

# **Reframing State-building and Peacebuilding Narratives in Africa**

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## **Reframing State building and Peacebuilding Narratives in Africa**

Case Study Countries:

Rwanda | Ethiopia | Kenya | Côte d'Ivoire | Sierra Leone |

With additional studies on South Sudan | Somalia/Somaliland

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### **Abstract.**

This is the final report on the research project on Reframing State-building and Peacebuilding Narratives in Africa research project from its inception including progress realised on the proposal objectives, the outputs produced, challenges faced during the research process, reflections and recommendations going forward. The report notes that a significant part of the project's objectives was achieved including the proposed outputs. The project's notion of "conversation," particularly emerged as one with a huge potential to address the emerging void in understanding, explaining the 'disconnect' between classical state-building responses to African conflicts. The research project revealed two major insightful perspectives on the role of political settlements from the case studies. First, the narratives on the trajectory of state-building that emerged from contexts of armed conflict vis-à-vis normative peace and state building intervention strategies indicate that they are disconnected. Second, an initial comparative analysis of case studies findings indicate that there is a degree of variation in state-building trajectories between states/contexts where peacebuilding processes involved a heavy intervention by external actors compared to states/contexts where peacebuilding processes have been shaped or largely led from within. Nevertheless, the outcomes so far, have not produced compelling evidence of lasting peace in either of the two contexts.

**Keywords:** State-building, Peace-building, Political Settlement, Conversation, Conflict, Africa.

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## Executive Summary

This is the final technical progress report for the research project titled: 'Reframing Narratives of State-building in Africa: The role of Political Settlements in Peacebuilding and State-building' (henceforth Research Project). African Leadership Centre Trust (henceforth Recipient) undertook this research project from 08 October 2013 to 08 October 2016 during which a no-cost extension was granted to the recipient from October 2015 to October 2016. The no-cost extension was necessary for two main reasons. First, the Ebola crisis in West Africa prevented two research teams from undertaking field research at the scheduled time. Second, the appointment of the Principal Investigator (PI) by the United Nations Secretary General to the UN Advisory Group of Experts for the Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture in 2015 led to the PI taking time off the project. The focus of the research remained across five country studies: Rwanda, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, and Kenya. Two additional studies – South Sudan and Somalia/Somaliland – were included for added comparative perspective.

During the course of the research, three workshops were held: a Methodology workshop on 3 February 2014; a Baseline Study Review Workshop on 26 and 27 June 2014; a Review and Validation Workshop on 18 and 19 April 2016. An Evaluation of the research project occurred between 30 July and 5 September 2016. The workshops convened the core researchers and also brought together scholars, policy practitioners and other participants from regional institutions, research organisations and academic institutions. This method of convening is consistent with ALC's Working Group methodology, which brings researchers, policy practitioners and potential end users together in a Working Group that meets throughout a research process so that cross-learning can occur.

Several significant research findings have materialised since the inception of the Research Project. The notion of "conversation" emerged as one with a huge potential to address the emerging void in understanding, explaining the disconnect between classical statebuilding responses to African conflicts. New and comparable insights have also emerged about several African countries that have pursued state-building conversations through different trajectories. Many of the proposed outputs have been achieved. ALC course and module outlines as well as course narratives focusing on the subject of this research have been developed. A number of papers at different stages of publication emerged from the research. Specifically, a book chapter, titled, 'Crises of war to peace transition and civil wars recurrences in Africa' was published by CIGI in March 2016; a paper on 'Making a case for Reframing Narratives of Peacebuilding in Africa' will be published alongside five other papers drawn from the integrated country studies in this Research Project in a Special Issue of the Conflict, Security and Development Journal, as well as an edited book by Zed Books. The PI plans a follow-on publication project on "Leadership Conversations in Peacebuilding."

This report covers all aspects of the project from its inception including progress realised on the proposal objectives, the outputs produced, challenges and obstacles faced during the research process, and reflections and recommendations going forward. The terms of reference and report of the external review of the Research Project is attached as an Annex.

## The Research Problem

This Research Project sought to address two crucial elements in the debates surrounding peace and state building in Africa. The first element related to the underlying narrative that surrounds the relationship between peacebuilding and state-building in Africa. Current approaches to peace and state building rely on dominant narratives that construct state-building as a prerequisite to peace. Underpinning this is the assumption that a certain type of [democratic] state would produce peace. As such, interventions in societies affected by armed conflict focus on the transfer of a model of state-building that is expected to lead to peace and stability. In this Research Project we noted that peace in the form construed by current interventions is not an end in itself. Rather, we argued **that peacebuilding should be conceived as part of the *conversations* occurring in the continuum of state-building in the affected societies.** Many situations of armed conflict in post-independence and post-Cold War Africa are the result of state-building conversations taking place in the specific national contexts. And those conversations might require a distinctly different solution, process or time frame from the models offered in response by interveners.

The second element of this Research Project was concerned with the extent to which various forms of political settlements are able to deliver sustainable peace and by extension more peaceful and viable states. The interest in political settlements stemmed from the assumption that the way in which a war or armed conflict terminates is likely to determine the extent to which the affected post-conflict society can achieve stable peace within a viable state. In this regard, the Research Project examined two distinct contexts of armed conflict. The first consists of those situations of armed conflict where violence ended with tactical victory on the battlefield and the post-conflict agenda was pursued locally without massive external participation [Ethiopia and Rwanda with an additional study on Somaliland]. The second includes situations where the end of violence as well as post-conflict agenda was negotiated and facilitated by external interveners [Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya and Sierra Leone, with additional studies of Somalia and South Sudan]. However it is worth noting that for the Kenyan case study, external actors facilitated the negotiations between the parties to the conflict; but implementation of the agreement did not experience the type of large scale external participation which the much larger scale armed conflicts in Cote d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone experienced. We envisaged that an examination of these settings might enable us to make better sense of the impact of internally and externally generated and driven peace processes, and the extent to which each helps to set a basis for long term peace.

The notion of “conversation” is the thread that connected the elements of this research. We argued that much conflict in Africa is the result of “conversations” about state-building, occurring in the various national contexts. In this regard, initial findings indicated by their state-building trajectories, the vast majority of African states are the product of many complex conversations initially between colonial elites and African peoples and societies; and in the post-independence period, between governing elites and their people. Some of the earlier conversations, which led to political independence for the societies concerned, were necessarily violent. In the absence of deliberate, structured dialogue about the terms on which groups in the newly independent societies would live together, some of the *conversations* between the post-colonial rulers and their people do not vary much from the

previous era. As such, when conflict escalates during state-building conversations, peacebuilding interventions would do well to return to the conversations that led to violence in the first place. In addition, in interrogating approaches to peace in the form of peace settlements, whether they are internally or externally driven or are the product of tactical victory on the battlefield, we examined the extent to which each type of settlement returned to those conversations that escalated into armed conflict and the degree to which these settlements therefore generated lasting peace or strategic peace.

*Conversation* in this Research Project represents a number of interactions and processes. The notion of conversation advanced here was not restricted to structured, overt and delineated verbal dialogues, discussions or exchanges that occur between a variety of actors within society. Rather, we were particularly interested in the wide-ranging interactions among groups in society – however unstructured, unseen, inexplicit and violent the conversations are – and their resulting signifiers. We saw these as particular forms of conversations, which occur especially in situations where power asymmetry is rife not least between populations and those in positions of authority, who preside over them.

These conversations can be said to be about state-building when certain types of issues are at the heart of those conversations and when there is an indication that they are occurring between particular segments of society. For example, existential issues, where the physical or material survival of a group might be at stake; the functioning of state institutions and the degree to which they are responsive to the needs of the larger population such as (in)security; and access to channels of power and resources, among a variety of other issues. As such, when citizens create alternative systems of response to needs deemed to have been neglected by their governments or those in authority there is an important conversation to be found therein. This is notwithstanding that the absence of a satisfactory response system has not been explicitly stated or requested. These conversations might be occurring between particular groups and their government; between groups with competing demands in terms of access to state resources; and typically, elite groupings struggling for the control of machinery of government, among other things.

The nature and range of conversations taking place in the national contexts selected for this research and the extent to which these conversations escalated into violence, as well as the degree to which these conversations were taken into account in the efforts to terminate violence and achieve peaceful resolution, was a central concern in this research.

## Research Objectives

To examine the problem as stated, the Research Project was guided by four key objectives:

- To draw new and comparable insights about the trajectory of countries that have pursued their state-building conversations in part through violent conflict
- To develop conceptual grounding of peacebuilding and state-building in Africa
- To draw lessons for peacebuilding processes in countries undergoing violent conflict in the course of state-building; and in particular for actors seeking to intervene in those contexts

- To deepen the knowledge of next generation academics and researchers on this subject – through participation in this research and development of curriculum for the study of peace and state-building processes in Africa

In its contribution to existing knowledge the Research Project brought new perspectives to the discourse, departing from the common approach to studying peace and state-building in Africa, seeing peacebuilding not as an end itself, but as part of a state-building continuum and conversations occurring therein. Moreover, bringing in the concept of political settlements served an important role as it is one of the first few attempts to examine the state-building continuum within the context of political settlements. The results of the research will serve scholars well in the interrogation of the current peacebuilding and state-building discourse. In addition, the results will serve as an invaluable tool for policy engagement. We will use existing close relationships established with the regional organisations such as ECOWAS and the EAC; and with the African Union (AU) and the United Nations, to engage in dialogue and debate around the findings of this Research Project.

## Methodology

This research undertook case studies of seven African countries. The research involved a four-part methodology.

### Part one:

The first was the development of existing knowledge, generating understanding and interpretation of peacebuilding and state-building particularly in the countries under investigation (See the section on project activities for more details).

### Part Two

Because of the limited time-frame for conducting research under this project, in the second stage, in addition to three senior ALC researchers as country team leaders (including the Director of the Centre as the Principal Investigator), additional ALC consultants/ expert researchers were engaged and contracted as ALC Associates to serve as country team leaders. The Associates are well known to the ALC and are indeed an extension of the ALC having served as Mentors and Associates of the ALC for the last eight years. As such they are considered ALC stakeholders. They were to accompany the research all through the phases from the moment they were commissioned. All researchers prepared substantial state-of-the-art research papers surveying that which is already known about the research questions in each of the countries under study i.e. Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Rwanda and later South Sudan and Somalia/Somaliland which each had only one researcher.

The research conducted in this phase was library and internet-based research using written sources, supplemented if, or as, necessary, by semi-structured interviews with informed sources, or practitioners, country and regional experts, in which the conclusions drawn from the research papers would be supplemented and refined to create a set of propositions regarding peacebuilding and state-building, and the role of political settlements and any other factors emerging from the survey and interviews. The propositions were the foundation for the final stages of research. This helped establish a baseline understanding of

the current state of knowledge on the role of political settlements in peacebuilding and state-building in the target states.

This phase was concluded with a Baseline Study Review meeting held at the ALC. The meeting researchers discussed and refined the Baseline study reports developed from the case studies (see the section on project activities for more details).

### Part three

The third stage of the research was to test the propositions developed in parts one and two, in focus group research as well as in-depth interviews carried out among both elites and publics in the target countries. Each method (i.e. focus group and in-depth interview) was employed as required for the target audience. The focus group methodology, which the PI has used effectively in previous research, permitted both the exploration of some of the themes and propositions emerging from the first stages of the project and, crucially, also served as a means of testing salient opinions and trends. These were complemented in many instances by the in-depth interviews, which also helped validate information obtained from various sources. All field research were reviewed and approved by the ALC Research Ethic Committee prior to field studies.

### Part four

The fourth stage of research saw the integration of the country findings with those of the focus groups and in-depth interviews to produce comparative, and comparable, empirical analysis of peacebuilding and state-building as well as the impact of political settlements and any other factors that might emerge reflexively in the course of the research.

In carrying out the research as outlined some existing structures of the ALC were used. In particular, the Working Group (WG) model (See annex 1) which convenes academics, policy makers and practitioners, was used to bring together the research team, leading experts in the field and valuable end users including policy makers and practitioners. In addition to a small reference group, the WG provided an avenue for testing the research plan and validate research findings at various stages.

In the end, the phase was concluded with a convening of the Review and Validation workshop. The purpose of the meeting was to review and discuss key findings from the field study research undertaken for each of the country case studies including Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire and Kenya as well as additional comparative studies from South Sudan and Somalia (see the section on project activities for more details).

## Project Activities

The Research Project was able to carry out three major activities according to the project's work plan – convening of (1) Methodology Workshop, which was an initial research meeting leading to production of draft baseline studies; (2) A Baseline Study Review Workshop to review the baseline studies and prepare for field study; and (3) Review and Validation workshop to review the field study findings and discuss how to integrate them into the baselines.

### Methodology Workshop

The Methodology Workshop was held at the ALC, Nairobi on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2014. The meeting convened scholars and practitioners from various African universities, research organizations, regional institutions and think tanks, as well as ALC researchers. The workshop aimed: (a) to convene the entire research team for the research project; (b) to provide the researchers with a platform to present and discuss the framing paper, which will guide the entire research project; (c) to provide the research teams with an opportunity to present their research background papers to their peers as well as practitioners in the field; (d) assist research teams to discuss and refine their focus along with the overall objectives of the research project and; (e) induct the research team to the research, standardisation of research materials and documentation processes. Emerging from this meeting was the need to develop evidence-based alternative discourses on peace and state building that views peacebuilding not as a static event but as a continuum of conversations on state-building. The methodology meeting also enabled researchers clarify methodological issues in research, particularly delineation of various actors in peace and state building as well as the conversations taking place between them. One of the main outcomes of the meeting was the expressed intention that the generalisability of the study's findings should lead towards the development of a theoretical framework. The workshop's participants noted that comparisons emerging from the case studies provide a benchmark for developing indigenous and evidence based African ideas and theories around peace and state building.

### Baseline Study Review Workshop

The Baseline Study Review Workshop was the second meeting of the project's Working Group and was held on the 26<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> June 2014 at ALC, Nairobi. The meeting brought together researchers in the project, a select number of researchers based in academia, as well as those engaged in policy and practice within Africa. The workshop's main objectives were: (a) to convene the entire research team to discuss the Baseline Studies developed from the case studies; (b) to provide the research teams with an opportunity to present their baseline studies to reviewers, their peers and practitioners in the field for critique and feedback; (c) discuss the field work protocols for undertaking research in these countries; (d) assist research teams to discuss and refine their Baseline study propositions along with the overall objectives of the Research Project and; (e) convene the Research Ethics Committee to scrutinize all field research plans and award ethical approval following reviews. Also the meeting provided the research teams with an opportunity to present their baseline studies to reviewers, their peers as well as practitioners in the field for critique and feedback as well as discuss the fieldwork protocols for undertaking research in these countries.

### Review and Validation Meeting

The Review and Validation Workshop was held at the ALC between 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2016. The meeting brought together researchers in the project, a select number of scholars and policy practitioners. The meeting aimed to: (a) Review and discuss key findings from the field study; (b) Discuss emerging issues for policy and practice from the research project as well as explore avenues of publication for the study findings. Overall the workshop provided



an opportunity for the researchers to get feedback and guidance on their baseline study reports.

### Additional Activities

The Research Project also carried out additional activities, which include convening and participation in conferences and workshops.

- In May, 2015, the ALC and the UN Advisory Group of Experts (AGE) on the review of the Peacebuilding Architecture jointly organised regional consultation on South Sudan at the Centre. The meeting was organised during the AGE's country visit of South Sudan following the appointment of the projects' PI to the United Nations AGE by the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon. The consultation convened scholars, researchers and policy practitioners engaged in South Sudan to discuss more about regional perspectives of the conflict and peace process in South Sudan. The aim of the consultation was twofold. First, to contribute to the policy and institutional review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture. Second was to develop findings and recommendations based on this work. One of the notable conclusions of the meeting was that it reinforced some of the research project's findings. The meeting noted that while the role of the UN in peacebuilding has been crucial, especially in ensuring that justice and accountability is achieved in South Sudan, this process has been fraught with several challenges. First is the ability of the UN to transcend competing peace processes and interests by multiple actors in the conflict. Second and more importantly the consultation noted that various actors and institutions intervening in the conflict including the UN, lack clarity on what peace and state building means and entails both conceptually and practically. Also following the ALC engagement with AGE, the PI proposed inclusion of South Sudan in this study to have an additional understanding of what the country's peace process and settlement experience has contributed to our understanding of peace and state-building.

### Participation in Conferences and Workshops

- Two members of the research team attended the Global Resilience Innovation Platform Summit (GRIP) organised by IDRC and the World Bank's Global Centre on Conflict, Security and Development (CCSD) in 2013. The research proposal was presented at the session on Promoting Inclusive and Equitable Political Settlements where we received diverse feedback on the idea of political settlements especially from Asian perspectives.
- In February, 2014, the PI also presented the Research Project's Framing paper, to a forum organised by the War Studies Department at King's College London for researchers in the University of London. The team received rich feedback and perspectives.
- In April 2014, four members of the research team including the PI also attended and presented the framing paper at the International Symposium on Governance in Africa that was convened by the Africa Programme of the University of Peace

(UPEACE) and IDRC. The paper was well received and got rich feedback from the participants.

- In October, 2014, the PI presented the projects framing paper at Oxford University – Department of Politics and International Relations in a seminar forum titled ‘New Narratives of Peace- and State-building: Lessons from African experiences’. The forum was organised jointly by Oxford Department of International Development; the History Faculty; and the African Studies Centre.
- In February 2015 three members of the research team i.e., the Principal Investigator, Lead Researcher for Kenya team and the Research Assistant and Coordinator attended the workshop on Peacebuilding in Africa: evolving challenges, responses and new African thinking that was held in Wilton Park London. The meeting focused on African perspectives on peacebuilding, and convened researchers, policy analysts and peacebuilding actors from Africa and other parts of the world. Perspectives from the current research project contributed significantly to this meeting which aimed to among others to assess the current threat landscape in Africa and the challenges to building stable peace as well as explore and discuss current and emerging thinking and analysis on peacebuilding in Africa from African perspectives.
- In May, 2015, the project coordinator and team leader of the Kenya case study participated at the peace and state building workshop in New York. The meeting jointly organised by the IDRC and Carnegie Corporation of New York, brought together various grantees funded by the IDRC’s project as well as policy practitioners, researchers and scholars who are based in the United States and are engaged on state and peace building issues around the world. During the meeting, the ALC research team presented both the thesis as well as preliminary findings of the research. The ALC team received positive feedback and comments from other partners and more importantly gained further insights from two case studies i.e. Cote d’Ivoire and Sierra Leone covered by ALC research team and are also being examined by other grantees. Moreover, partners also discussed various ways of communicating and sharing the research findings to larger audiences.

## Project Outputs

Since the inception of the project and during the course of the research process the following outputs have been achieved.

1. The framing paper ‘Making a case for reframing narratives of peacebuilding in Africa’ which looks at the notions of state-building and peacebuilding, arguing that the latter is a continuum of the former. In addition, introduces the notions of political settlements and conversation in looking at ongoing peace and state building discourses.
2. Background papers for the five country case studies; Rwanda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone and Cote d’Ivoire. These papers provide information on the ongoing state and peace building conversations, moreover provide supporting evidence

as to why the countries make good case studies for the overall research objective.

3. Methodology Workshop Report which captured the discussions and recommendations around the proposed methodology for the Research Project.
4. Literature Review paper on Peacebuilding, State-building and Political Settlements. This review served to provide evidence on existing literature around these concepts. Moreover, is served to show the gaps in the literature especially with regards to the African context and provided a platform on which the research problem as stated in the proposal becomes relevant for study.
5. Baseline studies for each of the five country case studies. These baseline studies captured the historical trajectories of peace and state building conversations in the respective cases, shed light on the conflicts and introduced the notion of political settlements within the context. The baseline studies became the framework through which each team teased out propositions to be tested during the field trips.
6. Integrated Research reports from the five country case studies; Rwanda, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire and Kenya with additional studies from South Sudan, Somalia/Somaliland. These reports were produced using the baseline studies and were completed with additional information gathered during the respective field trips (Ethiopia excluded). The Research Project also gained two additional reports from newer studies done on South Sudan and Somalia/Somaliland.
7. Report from the Review and Validation Workshop. This report captured the findings from the respective field trips. It also shares the recommendations and discussions shared during the workshop, which were to help guide the research teams in finalising their reports.

In line with the final outputs agreed upon, the Research Project also produced the following:

8. A course narrative on 'Reframing Theories of Peace and State-Building in Africa'.
9. An ALC postgraduate Module Outline on Reframing Theories of Peace and State-Building in Africa.

The intent of the courses and modules is to utilise them in ALC's tailored mentoring fellowship programmes as well as professional training programmes. The Fellowship programmes include: on Peace and Security Fellowships for African Women; Peace, Security and Development Fellowships for African Scholars; and Peace and Security Fellowships for Regional Organisations. The ALC's mentoring and training programmes seeks to directly respond by offering carefully crafted courses based on the Centre's cutting-edge research as well as modules offered by King's College London, to practitioners working on the ground on the Continent. The ALC's courses and modules offer a distinctly research-based content on African

perspective to the challenges that plague the continent, and utilise a methodology that encourages participants to use their specific contexts and realities to begin to respond to these challenges.

10. An article (to be published in Conflict Security and Development): 'Making a case for Reframing Narratives of Peacebuilding in Africa'.
11. A book chapter 'Crisis of war to peace transition and civil wars recurrences: a focus on leadership building and the postcolonial state in Africa'.
12. A paper on hierarchy of identities in peace and state-building based on comparative analysis of the Rwanda and Cote d'Ivoire country studies

With regard to other outputs the research Project has achieved the following:

#### 13. Institutional Capacity

This Research Project has contributed significantly to ALC's research cluster on 'Leadership and Peacebuilding,' as well as growing the research portfolio of the ALC in general. It has also contributed to the ALCs research and understanding of the African state in relation to peace and security. Furthermore, the project has enhanced the research capacities and skills of the researchers involved in the project.

#### 14. Knowledge Building

The research continues to elicit debates among academics both in the continent and beyond as well as policy practitioners both in institutions who have either directly participated in the Research Projects events or in platforms where the project has been presented, about what constitutes effective state and peacebuilding and what roles are critical for various local actors.

Future outputs for the Research Project include:

15. **A special issue of CSD Journal.** The special issue will be published with the Journal of Conflict Security and Development (CSD). The process for the journal publishing had already commenced at the time of submitting this report.
16. **Edited Book.** The book, which is provisionally titled *Transforming Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Narratives in Africa*. The research project has prepared a proposal for Zed Books.
17. **Policy papers.** Several short papers are being adapted for publication as policy-papers targeting a series of policy oriented seminars and workshops in regional organisations and among some UN agencies.

## Project Outcomes

The research project was able to accomplish the following targets over the course of the research process based on the initial objectives.

In seeking to draw new and comparable insights within the case studies, the research noted two emerging trends. As reiterated in the evaluation report, case studies were able to develop new insights around the trajectories of the state-building. This included contexts where violence ended on the battle field and the post-conflict agenda was pursued internally without immense external support as well as in contexts where violence and the post conflict agenda was facilitated by external interveners. The case studies' review of historical continuities of state-building conversations, and the place of peacebuilding processes, has revealed two major insightful perspectives on the role of political settlements. First, the narratives on the trajectory of state-building that emerged from contexts of armed conflict vis-à-vis normative peace and state building intervention strategies indicate that they are disconnected. Second, an initial comparative analysis of case studies findings indicate that there is a degree of variation in state-building trajectories between states/contexts where peacebuilding processes involved a heavy intervention by external actors compared to states/contexts where peacebuilding processes have been shaped or largely led from within. Nevertheless, the outcomes so far, have not produced compelling evidence of lasting peace in either of the two contexts.

- 1.1 The Research Project was able to develop a conceptual grounding of peacebuilding and state-building in Africa, particularly in its presentation of the notion of conversation which was broadly defined and left flexible to allow the researchers to contribute to its conceptualisation during the research process. The concept of conversation allowed researchers explore state-building trajectories in the respective case study countries as a basis for interrogating peacebuilding and outcomes. The Research Project was able to provide a compelling argument that peacebuilding ought to respond to conversations in the continuum of state-building. In so doing, it makes a case for practitioners and scholars to focus on the conversations taking place instead of generic models and pre-determined templates of state-building.
- 1.2 Within each of the case studies, the Research Project has delivered its objective of drawing lessons for peacebuilding processes. The findings from the project indicate that it is imperative to closely examine political or peace settlements and what experiences from countries emerging from armed conflict tell us about the nature of settlements. These experiences have the potential to assist interveners in determining whether the choice of and nature of the settlement reached to end armed conflict allows for a return to the conversations that led to war and whether they can produce lasting peace. More importantly, initial findings from the case studies suggests that with multiple state-building conversations occurring in a particular state the dominant liberal-peacebuilding norm cannot be based on generic state models. Rather, peacebuilding is inherently about commitment between society and their leaders based on a common future goal. Therefore, lack of such commitments means that

interventions that prescribe particular forms of state are inherently weak and are bound to fail.

- 1.3 The final objective of the project to deepen the knowledge of the next generation academics was met in several ways in the course of the research. What stood out was the engagement and participation of junior scholars in the research project all through. Through the Working Group (WG), junior scholars were assigned to research teams that were led by senior researchers within the ALC faculty who also served as mentors during the process. In addition, there was a good balance of gender and range of researchers both within Africa institutions and in the global north. In addition, through the WG approach researchers were able to produce research that is relevant and meaningful to policy. The workshops conducted under the WG also served as a learning place for all the researchers whereby additional participants from policy and practice, academic and research spheres were convened; providing a platform for ideas and concepts around the research to be discussed and shared. The presence of policy makers and practitioners as members of the working group will greatly enhance research uptake. In some instances, junior members from some of the teams were able to present at these workshops, the findings from the respective research studies. Furthermore, a peer review system was incorporated in all the teams giving both the senior researchers and the junior researchers an opportunity to review and comment on each other's work. This approach also helped to avoid duplication of effort by encouraging information sharing and collaboration where possible. The interaction enriched the debate on key peace and state-building discourses and allowed for relevant discussions.
- 1.4 Some of the findings of this research have been and will in future be used to provide those within academic faculties, as well as within policy and practice arenas with new insights on peace and state building in African contexts. As noted in the section on project activities, perspectives from the research project have contributed to deliberation in various meeting as well as in emerging thinking and analysis around peacebuilding in Africa.

## Synthesis of research results and development outcomes

The key findings of the research from inception till date are highlighted below:

- I. Dominant contemporary discourses on state and peace building in Africa rarely construe the outbreak of conflict and efforts to reconcile affected societies as part of a continuum of *conversations* inherent in state-building processes.
- II. Contemporary African states are a product of multiple state-building *conversations* occurring between citizens and their leaders within particular contexts. Historically, these conversations include colonial elites and the African people and societies while in post-independence period this include the elite groupings and their people.
- III. Despite the huge investments in liberal peacebuilding there has been limited success in achieving durable peace in conflict-affected states in Africa.

- IV. Narratives on the trajectory of state-building that emerged from contexts of armed conflict vis-à-vis normative peace and state building intervention strategies indicates that they are disconnected.
- V. Discourses on peacebuilding that focus on policy tend to be prescriptive, focus on concepts rather than contexts, and are normatively loaded. As such, its agenda and strategies are driven by what ought to be the case rather than by the contextual realities.
- VI. There is huge variance in outcomes of peacebuilding in contexts where there was external intervention in ending of the conflict and implementation of the liberal peace agenda compared to contexts where end of conflict and peacebuilding agenda was led and shaped from within. However in both scenarios, evidence so far from the case studies has not produced convincing evidence of durable peace.
- VII. In relation to gender the outcomes, the responses were diverse (albeit with similar trends) across the country case studies. In some cases, gender emerged a key part of state-building and peacebuilding processes while others showed limited response and address gender within many of the studies either as a result of no conversation in the settings or limited information. As a result of the varying responses to the gender question, the research project took a different approach to addressing gender in the review of the studies, by closely examining identity markers in both conflict and post-conflict narratives. The review found that across a majority of the country studies the idea of identity was very much present and there were patterns around how and which identity issues were being addressed. Moreover, there seemed to be some hierarchy of identity vis-à-vis triggers of the conflicts and in the responses to conflict- state and peace building processes and conversations. As a result, ethnicity, was by and large identified in the project as well as in broader literature, as being one of the major factors underlying the conversations in many conflicts compared to other identity markers and conversations surrounding gender, youth and class which also emerged and have played a role in these conflicts.

## Findings from country case studies

For each country case study, the findings differed both across the country studies and in some instances post-field research. The findings for each case study were guided by the core and operational research questions. Each case study began with an initial baseline study, which produced a baseline report as a key output. The baseline reports across the five case study countries advanced propositions, which were subsequently tested in the field. It is those tested propositions that are addressed centrally in the integrated reports. The additional studies of Somalia/ Somaliland and South Sudan served to further interrogate the two contexts under investigation.

### Cote d'Ivoire

Prior to conducting field research, the researchers on the Cote d'Ivoire case study noted the following findings in the study following extensive desk research:

- I. Violence around the post-election crisis resulted in more female victims. In what way have conversations been affected by this?

- II. Civil society has had no 'prominent' place in state-building and peacebuilding conversations. State-building and peacebuilding have been controlled exclusively by the Ivorian elite across all spheres.
- III. Peacebuilding and state-building have been marred by violence by state security institutions and non-state security actors.
- IV. The Westphalian model and colonial model have been the unquestioned models for state-building in Cote d'Ivoire.
- V. Elections have been fetishized as the 'cure-all' for the crisis of development, state-building and of violent political conflict.
- VI. Efforts towards state-building and peacebuilding have not dealt with the issue of exorbitant powers concentrated in the executive.
- VII. Cote d'Ivoire's peacebuilding processes have been marked by the continued involvement of external actors.

Following the research team's field study guided by the propositions, the following findings emerged from the Cote d'Ivoire study as noted in the integrated report.

- VIII. Conflict arising from state building conversations have been shaped by peacebuilding processes being resolved through the force of arms.
- IX. Violence dominated the conversations culminating in the 2002 post-electoral crisis. Nonetheless the resolution of the post electoral stalemate has contributed to a reduction in violence around elections, evident in the more stable 2015 elections.
- X. The Ivorian state-building project is in need of adjustments.
- XI. The creation of a Truth, Dialogue and Reconciliation Commission has, to an extent, led to the reorientation of national conversations around peace and state-building.

## Ethiopia

The researchers on the Ethiopian case study noted the following findings in the study following extensive desk research with a small number of interviews and archival research:

- I. Ethiopian state was characterised by a centralised, highly extractive state that presided over a integrated society akin to the modern nation-state.
- II. Existence of a long tradition of statehood enabled the successive rulers to further entrench their apparatus of control, it also generated its own contradictions that affected the subsequent process of state making and remaking.
- III. The contradictions include the center-periphery disjuncture- centralisation of power by groups were from one group and marginalisation of the groups on the periphery, the contradictory vision of the aristocracy who were gradually losing power to the petit bourgeoisie and intellectual class because of bureaucratisation and modernisation initiatives and discontents related to ethno-cultural suppression and religious domination. These contradictions manifested themselves in insurgencies.



Following the research team's review of the baseline study guided by the propositions, the following findings emerged from the Ethiopia study as noted in the integrated report.

- i. Ethiopia's strengths and weaknesses in peace and state-building derive from its past.
- ii. The conflicts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were caused by the exclusionary nature of the state.
- iii. The nature of the protracted war, the type of insurgency and organization determined the course of the political settlement and subsequent processes of state-building.
- iv. The political settlement was not only exclusionary at the outset but also continued to be more so in subsequent periods. The post- 1991 political powers partially addressed the major causes of conflict in the country and this has been followed by a modicum of peace and stability.
- v. The major issues for consideration in the settlement were ethnic and national, as well as economic conditions; and the major actors were ethno-nationalists.

#### Sierra Leone

Prior to conducting field research, the researchers on the Sierra Leone case study noted the following findings of the study following extensive desk research.

- i. Identity conversations in Sierra Leone state-building process centre on the control and domination of the state and the political sphere by political elites. These identity conversations including gender have not been adequately addressed.
- ii. The politics surrounding the management of natural resources is central to the establishment of long-term stability after a bitter civil conflict that occurred partly because of natural resource mismanagement.
- iii. Third, the team noted that corruption lay at the root of the civil war where elites made use of extensive patronage that eventually undermined governance of key institutions including the parliament, police, armed forces and civil service.
- iv. Although Sierra Leone has not returned to conflict since the official end of the war in 2002 there is the need to investigate whether the peace agreement was effectively well packaged to address all aspects of the conversations that led to war or whether there were other factors that prevented a relapse of the armed conflict.
- v. The externally driven peacebuilding process has not anchored the basis for stable peace.

Following the research team's field study and review of the baseline study guided by the propositions, the following findings emerged from the Sierra Leone study as noted in the integrated report.

- I. The main issues that led to the civil war were multiple. They included but not limited to; patrimonialism, lack of rule of law, state control of the judiciary, lack of transparency with the awarding of mineral concessions, corruption,

manipulation of opposition parties, cronyism, youth unemployment, and the lack of judicial and legislative independence; and they continue to be recurring issues in the post conflict state building conversations.

- II. There is need to set up various institutions such as the anticorruption commission, ombudsman, and human rights commission, and the passing of various laws including the three gender laws.
- III. The structures created after the peace-building processes are there although there are challenges with the working of these structures.
- IV. Leaders (mainly political elites) still continue to undermine economic management of the country particularly when dealing with regional imbalances in development.
- V. There is the concern about the freedom of expression, which the study found to be limited in the country against wishes of the society.

## Rwanda

Prior to conducting field research, the researchers on the Rwanda case study noted the following extensive desk research.

- I. Rwandan post-genocide state has attempted to structure its own state and peace building along three initiatives: (i) rebuilding from colonial ruins, (ii) restructuring the colonial orientation of people's mindset to enhance belongingness, and (iii) education to instill change in people's perception about 'the other'
- II. An examination of the root causes underpinning the genocide shows that Identity and reconstruction of 'ideas of identity' are at the core of Rwanda's nation- and state-building conversation.
- III. The conversation as well as the conversable spaces have mutated across periods of Rwanda's history, starting from the pre-colonial period to the post-genocide phase.
- IV. During these periods, identity was being constructed and politicised by various actors along varied political and socio-economic lines and it is the politicisation that some of these conversations have turned into violent conflicts the worst being the genocide in 1994.
- V. The country paid less attention to on-going forms of identity-based exclusion within Rwandan society both prior to the genocide as well as during the Arusha peace process.
- VI. Identity conversations invariably underpinned other areas of Rwandan society and the emergent state, with certain identity forms and issues are more dominant in the nation- and state building conversations than others.

Following the research team's field study and review of the baseline study guided by the propositions, the following findings emerged from the Rwanda study as noted in the integrated report.

- I. The settlement was an outright military victory of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), which although it did not have a blue print of how to develop the country after the genocide, had a decisive leadership who created a space for the society to have conversations and allowed mobility of ideas on state-building within communities based primarily on the previous Arusha Accord.
- II. The team noted that the gender regime had evolved over time where women despite the diminished place during the colonial period, during the pre-colonial period played a central and influential role in leadership. In the genocide and post-genocide phase the RPF took a deliberate policy based on if the gender regime that predated conflict altered and if this change differs from other identity conversations during pre- and post-conflict.
- III. In the post-genocide period, the Rwandan state has created spaces where people across all sections of societies elites and ordinary people can have conversations they include among others: *Umuganda* (monthly community service), presidential and cabinet visits, political parties forums, annual national dialogue, unity clubs, youth camps annual national breakfast, women retreats among others.
- IV. Issues on identity, refugees, political leadership are discussed openly along prescribed rules. Although the research team noted that indeed these conversations are taking place, there are elements of performance, choreography and management in some of these events. Certain members of the community (local leaders) are for instance, allowed to speak and criticise, but in a way they reinforce certain narratives or themes for example economic development, women's participation and do less so on thorny and divisive issues that criticises the upper echelons of the Rwanda elites and RPF narratives. These conversations include political prisoners, 'new identities', media freedoms, historical accounts on the trigger of the genocide, reprisal attacks of FDLR, and controversial killings of RPF dissidents. These issues are discussed in informal spaces as well as Rwandans living outside of the country.

## Kenya

The researchers on the Kenya case study noted the following findings of the study following extensive desk research.

- I. The peace settlement in Kenya had two unique aspects. First was the role of local pressure, which led to violence. This was not only a culmination of national state-building conversations albeit 'silent' on attempts to change the governance structures, amend the constitution, and decentralize power but also formed a consensus that an intervention by external actors was inevitable. The peace settlement had limited local resonance with the people and it was in itself a pause or 'ceasefire' to the silent conversations taking place.
- II. The peace process appeared to take the characters of an international peace model on responsibility to protect mainly fronted by external actors. This is largely because local mechanisms did not feature in a sustainable way. In

addition, the internationalization of the justice systems through the International Criminal Court also had more negative rather than positive outcomes. It not only highlighted the level of impunity in the Kenyan political processes particularly when handling social injustices but also in a contradictory way facilitated the political alliance of leaders accused of perpetrating the post-election violence who then took power and began undermining the same international justice system.

- III. Although the country has made some progress for instance adopting a new constitution, security sector reforms, and devolution of government, there are several set-backs. First, the inability to deal with historical legacies of a centralized state land injustices and inequality, politicization of youth for political expediency.

Below are findings from the South Sudan and the Somali/Somaliland case studies.

### Somalia

- I. The study notes that apart from the reports by the human rights organisations, there is limited literature on the genocidal campaigns that occurred in Somaliland, including addressing issues of political stalemates and settlements in Somaliland. Nevertheless, scholars of political violence who looked at the socio-political impacts of state-perpetrated genocides against its own civilians have recognised the importance of instituting public memory for the victims and their families.
- II. The genocide memories have had a profound impact on the Somaliland masses. What they had experienced is a recurrent reference to rebut the occasional remarks made by southern political players that Somaliland is part and parcel of Somalia.
- III. To this day, the conflicts in the South-Central Somalia lack decisive winners, something that produced conflicting memories. By contrast, in the North, the collective memory of genocide and previous political marginalisation had created unity for the cause of secession.
- IV. Exploring what happened in the North, as it was the place where the regime had conducted the most brutal campaign of obliteration and expulsion against a whole clan-group and how the genocidal campaigns in general affected the rest of Somalia, is important to understanding the roots of the perpetual conflicts still wreaking havoc in Somalia and the discontinuity and disjuncture of the state façade of the once unified Somali State.
- V. However, many people in Somaliland hold the view that, if sympathetic and sensitive political leadership had emerged in the South, they might have reached some kind of deal or no deal.

## South Sudan

- I. The nature of the Sudanese state is characterised of the conquest state centre-periphery relationship.
- II. Unlike other movements that accepted the Marxist-Leninist ideologies, Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) was not guided by the ideology and did not implement it in South Sudan hence the factionalism on followers.
- III. The SPLM unlike other liberation movements did not win the war and hence came to negotiate for power through the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.
- IV. There was reliance on external actors for peacebuilding processes especially the United States. Therefore, there have been nearly no conversations on state and peace building in South Sudan.
- V. The study notes that SPLM ignored and often suppressed conversations partly because of ideological reasons as well as reliance on external actors.

## Overall Assessment and Recommendations

### Problems and Challenges

From the outset of the project, several obstacles presented themselves.

1. Given the nature of the structures in three of the country case studies; Ethiopia, Kenya and Rwanda, the respective research teams faced a number of challenges linked to the research environment which impacted upon either the quality or the extent of data collected. Due to lack of clearance from authorities in Ethiopia the team had to amend its research plan and instead focused on collecting publicly available documents and available documents on political settlement and on the dynamics of state-building in Ethiopia. The research team was only able to begin this process in September 2015.

In addition to this, the Research Project faced additional challenges, which led to the request for a no cost extension and a delay in carrying out some of the field research. As a result the no-cost extension for the project was obtained, allowing the project to finish in October 2016 rather than October 2015.

2. The Ebola outbreak in West Africa 2014-2015: This epidemic prevented the Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire teams from undertaking fieldwork for a number of months. After thoroughly monitoring the epidemic, the Sierra Leone team was able to begin preparations for its fieldwork in the October 2015.
3. The appointment of the projects' Principal Investigator (PI) by the UN Secretary-General to UN Advisory Group of Experts for the Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture in 2015. The PI's appointment to the UN Advisory Group brought significant prestige to ALC among policy-makers and practitioners and afforded the PI and project team access to African policy actors and high-profile fora which significantly enhanced the research, impact and dissemination elements of the project and which may otherwise have been inaccessible.

The research project was able to meet all its targeted objectives. This was facilitated in a large way not only from the support from the IDRC but also the flexibility on the part of the grant administrators to accommodate the unanticipated developments during the research process. A case in point was the granting of no-cost extension following Ebola crisis that affected part of the case study countries. Also, as reiterated in the evaluation process, was the vital role of the Research Project's Working Group methodology and approach which in the end worked well for iteratively fostering regular interaction between academics, policy makers and practitioners, thus bridging the gap between academia and policy concept through open discussion and exchange. The research team therefore recommends up-scaling and investing further in development of this approach in future such as enhancing and facilitating regular interactions.

## Partnerships

The Project, through the ALC, established an institutional partnership with the Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace (IRDP) based in Rwanda. This initiative emerged from the process of obtaining a research permit in Rwanda. The partnership between ALC and IRDP was broadened after the two institutions agreed to mutually engage both in the field study phase of the research as well as the post-research project phase in the areas of research, curriculum development, and policy advocacy. To this end the two institutions signed a Memorandum of Understanding that will, among other things in the future: establish a mechanism for exchange of researchers; conduct joint research in the area of Leadership and Peacebuilding; jointly publish their research outputs; engage in joint training and mentoring of ALC Fellows through short term visiting research positions.

## Comparative dimension of research:

One of the evaluator's strong recommendations was the need to revisit the comparative dimension of the research. This was particularly noted as the research project enters its final dissemination phase of publishing the *CSD* special issue as well as the book project. It was noted that it would be rewarding for the research project team to re-convene and reflect on how the various case studies speak to the wider research project's research objectives, questions and aims. Such convening was previously noted as worthwhile in assisting the research team to have a clear conceptual and intellectual reflection on the linkages between the case studies.

## Annex I: ALC-Working Group Approach

The *Working Group approach* outlined was developed by the ALC from experience of previous research. The Working Group (WG) enables the ALC to make contribution to the research process, dissemination and research uptake. This approach provides a forum for dialogue and interaction between key security and governance actors in peacebuilding including academics, policy makers and practitioners. It is anchored on the aim that regular dialogue produces research that is relevant and meaningful to the needs of practitioners and end users.

The aim of the approach is to have three layers of interaction in this initiative. First is a core team of researchers and analysts whose duty is to carry out the main research and writing responsibility of this project. This team provides regular annotated briefing papers that form the basis of Working Group discussions. Second, are sub-Working Groups, focusing on specific thematic and or country/ region case studies. The sub-groups serve as reference groups to discuss and comment on research outputs generated by the core team. Third is the overall Working Group, which will interact largely via the ALC online platform and meets regularly to discuss ideas and output generated from the core team and sub-groups.

The primary objective of the WG is to develop a network of scholars, researchers, policymakers and other practitioners for the purpose of experience sharing, stimulating and crystallising new policy thinking, and developing new policy responses to governance related conflicts in developing societies. It also intends to develop a linkage between research and policymaking by engaging scholars, practitioners, and policymakers in a process of dialogue and experience sharing that would be mutually reinforcing and beneficial and would facilitate both theoretical understanding and appreciation of the practical challenges of peacebuilding and policymaking in this area.

The specific objectives of the WG include:

- To develop a participatory forum of policymakers, other practitioners and researchers engaged in peacebuilding with a view to promoting dialogue and stimulating the production of new ideas and policy responses to governance-induced conflicts;
- To stimulate the production of knowledge on issues pertaining to peacebuilding particularly in but by no means limited to Africa and develop a network of researchers both in the collaborating institutions and in institutions in the target regions conducting detailed research into peacebuilding and leadership issues in those areas;
- To bring peacebuilding issues in Africa to the forefront of international public discourse through the online platforms and the provision of regular briefings, periodic seminars, workshops.

Adopting a working group approach on this subject has number of benefits particularly with producing research that is relevant and meaningful to policy. First is that the WG approach will foster regular interaction between academics, policy makers and practitioners, thus bridging the gap between academia and policy. In addition, the results of the research are

disseminated through key partners and networks by seizing the opportunity of ALC participation in the activities of partners like ECOWAS, African Union to present findings from this research. Such activities include, for example, AU retreat of mediators and special envoys (which the ALC co-hosts), meetings of the AU Panel of the Wise (PoW) and meetings relating to ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF).



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