

# **Peace, Security and Governance**

## **Extraction of Materials Relevant to Research Arenas, Partnership Experiences, Emveddedness and Capacities<sup>1</sup>**

### **1. Stocktaking of experiences with international partnerships**

- a) There are two dominant types of international research partnerships in the field of peace, security and governance. First, research partnerships that normally evolve around development cooperation in war-torn countries or fragile states, often linked to humanitarian assistance. Such development cooperation-cum-research partnerships may have inbuilt research component with the sole objective of enhancing the developing countries capacity to engage the peace, security and governance requirement. In most cases, cooperation agreements involving countries from North and South have a strong Northern influence of partnership, aiming to facilitate a passage to peace through humanitarian means. The second form of research partnerships is in the form of international research cooperation in countries considered peaceful. In this instance, there are two research poles, one in the North and the other in the South. They enter into partnerships for research purposes or joint research involving researchers from North and South. However, it must be made clear that partnership is a very strong word and we prefer to refer to research cooperation instead.
- b) Added to national institutes of higher learning, state created research institutes regional organizations, the research arena is also very much alive as a result of the activities of NGOs and CSOs. Across the length and breadth of the sub region, these organizations have taken up a large research portfolio running the gamut of peace, security, governance, refugees, human rights, poverty alleviation, sanitation, the rule of law, etc.
- c) International organizations concerned with research in the growing field of peace, security and governance often cooperate with national and regional research organizations without forming partnerships in the strict sense of the term. By-and-large, they establish various modes of cooperation that fall short of fulfilling the full range of partnership possibilities;
- d) International, regional and national NGOs, think-tanks and research institutions cooperate with grassroots' organizations, local communities and CBOs, but treat them as information gatherers, vehicles for entry into the field in order to gain access to "the local populations". However, the knowledge generated and

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<sup>1</sup> Summary prepared by Mohamed Salih, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague and University of Leiden from the four papers submitted to the sub-theme on Peace, Security and Governance. These are as follows: Professor Paschal Mihyo, "Security, Peace and Governance in Eastern Africa and the Great Lakes Region"; Professor Nira Wichramasinghe, "The Production of Knowledge on Peace, Security and Governance in Sri Lank"; Professor Kwame Boafo-Arthur, "Peace, Security and Governance in West Africa: Towards enhancing research arenas, practices and capacities" ; and Professor David Francis, "AfriCom & ECOWAS: African Security versus US Strategic Interests- Policy Implications".

information gathered through research are hardly shared with the local communities and at times not even with national policy making institutions. There is also doubt in the South whether such knowledge is actually reflected in the policy designs preoccupied with peace, security and governance,

- e) More often than not, grassroots, local communities and CBOS are treated as junior partners at best and “workers” in the research process for information collection, at worst. They are not treated as equal partners or owners of the research process, findings or potential users of the knowledge generated about their lives, communities, environments, conflicts and in some cases personal lives.
- f) Peace, security and governance research partnerships (or rather cooperation) tend to sideline the private and voluntary sectors as recipients of research funds or partners in the research process. The common perception among donors is that the elite (those dominate the state and those who struggle to overcome the state are the major actors to be strengthened, studies or undermine. International donors privilege national level actors and probably that also where they look for solutions to conflicts in the developing countries. Such research generate in supporting such policies have contributed to the institutionalization of peace, governance and governance arrangements dependent on and conceieved from within the confines of the very institutions that have caused the conflict in the first place.
- g) A small number of greedy entrepreneurs exploit conflicts for personal or corporate gain, also trading in illegal arms, mineral. These “criminal activities” have tarnished the image of the private sector hence undermined the potential of research partnership.

## **2. Positioning on international partnerships**

- a) Despite the comparative advantages of creating research partnerships for developing countries’ inter-governmental, governmental, universities, research institutions, these have not developed systematically into workable modalities for influencing research orientation, priorities or embeddings and usage.
- b) National/regional research institutions in the developing countries are connected with regional and international research networks, drawing on each others skilled human resources and at times crowding out resources from teaching and research institutions in higher education.
- c) National and regional research institutions concerned with peace, security and governance are the best positioned to link and coordinate other partners, facilitate the development of common programmes at national and regional level; and support capacity development for other research partners.
- d) The internationalization (or embedding) of research agendas in the field of peace, security and governance has resulted in a division of social scientists between those concerned with the present and use theoretical and conceptual frameworks emanating from the West to reflect on their own world and conflicts; those unaware of or willingly distance themselves from these trends thus shun them as alien and distort of their reality.

- e) International organizations seeking to encourage political stability and integrate post-conflict societies into the global economic system encourage research in the field of peace, security and governance disguised under the liberal peace banner. In the last decade, there has been an increase in the sponsorship and encouragement of international donors to foster particular models of political transformation, governance arrangements and conflict management/resolution. As a result many political activists took up practices of 'peace-building' as a technical and apolitical answer to the conflict. More damaging has been the entry of this concept into research productions. This donor-driven research has not been particularly helpful in achieving the cherished outcomes of peace and security.
- f) There is a glaring overlap between research partnerships in the context of development cooperation and in the context of international research cooperation (Paris Declaration call for Harmonization etc. must have fallen in deaf ears). There is a conscious effort by donors to institutionalize development cooperation embedded research in the field of peace, security and governance due to excessive compartmentalization even when institutionalized within the context of development cooperation; it often ends up taking the form of international research cooperation and not partnership. However, there is more freedom within the realm of international research cooperation than in development cooperation oriented research – meagre reference to peace and security governance issues are integrated into the latter.

### **3. Stocktaking of experiences with embedding research**

- a) Developing countries researchers are aware of at least two options for research on peace, security and governance from the South perspective and also conscious of the "asymmetry of ignorance" between the South and North. The first group of researchers attempt to develop indigenous methods and devise appropriate analytical tools to appraise society that do not emerge from the North. Apart from the danger of parochialism this position is inevitably compromised since a purely indigenous social science is simply not possible today. Indeed the historian speaks from a position in time and space; cannot possibly erase or abstract parts of a mental heritage - years of schooling and life experiences as a modern person living in a nation-state. The second position acknowledges the close complicity between 'history' and modernising narratives (and modernity as the critique of the present) of citizenship, of the public and private spheres and of the nation-state and realise that inside the discourse of history produced in the institutional site of the university disapproval of such narratives is impossible if not dishonest.
- b) Research methods convergence could be attributed to the universal acceptance of the nation-state as the form of community that is the most desirable and the consequent imposition of a western conception of history as a discipline in nation-states across the world. The researcher of the South is therefore condemned to know Europe as the cradle of the modern and locate her/his own research in relation to this situation. The ensuing polemic is highly relevant to our concern with peace, security and governance as discourses embedded in how

the priorities organizing the human conditions, including conflict management are addressed –e.g. in a democratic or authoritarian manner, are arrived at.

- c) The knowledge produced in the field of peace, security and governance are of three sorts: there are a few publications that would qualify as academic writings: one of the reasons for the paucity of scholarly work of this nature is the absence of any university press or academic publisher. This is one area which a funder could support but until now there has been no interest in creating this type of expertise and institution. The second category are a few books published in academic presses outside the developing countries, essentially in India and the third and by far the largest is the plethora of reports and surveys. Clearly it is the research in the first two categories that has a shelf-life. The production of the third kind serves a very ephemeral purpose and reports are immediately sent to the dustbins of history - sometimes not only rhetorically speaking (Sri Lanka).
- d) There is no evidence to suggest that research in the field of peace, security and governance has been nationally, regionally or sub-regionally embedded. Even regional and sub-regional cooperation institutions suffer severe research deficit capacity in this field, let alone individual countries.
- e) Peace, security and governance research carried out by national, regional and sub-regional research organizations in the developing countries is often externally-driven or conflict-specific. Conflict forecasting, early warning systems, concerted regional efforts to analyze and understand conflict patterns, post conflict development outcomes, impacts, failures and successes etc. are grossly lacking.
- f) Research on peace, security and governance is embedded in firms that operate outside government and international development cooperation sponsored institutions. They conduct research on topical issues and have in most cases been able to accumulate large documentation and datasets that are not rivaled by any national or regional research institutions (Eastern, Central and Southern Africa).
- g) Research conducted by volunteer organizations embedded in the developing countries and involved in Legal Aid, human rights and conflict management service initiatives to formulate and implement research which often increase synergies with other partners does not exist and therefore there is no experience to report (East and Central Africa).
- h) Research has equally not been embedded in civil society organizations which have spearheaded peace, security and governance initiatives (Eastern and Central Africa). They lack research capacity and as a result have confined themselves to fact finding missions and training activities some of which are not informed by accurate knowledge generated through adequate research.
- i) Knowledge in the field of peace (Sri Lanka as a case in point), security and governance is produced in the state universities, government and autonomous research centres (known as NGOs or INGOs). Among the government agencies, the Central Bank of Sri Lanka conducts economic research that may relate to issues of governance for the guidance of the Monetary Board and for the information of the Public. An exception is The Social Policy and Research Centre (SPARC) of the Faculty of Arts aims to build up expertise through applied research and teaching programmes on poverty and social policy issues (Sri Lanka).

- j) There are also autonomous research institutes, funded by government and non-government sources such as the Institute of Policy Studies created by an Act of parliament in 1988. In the early years the Institute's programme focused on macro-economic policy issues. More recently the research portfolio has been extended to other areas i.e. social and economic infrastructure, health policy, gender, poverty alleviation, energy policy and government reforms (Sri Lanka).
- k) Among non-governmental centres producing knowledge in the fields of peace, security and governance is the Centre for Society and Religion, the Centre for Women's research, the International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Colombo and Kandy, the Marga Institute, the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, the Social Scientists' Association and the Women's Education and Research Centre, (WERC) (Sri Lanka).
- l) A very rough estimate based on the survey I undertook for the SSRC review of social science capacity in Sri Lanka would be between 250 and 500 social scientists, with 292 social scientists in university departments and 72 in autonomous research centres. The numbers show that capacity for producing texts exist and begs the question as to why the production of works with a plausible shelf life is so meagre. An analysis of the specific issues covered by these researchers is helpful and casts a different light on a seemingly productive sector (Sri Lanka).
- m) Knowledge production is influenced by Western frames of reference and analysis have been imitative and unimaginative employed. The increasing hegemonic discourse of conflict transformation has been an 'obstacle to any innovative thinking into the explaining the power structures and ideological formations that sustain conflicts.

#### **4. Positioning on embedding research**

- a) Knowledge flows between individuals, institutions and states are of an uneven and often unequal nature as so in partnership in international relations and development cooperation. Pondering on the relationship between epistemological exclusion and social exclusion has led to only a few practical results. However, conflict make the relationship between regions or countries under the stress of conflict, their choice of peace, security and governance arrangements largely inflected by and immersed in direct and indirect dictates by those capable to intervene.
- b) If we accept that 'knowledge' relates to the constructs, assumptions, and beliefs by which people understand and interpret the world around them, the global knowledge architecture continues to function as an instrument for justifying and sustaining hierarchical relations between individuals, institutions and states as well as spaces within states. The dominant knowledge patterns also subscribe the dominant solutions and possibilities for managing conflicts with and between states. Ironically, peace, security and governance debate tends to mute power and thus keeps silent about its implications for state formation and long-term human flourishing.
- c) Inequitable distribution of power within and between states gives a strong perception that international partners either fear or purposively and unwillingly

undermine plurality of thought. By extension decisions made about the best research practices in the field of peace, security and governance for the developing countries often originate or emanate from the North and exported to decision makers in the South. The fear or unwillingness to operate within plurality of ideas also explains the unquestioning endorsement by many of the aims and practices of globalization coded as concensuses or partnerships. This conclusion leads to a lack of openness to other forms of thought in everyday life as well as in the academia where the research proposal has to comply with certain policy priorities and preset conceptions of what is permissible and what is not.

- d) In the last twenty years the focus of social science research has been on finding the root causes of ethnic conflicts, studying its various manifestations and trying to find solutions. New research areas – devolution, comparative federalism, minority rights, women and development, security – and even new disciplines – conflict studies, ethnic studies have emerged as a response to these queries (Sri Lanka and Africa). An overarching theme is the huge expansion of social science research since the mid 1980s that is related to ethnic conflict. A significant part of this research comes under the theme of “strengthening of democracy” (Sri Lanka).
- e) One of the most intellectually sterile research themes in the field of peace, security and governance that have now conquered the field is ‘conflict resolution’ rhetoric. The growth of this field is linked to the need for organizations and institutions that can contribute to the range of activities that have come to be known as ‘peace building’ The knowledge production in Sri Lanka influenced by these frames of analysis has been imitative and unimaginative to say the least. The increasing hegemonic discourse of conflict transformation has been an ‘obstacle to any innovative thinking into the power structures and ideological formations that sustain conflicts (Sri Lanka).
- f) The growth of women studies has been strengthened under the field of gender where the production of knowledge has been much closer to the Northern idea of quality research than in the field of conflict studies, possibly because in the field of gender, scholars – the majority are women - had better negotiating skills with donors than scholars in the area of conflict and peace and also probably that funders in the area of gender were concerned with erasing unequal relations of power in social structure and representation.
- g) International organizations and research funders are responsible for the dearth of creative social science research in the field of peace, security and governance. The responsibility is mainly with local intellectuals who have chosen the path of easy funds provided by international donors for preconceived research arenas through mimicry rather than original research. In the circumstances, knowing donor research (or rather development) priorities offers better chances for securing research funds than creative or felt-need research arenas.
- h) Certain themes with serious implications for and influence of peace, security and governance are left out: there is a need for research from the South on areas such as the impact of globalization on health, education, trade in order to create expertise not only for research but also to negotiate on an equal terrain at discussions on WTO or GATS. Southern governments and centres funded by the

North are unfortunately engaged in what would appear to be pure mimicry of Northern works and positions that rarely contest the neo-liberal social science approach that prevails. The implications of these important research areas for the quality of governance (corruption, human rights abuse, and corporate social responsibility, conflict over meagre resources contested by local and corporate interests), peace and security cannot be overemphasized.

## **5. Stocktaking of experiences with research capacity development**

- a) Research capacity development in the field of peace, security and governance tend to privilege universities and research institutions both governmental and non-governmental. Developing research capacity amongst other partners such as the private sector, civil society organizations and CBOs is rather inadequate.
- b) The current patterns of development cooperation funding are compartmentalized in terms of sectors. In the circumstances, research on peace, security and governance is not fully integrated into other social, economic and political sectors and development interventions.
- c) Research capacity development in the field of local governance, peace and security institutions for local conflict management and post-conflict development processes is rather inadequate.
- d) The rather meagre international cooperation support for national and regional capacity development in research in the field of governance, peace and security should be complemented with more research at the local level also with linkages to other social, economic and political sectors.
- e) A new breed of purely private for-profit institutions is emerging in most developing countries, developing research agendas and offering courses on human rights, governance, conflict, peace and security, by mainly consultancy firms, not for profit companies limited by guarantee or simply as for profit companies id proliferating.
- f) Private for profit or non-profit research organizations increasingly operate at the national and regional levels. They are well connected with similar firms across borders and internationally. Equally, these research firms cooperate but do not form partnerships. Often headed by senior researchers, retired higher education professionals and international development agencies, these firms have greater flexibility to operate globally and the shortest possible time.

## **6. Positioning on research capacity development**

- a) National civil society and NGOs, regional research institutions and advocacy organization have conducted substantial amounts of research in the areas of constitutionalism, citizenship, environmental resources management and conflict. The quality of the research and its impacts on improving the quality of intervention in peace, security and governance circumstances is in doubt. However, in most cases they have relied upon researchers based in institutions of higher education. It may be essential for them to increase their in-house capacity by recruiting highly qualified specialists with research management experience.
- b) Some private and non-for-profit organizations seem to have developed commendable in-house capacity. In the majority of cases however, there are areas

that need further strengthening. Studies on human rights and constitutionalism need further strengthening in their empirical approaches leading to more in-depth analyses of the application, acceptability and enforceability of laws aimed at the protection of citizens and their rights and entitlements.

- c) Comparative research on peace, security and governance is weak, as most research funding tends to be location and country-specific although issues are regional and even global. In addition research findings and reports or publications need to go beyond the objective of unearthing information and adopt a value-added approach to ensure the translation of research into policy instruments.
- d) Although most developing and industrially advanced countries' researchers have attempted to adopt multi-disciplinary approaches in the study of peace, security and governance, some outputs tend to still reflect a single-issue approach, failure to identify and integrate inter-locking relationships and reflect the multiple identities of groups and phenomena.
- e) The current partnership (cooperation) patterns are ill-equipped to provide guidance or best practices in relation to research findings and information processing and sharing between partners in the field of peace, security and governance. The need for a clear understanding of creating synergies and interfaces in developing and sharing information resources. Lacking yet still is support from upstream organizations for the decentralization of technical, financial, managerial and software management capabilities to mainstream knowledge access and delivery and capacity for downstream organization to continuously exchange information with mainstream users.
- f) A renewed research partnership is needed in the field of peace, security and governance because the current arrangements have not been positioned (or positioned) to improve the quality capacity in research or ensured that the knowledge generated has been acted upon – for improving policy instruments, decision making or interventions. Weaknesses in the field of methodologies for assessing the linkages between governance, conflict management and peace-building leave much to be desired.
- g) Research capacity development in the field of conflict risk analysis, peace and security fragility analysis and respective political, socio-economic as well as climatic (environmental factors) perpetuated by or as a result of governance deficit, have not been sufficiently developed let alone assessed.
- h) Strengthening capacity for monitoring, assessing and upgrading the quality of research in the field of peace, security is mandatory. It requires the development of "A Framework for Renewed Partnership" with three objectives:
  - i. Create closer links between midstream actors both vertically and horizontally;
  - ii. Develop the capacities of and give more voice to downstream actors on ownership and research usages;
  - iii. Establish quality research-policy oriented frameworks and interface overseen by clusters for ensuring effective and measurable outcomes; and by necessity
  - iv. Upgrade and renew the current cooperation structures and/or frameworks into authentic partnerships.