsiders, that makes very important to take into consideration "the connection between what actors want, the environment in which they strive to further those interests, and the outcomes of this interaction" (2008: 29). In this strategic interaction, which was defined by Ferguson as the game between the 'machine-survival' and the 'regime-survival', many different dynamics can take place. Barnett and Zürcher have distinguished four categories: "*cooperative peacebuilding*" (local elites accept and cooperate with the peacebuilding program), "*co-optive peacebuilding*" (local elites and peacebuilders negotiate a peacebuilding program that reflects the desire of peacebuilders for stability and the legitimacy of peacebuilding and the desire of local elites to ensure that reforms do not threaten their power base), "*captured peacebuilding*" (state and local elites are able to redirect the distribution of assistance so that it is fully consistent with their interests), and "*conflictive peacebuilding*" (the threat or use of coercive tools by either international or domestic actors to achieve their objectives). In the case of Sierra Leone we can say that these four types of interactions took place at the same time, or at least it did not exist a single type exclusively: while apparently the game was co-operative or co-optive, the more the local elites captured it, the more conflictive it was. Nevertheless, this strategic interaction cannot be considered as symmetric or balanced. There existed a deep unequal relationship between the two main sides, as the practical problems highlighted: where outsiders were considered as capable and full of resources, insiders were considered as non-capable and lacking of resources. In this unequal situation, there was an evident hierarchy of priorities. In this sense, donors priorities and their need for quick results might have put a lot of pressure to the local scenario. This could have also led them to look for what Duffield called the 'right type of interlocutor', since SLPP Government was not considered anymore as the right partner (as it used to be at the beginning with the arrival of Kabbah) to implement the libera peace agenda.

e) Local ownership might be strongly influenced by structural problems

SLPP government accepted the contents of the "peacebuilder's contract" since the very beginning. Security, democratisation and socioeconomic development were all targets

that SLPP government deemed paramount for the future of the country. In this sense, apparently, SLPP's aspirations were also liberal. President Tejan Kabbah, who had a significant curriculum in international organisations, had been very familiarised with peacebuilding discourses and methods. However, there were different political priorities that clashed and generated certain degree of tensions. Liberal agenda was not really interested in understanding the local particularities. In somehow, there was a real moral superiority of the exogenous peacebuilding agenda.

On the other hand, local ownership was rhetorically very important, but in reality it was a chimeric idea. To ensure more local ownership, especially in the first stages, would have posed difficult dilemmas to resolve to international stakeholders but also to local actors, which were both very worried about the security and the stabilization of the country. In this sense, the notion of local ownership was without doubt very problematic. It was not possible to respect it, but at most, to transfer it gradually. The rhetorical use of the concept, however, was very instrumental to ensure internal legitimacy to external partners. All in all, Chandler (2010) argues, this reveals the 'narrow aspirations' of liberal peace, which in practice accepts to give up his transformational essence to become an instrument of regulation of fragile states and unstable spaces, something that Duffield (2007) has conceptualised as the 'securitisation of policy-making'.

But if ownership was not really respected in Sierra Leone, did efficiency and sustainability, as well as ethics and legitimacy –aspects embodied in the concept of ownership- notice significant improvements? As we have noted, legitimacy was gradually worsening as local political elites perceived that outsiders were pressuring and discrediting them. SLPP was not the 'right type of interlocutor' anymore. The donors and most of the external actors were not either the confident partners that used to be for the SLPP and for some sectors of the population. However, peacebuilding has not really suffered a crisis of legitimacy. Most of the population agree with the need of carrying out measures to reform the political and economic realms. But legitimacy is narrowly linked to sustainability. The outstanding stabilisation of the country contrasts with dire socioeconomic conditions that the bulk of the population is still facing. As some authors have emphasized, this means that Sierra Leone has consolidated a "virtual peace" which poses many challenges and futures uncertainties to the country (Richmond, 2008). According to Taylor, this virtual peace is "generally satisfactory to donors and external actors, and also to the connected domestic elites, but not broadly sustainable nor able to enjoy [internal] hegemonic support" (2007: XX).

4. Conclusions

Local ownership is clearly a rhetoric concept and a conditional right. In Sierra Leone, local ownership between 2002 and 2007 was understood as a final outcome, but not

really as the starting point. Through persuasion, coercion or socialization, local actors are able to internalize the conditions to establish and allow local ownership. Nevertheless, local ownership must be also considered as an instrumental mean in itself, since donors do need it to disguise what in fact is a strong external control in certain stages of the reconstruction. Local ownership was also perceived in different ways by different actors: while some of them perceived to have an effectual participation in the design and implementation of different reforms, others saw themselves as just having a symbolic participation. Local ownership in Sierra Leone was also a top-down and elite-centric process, since civil society organizations and local communities had a very poor participation. On the other hand, local ownership also tried to hide a very tense and unequal relationship between the local Government and donors, which was progressively built on mutual distrust due to the existence of different agendas, political priorities and cultural perspectives. Finally, if local ownership is supposed to contribute to bring more legitimacy and sustainability to post-conflict peacebuilding processes, in Sierra Leone none of these goals has been really achieved. Donors' legitimacy was questioned by the SLPP government at the end of its mandate, and lack of sustainability (what we hace called 'virtual peace') seems to generate nowadays many controversial debates about the uncertain future of the country.

It is difficult to state that donors did not perform as best as they could. Post-conflict peacebuilding reforms were wished by the local government and by most of the population. Stability, democracy and socioeconomic developments were important and accepted goals. However, donors did not take into consideration other forms to do it. In this sense, political and cultural clashes show this lack of mutual empathy and lack, especially on the side of the donors, of flexibility in listening to other ways of doing. As Ole Jacob Sending suggests, "current peacebuilding practice tends to interpret ownership in a nominal, technocratic way, aimed at transferring responsibility of externally defined reforms to local authorities, yet leaving little room for genuine dialogue, experimentation and innovation to establish customsize approaches" (2009: XX). Rather than viewing peacebuilding as accelerated modernization, peacebuilding should perhaps be better understood in terms of cultural exchange with the overarching goal being to merge elements of old and new, inside and outside, to create a more just, stable political order (Donais, 2009). As the case of Sierra Leone has shown, this is a very disempowering, hierarchical and top-down form of local ownership, where internal political forces are expected both to uncritically adopt and to actively implement an external blueprint for post-conflict transformation (Sending, 2009).

Precisely, the critical literature has underscored in the last years two important things: the need to 'indigenize' peacebuilding and the need to understand peacebuilding not as a simple process but as a complex space of interaction. Regarding the issue of 'indigenization', many authors have emphasized the naive approach of liberal peacebuilding by considering local postwar spaces as 'blank slate', as a tabula rasa or as a vacuum that international partners must fill with exogenous reforms (Cramer, 2006). In this sense, a '*peacebuilding from below*' would be desirable. The goal of

peacebuilding should not be simply to erect the central institutional pillars of a liberal democratic state as rapidly as possible in the aftermath of conflict, but rather to ensure that these pillars rest upon solid foundations, are adjusted to local conditions, and develop not only through a genuine and collaborative partnership with war-affected communities but also in ways that are supportive of the broader goals of sustainable peace (Donais, 2009). Likewise, as the works of Boege et al (2008) or Richmond (2008) have suggested, it seems also paramount to undertake further research on notions as 'hybrid political orders' or 'post-liberal peace'. On the other hand, it is also critical what Heathershaw and Lambach (2008) suggest. According to them, post-conflict peacebuilding should not be understood as a simple proces of transition from war to peace, but as fields of power where sovereignty is constantly contested and negotiated among global, elite and local actors. We think that this complex approach will enable us to understand more properly how local ownership becomes an instrumental concept in the hands of different actors, and how peacebuilding becomes a conflictive space where multiple agendas clash and create uncertain scenarios.

REFERENCES

ALBRECHT, P. and P. JACKSON, 2009: *Security Sector Transformation in Sierra Leone*, International Alert

ANDERSEN, M. S. and O. J. SENDING, 2010: *Governmentalization of Ownership: Ownership in Peacebuilding*, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI)

ANNAN, K. 2001: "No exit without strategy: Security Council decision-making and the closure or transition of United Nations peacekeeping operations", UN Doc. S/2001/394, 20 April 2001

BARNETT, M. and C. ZÜRCHER, 2008: "The Peacebuilder's contract: how external statebuilding reinforces weak statehood", in PARIS, R. y T. D. SISK (eds.), 2008: *The Dilemmas of Statebuilding. Confronting the contradictions of postwar peace operations*, Routledge, pp.: 23-52

BOEGE, V., A. BROWN, K. CLEMENTS y A. NOLAN, 2008: *On Hybrid Political Orders and Emerging States: State Formation in the Context of 'Fragility*, Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management

CHANDLER, D. 2010: *The rise of Post-liberal governance*, Routledge, Oxon

— 2006: *Empire in Denial: The Politics of State-Building*, Pluto Press, London

CHESTERMAN, S. 2007: "Ownership in Theory and in Practice: Transfer of Authority in UN Statebuilding Operations", *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 1, No. 1, pp. 3-26

COOPER, N. 2006: "Chimeric governance and the extension of resource regulation", *Conflict, Security & Development*, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp.: 315-335

CRAMER, C. 2006: *Civil war is not a stupid thing: accounting for violence in developing countries*, Hurst, London

DONAIS, T. 2009: "Empowerment or Imposition? Dilemmas of Local Ownership in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding Processes", *Peace & Change*, Vol. 34, No. 1, pp. 3-26

— 2008 (ed.): "Understanding Local Ownership in Security Sector Reform", in *Local Ownership and Security Sector Reform*, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), pp.: 3-18

DOYLE, M. y N. SAMBANIS. 2 006: *Making war and building peace: United Nations peace operations*, Princeton, Princeton University Press

DUFFIELD, M. 2007: *Development, Security and Unending War. Governing the World of Peoples*, Cambridge, Polity Press

— 2001: Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security, Zed Books, London, 2001.

ELDEN, S. 2006: "Contingent sovereignty, territorial integrity and the sanctity of borders", *SAIS Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 29, pp. 11-24

FERGUSON, J. 1990: *The Anti-Politics Machine: 'Development', Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

HARRISON, G. 2004: *The World Bank and Africa: the Construction of Governance States*, Routledge

HEATHERSHAW, J. and LAMBACH, D. 2008: "Introduction: Post-Conflict Spaces and Approaches to Statebuilding", *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, vol. 2, no. 3

NARTEN, J. 2008: "Post-Conflict Peacebuilding and Local Ownership: Dynamics of External-Local Interaction in Kosovo under United Nations Administration", *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 369-390

NATHAN, l. 2008: "The Challenge of Local Ownership of SSR: From Donor Rhetoric to Practice", in *Local Ownership and Security Sector Reform*, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), pp.: 19-38

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) - Development Assistance Committee (DAC), 2008: *Accra Agenda for Action*, Paris

— 2007: *Principles for good international engagement in fragile states and situations*, Paris, in: http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/61/45/38368714.pdf

— 2005: *The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness*, in: http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/41/34428351.pdf

— 1996: *Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation*

OLAWALE, I. 2008: "Enabling Local Ownership: Participation and Capacity-Building in SSR", in DONAIS, T. (ed.), *Local Ownership and Security Sector Reform*, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), pp.: 127-148

OTTAWAY, M., 2002: "Rebuilding State Institutions in Collapsed States", *Development & Change*, Vol. 33, No. 5, pp.: 1006-7

POULIGNY, B. 2009: "Supporting Local Ownership in Humanitarian Action", *Humanitarian Policy Paper Series*, Center for Transatlantic Relations and Global Public Policy Institute

RICHMOND, O. 2008: *Peace in International Relations*, London, Routledge

SALIH, M. 2009: "A critique of the political economy of the liberal peace: elements pf an African experience", en Newman, E., Richmond O. y Paris, R. (eds.), *New Thinking on Liberal Peacebuilding*, UNU Press, pp.: 133-158

SENDING, O. J. (ed.) 2010: *Learning to Build a Sustainable Peace: Ownership and Everyday Peacebuildin*g, CMI Report

— 2009: *Why Peacebuilders Fail to Secure Ownership and be Sensitive to Context*, NUPI

— 2009b: *Why Peacebuilders are "Blind" and "Arrogant" and What to do About it*, NUPI, Policy brief 3

SUHRKE, A., 2007: "Reconstruction as Modernisation: The 'Post-Conflict' Project in Afghanistan", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 7, pp.: 1291-1308

TAYLOR, I., 2007: "What Fit for the Liberal Peace in Africa?", *Global Society*, Vol. 21, No. 4, pp.: 553-566

THOMPSON, B. 2007: "Sierra Leone: Reform or Relapse? Conflict and Governance Reform", *Chatham House Report*, Chatham House, London, June 2007

TSCHIRGI, N. 2004: "Post-conflict peacebuilding revisited: achievements, limitations, challenges", *Prepared for the WSP International/IPA Peacebuilding Forum Conference*, New York

UNITED NATIONS, 2008: *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. Principles and Guidelines* (Capstone doctrine), New York, in: http://www.peacekeepingbestpractices.unlb.org/Pbps/Library/Capstone_Doctrine_ENG.pdf

WORLD BANK, 2005: *Building Effective States—Forging Engaged Societies*, Task Force on Capacity Development in Africa, Washington, D.C.

Annex 1

		Outsiders (point of departure)	Insiders (point of departure)	Main contradictions
PRACTICAL PROBLEMS	**Lack of capacity**	- Very demanding agenda of liberal reforms	- Lack of local capacity (governmental actors) to implement it	- Ownership will not be able in the short-term - Outsiders will need to build local capacities and in the mean time to lead the agenda (ownership as technocratic transmission of tools) - Elite-centric and top-down dynamic: poor participation of civil society organizations and communities → unidirectional transmision
	Dependence on external resources	- Full provision of funds and resources - Use of conditionalities and types of aid (budget support) to do it	- Lack of resources	- Ownership will be tied to conditionalities and local performance - Locals are not able to negotiate the agenda, they must internalize it and behave in the right way - Looking for the 'right type' of interlocutor (someone that understand the agenda and is willing to carry it out)
	Mutual distrust	- Politically, outsiders need to achieve results and improvements (*machine-survival*) - Culturally, western views and ways of doing prevail	- Politically, insiders want to remain in power (*regime-survival*) - Culturally, local views and ways of doing prevail	- Ownership suffers from political and cultural clash, tensions can arise
STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS	**Moral superiority**	- Normative force of liberal peacebuilding and universal acceptance are assumed	- Internalization of liberal peacebuilding	- Ownership lacks horizontal negotiation and exchange - Lack of external accountability - Disempowering, hierarchical and top-down methodology - Few chances of indigenization of peacebuilding (indirect hibridisation, post-liberal peace arises)
	Problematisation of autonomy	- Autonomy is perceived as a problem that needs to be *managed* - Problematisation of fragility → international statebuilding as current solution/prescription	- Ownership is considered a right	- Ownership becomes a conditional right

Notes

[1] Especially in Africa, the issue of corruption and clientelism (the debate on neopatrimonialism) has been critical for external partners to explain the limits of the liberal agenda.

[2] See "Security Council asks Secretary-General to establish peacebuilding office in Sierra Leone after mandate of united nations integrated office ends", August 5th 2008, http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2008/sc9414.doc.htm

[3] In the first years of reconstruction, international spending was estimated at $16.4 billion each year for the UN agencies and £100 million each year for the British government.

[4] See ANNAN, K. 2006: Success in Sierra Leone is good example of achievement of UN, at: http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sgsm10813.doc.htm

[5] BLAIR, T. 2009: Africa's Surprise Success Story, The Daily Beast, at: http://www.thedailybeast.com/blogs-and-stories/2009-04-29/africas-surprise-success-story/

[6] "Britain's Blair Says Farewell in Sierra Leone", at: http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2007-05/2007-05-30-voa49.cfm?moddate=2007-05-30

[7] Fieldwork was undertaken between April and June 2008 and between July and August 2009. Fieldwork entailed interviews with key actors and focus group discussions with students of peace and conflict stduies at Fourah Bay College (University of Sierra Leone).

[8] See field work

[9] The "First report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone" highlighted aspects as: *"There is increasing concern about what is perceived as a heavy-handed approach by the Government in dealing with the political opposition"*; *"There is moreover a general perception among the public that some elements of the Sierra Leone police are politicized"*; *"There have also been allegations about the politicization of the paramount chieftaincy system and the use of paramount chiefs to deny the opposition access to their supporters, particularly in the Eastern and Southern Provinces"*; or *"there is a general feeling among the population that the Commission is not able or willing to achieve tangible results. The review of the implementation of the above-mentioned benchmarks later in the year may have a significant impact on the attitude of the donor community"*. This report generated a very uptight situation between Kabbah's Government and the UN. President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah had serious complaints about UN Uniosil's report: *"the report soured relations with Uniosil chief Victor Angelo. Only a phone call from Annan to Kabbah prevented Angelo being declared persona non grata"*. AFRICA CONFIDENTIAL, 2006: Africa Confidential, Vol. 47, No. 12, p. 5.

[10] *Unity*, a pro-governmental newspaper even stated: *"This piece (...) is an attempt to show you the average Sierra Leonean how vicious the international community could be when they are pursuing an agenda of having puppet regimes in post conflict countries or emerging democracies like Sierra Leone. This article is the first in a series that is aimed at exposing the international community's role in undermining the SLPP government"*. Carlos Valentia exposed", Unity, Vol. 3. Number 65, 23 de agosto de 2007