

# The Complexity of the Intersectionality of Domestic and International Non-Governmental Peacebuilding Organisations in South Sudan

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## Abstract

As peace operations and peacebuilding develop, recent discussions have centred on the growth of peacebuilding literature on inclusivity, bottom-up and local approaches. Given that a substantial number of peacebuilding is conducted by Non-governmental organisations, which occupy a middle level to governments and community levels, the paper unpacks the complexity of the interaction of the international and domestic middle-level organisations. The paper presents a case study of South Sudan's experience, which proves difficult to operationalize the critical inclusivity debates in their operations. The article argues that although there is more participation of local organizations in peacebuilding, the internal and external organizations are still riddled with complex intersections that still maintain the liberal (international) order of peace constituted by a specific form of external governance.

Thus the paper concludes that inclusivity is a non-linear process and in constant [need of] reconstruction.

**Keywords:** peacebuilding, South Sudan, NGOs, local peace building, intersection.

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## Introduction

Peacebuilding research, policy and practice have seen a substantial paradigmatic shift. This has entailed the current focus increasingly turning towards a critical reflection of the post-liberal order that seeks to focus beyond the states (level). Shifting from a majorly internationally conceptualized and driven agenda to an understanding of the importance of local-led peacebuilding and the potential role to be played by contextualizing strategies and domestic actors (Paffenholz, 2013). Giving rise to debates on the emerging consensus that local conflict resolution is crucial to building lasting peace on one hand while acknowledging that international support tends to increase the chances of successful peacebuilding (Autesserre, 2017).

As this paper attempts to show, International actors are now, due to the emergence of the local agency, working with domestic actors to achieve their objectives; this interaction is also termed hybrid peacebuilding (Hellmüller, 2014) and has led to further concepts such as concepts such as local ownership. In this space, two levels exist (although not exclusively), one is the strictly Weberian notions of the state and liberal institutionalism (Pearce (1997: 451), Barnett et al., 2007: 36; Donais, 2012: 31) and the second is a bottom-up lenses (, usually concentrate on local civil society in general) that seeks to be institutionalized in the existing state-building and greater architecture of peacebuilding. As argued by scholars (Hoksbergen, 2005; van Leeuwen,

2009; Donais, 2012: 139–53), contention lies in the critical debates that hybridity has led to many local efforts being co-opted and instrumentalized to it the universalization of peace intervention strategies and actors (MacGinty, 2011), subject to a diverse international presence of peacekeepers, peacebuilders and peacemakers. So to say, how can the local peace-level actors best fit into the international agenda of peacebuilding,

The paper departs from the critical debates which have argued that liberal peace approaches with a state-building approach have been diminishing and the presence of domestic actors is gaining traction as presented by various scholars (Donais, 2009). This has caused the need for the focus of peacebuilding to shift from mere inclusivity of the actors to the formation of strategies that goes beyond increasing numbers of actors by interrogating the nature of the relationships and collaborations.

While various authors have provided an analysis of interaction, this has been mostly an interaction between international peacebuilding actors on the one hand and local actors in general on the other hand (Hellmüller, 2014: 7). By setting this paper as a project of inquiry, I set to describe the relationship dynamics between the international and local communities and discuss the implication of the type of inclusivity practised. The paper discusses this based on analysis of South Sudan, with a record of conflict spanning from the 1950s; there is a longstanding engagement of international actors, and lately, South Sudan's domestic actors have shown much prominence in peacebuilding activities.

According to the pyramid by Lederach (1997) which describes three levels of actors in peacebuilding, the middle-level organizations represent non-governmental organisations, and consist of middle-range leadership, generally known as civil society, from various sectors such as Ethnic and religious leaders, community leaders, academics/intellectuals and philanthropic organizations to name a few. To have a structure of comparison, the paper focuses on middle-level external actors (and organisations) who are working with domestic actors, that is [I]NGOs and IGOs (whom are international organizations founded outside of South Sudan) operating at a middle level and South Sudanese National Non-Profit Organizations – henceforth referred to as domestic organizations (founded and predominantly organized by South Sudanese).

Given their inevitable interaction, the article aims to explore the area of intersection that exists between midlevel peace actors in South Sudan. With the assumption that this process and relationship is not natural nor neutral, how then do the international and domestic actors employ their strategies in this (intersection) space? To what extent have international organizations incorporated local perspectives in their peace-building strategies? Is there an interaction of strategies at the two levels? What impact does this relationship have on the strategies employed and the general goal of moving South Sudan from a conflict to a post-conflict and even further to a democratic state?

With the aim of presenting a view of the complex space that exist and occupied these actors, presenting the reality and impact of their interaction, the paper provides importance to both academic and practice in developing theories and understanding the implications of moving beyond creating a binary of 'the local', with its representation of both 'good'(Donais, 2009) and 'unstable'(Hirblinger & Simons, 2015) and the international who are framed in whispers of colonial undertones in critical peacebuilding scholarship (Jabri, 2013).

### Inclusion of Local Spaces in peacebuilding approaches

Upon reflecting on the African perspectives on peace and development in the late 1980s, Hansen (1987) in his book argued that the dominant and more western liberal perspectives of peace were not helping Africa find peace. This is because they were only addressing limited perceptions and practices. Abdullah (2017) concluded on two important issues of peacebuilding in the African Continent as a result. The first, peacebuilding in Africa has sometimes been characterized by interventions by international actors who lack the local knowledge and lived experience needed to fully address complex conflict-related issues on the continent and second researchers living and working in Africa need additional resources and platforms to shape global debates on peacebuilding as well as influence regional and international policy and practitioner audiences.

'Local' turn scholars, have highlighted the limitations of a peace concept that addresses only the technical question of the instruments of violence and who view minimalist conflict management as a sufficient condition, or the only sufficient condition, for peace (Lederach, 1997; Graf, Kramer & Nicolescou, 2006; Mac Ginty, 2008); local peace Richmond, 2013; and local ownership Donais, 2009). Calling for fundamental re-conceptualization of the methods employed to study the conflicts we try to resolve.

The significance of Such (localized) approaches revolved around the non-linearity of approaches needed to match the complexity of today's conflict and donor dependency and system theories, (Randazzo, 2017:3). John Paul Lederach explains it through his acknowledgement of web-like relationships at the basis of the social context within which conflicts take place (1997:78). He advocated for non-linear reasoning in drafting of peacebuilding initiatives. Scholars who refer to this perspective condemn previous paradigms that follow a linear casual positivist methodology, labeling them as reductionist approaches that are bound by westphalian statecentric notions regarding identities and knowledge (Korppen, 2013: 86-93) and generalize actors, agendas and action and bring limited solutions (Burns, 2011:104).

Boege (2013:39) suggests that culture-specific forms of knowledge may be instrumental in providing non-linear understanding and are as important as linear western ones. Such an approaches have tended to rely on actor-based understanding of conflict which have often perpetrated binary and misrepresent understandings of agents and their roles. It is crucial to realize that, reflecting this contingent reality requires looking beyond the 'dualistic categories that many peacebuilding strategies are based on such as inside/out or global/local' (Korppen, 2013: 90). This espouses the localization is imperative.

Placing local actors and local epistemologies at the center of understanding peace discredits tautological assumption and normative claims of universal solutions. More importantly, it is especially to discredit the tendency to privilege the local agency only when it is in service of liberal peace' (Vimalarajah & Nadarajah, 2013, 136). It also uncovers skeptical identity of the local turn theory (Simons & Zanker, 2014; (Kappler, 2015) and the perceptions on the formation of this identity (Hirblinger & Simons, 2015).

### Effect on interaction on hybridization and localization

This paper tries to avoid the trap of dichotomous and limited pro/contra debates around liberal peacebuilding (randazzo 2017: 2). Despite the criticism that the liberal peace-building project excludes the everyday, most scholars keep envisaging a form of liberal peace, though hybridization. Paffenholz (2015: 30) explains the dynamics of a hybrid peace, describing it as the peace-building discourse that considers the entangled relationship of international and local, formal and informal,

and liberal and illiberal forms of peace governance. This aligns with Kraushaar and Lambach (2009) who propagate for the formation of so-called 'hybrid peace governance structures' that provide actors with a joint – hybrid –framework of norms, values and institutions. As such, the notion of hybridity suggests the need to move beyond the ontological and methodological dominance of Western actors and approaches, and to engage with bottom up, local views of politics and society (Belloni, 2011).

Cautions against hybrid forms of peace governance need to be exercised. Although there is evidence on the critical reflection and concerns on identity of the local (who defines them) within these hybrid structures (Heathershaw, 2013), there is lack critical analysis hybridity has led to concerns of diffusion of peacebuilding norms. The questions on the latter are not simply about whether and how ideas matter, but also which and whose ideas matter (Acharya, 2004). The worry here, is that local agents reconstruct foreign norms to ensure the norms fit with the agents' cognitive and identities. This produces an additional category that shows the constant feedback between domestic and international actors' ideals over time.

This question sparks a notable contribution on the influence and the type of interaction and the impact in terms of peace objectives. In his demonstration, Acharya (2004), has attempted to argue that these transnational norms shape regional institutions and produce institutional changes through a contestation between emerging transnational norms and preexisting regional normative and social orders. Thus, he describes the this interaction may lead to localization, which in itself is as a complex process and outcome. Through this process then norm-takers (the local in this instance), build congruence between transitional norms (including norms that were previously existing in the region).

The concern here is that inclusion and the local turn can result in having more local actors in peacebuilding who are not only the receivers of these international norms, but also transfers to their constituencies. Thus, as an addition to norms being resisted, displaced or localized as explained by Archarya (2004: 254), there is also a possibility of absorption of some norms from the local to the interveners.

Thus, there is a constant [need] for exchange of information which leads to the constant feedback of the different actors although at the same level. This then impacts on strategies, behaviors and the general outcome of the peace. Examination the type of this interaction and the impact it has on achieving peacebuilding objectives remains important for the analysis of the development of peace practices and its longevity.

### Non-Governmental capacities as middle-level actors

NGOs are part of the peacebuilding consensus that include donors, major states, Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) and international financial institutions, in which there is a broad concurrence on liberal peace, though there might be disagreement of how this is to be achieved in a technical sense (Richmond and Carey, 2005:3).

Although NGO involvement can hardly be described as a panacea for the establishment of sustainable peace and development, NGOs have made enormous differences to complex peace processes through both their independent access at grass roots level, and via their cooperation with the local population, or attempts to modify state and unilateral interventions at the socio-political and developmental levels. NGOs have, to a great extent, inherited the role of building civil peace as a key component of the liberal peace, along with the parallel construction of the constitutional peace (through democratization) and institutional peace (associated with the UN system), which

are also components of the liberal peace. As a middle level organization, effectively, NGOs are thus crucial in building the institutions of the liberal peace from the bottom up, including free market economies and development strategies, social reform, political democratization to human rights and humanitarian assistance (Duffield, 2001:11). This consensus effectively indicated that NGOs have become part of the external governance of post-conflict zones. (Olivier). The construction of liberal peace now focuses on peace-as-governance, and the NGOs are vital actors in this project within the broader context of the globalization of the norms of the liberal peace and of global civil society. Non-state actors and the NGOs have been instrumental in broadening the understanding of peace and security (UN, 2004b:5).

NGOs have become essential in building stable communities and effective institutions, where it has become apparent that, NGOs not only have a role to play in peacebuilding, but that they are vital to the process entailed in the construction of the liberal peace (Richmond and Carey, 2005:19).

### Case of South Sudan

South Sudan presents a case that requires scrutiny. Some of the key contributions provide insight to the predominantly liberal peace building trajectory adopted by South Sudan after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was that of liberal peace-building and state-building (Gerenge 2015: 87). However, in just about 3 years' time after its secession, the young nation relapsed in to conflict. The previous peace-building efforts that prioritized elections had failed to bring about true peace and transformation (Young 2012: 9-10; 134-176). Several documents highlight various issues including, the lack of an inclusive peace process (Ajak 2015: 8; Akol 2014) in seeking to understand why the country relapsed into another war so shortly after independence.

There is strong evidence that peace negotiations characterized by high civil society involvement have enjoyed sustained peace in the peace building phase (Wanis-St. John & Kew 2006). This has led to an inclusion of bottom-up processes the top-level peace talks, for instance at the peace talks held in Addis Ababa, where Civil society participated directly in the talks alongside representatives from the Church, political parties and political detainees to name a few.

While arguing for the support of local and subnational peace-building efforts, and multi-level approaches to peace-building strategies, the report 'in the long Haul' by Christian Aid says that South Sudan's multi-level and interdependent conflicts require peace-building strategies that reject the distinction between local and national processes. Local does not mean unimportant, and sub-national actors can impact national dynamics of peace and war, just as national leaders depend on local constituencies to supply fighting forces and for legitimacy, according to the study (Christian Aid: 2018.) Although there is increased civil society participation, engagement and collaboration between both the international and internal (local) organisations, to which the quality of such a relationship is the inquisition of the paper.

### Strategies used by Mid-level Peace actor in South Sudan: Community centered Vs Community engaging approaches

As explained above, the previous protocols involving the international actors were mainly employed at a high level, monitored by the international actors and were characterized by lack of a connection to the ground and the local, thus disconnecting the South Sudanese local to peace processes (Salman, 2011). One of the largest drivers of peacebuilding efforts in South Sudan was largely maintained in state building. Prior to 2016 the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), approach employed by the UNMISS focuses on bilateral high-level intervention



between government signatories and international monitors. According to the United Nations Peacebuilding fund their peacebuilding plan focused on building the state's capacity to manage conflict and strengthen the rule of law in line with the overall principle of national ownership.

The strategies employed by international organizations have considerably changed. Consider the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Within the office of transition and conflict mitigation (TCM), they have one of their project is known as Viable Support to Transition and Stability VISTAS. The VISTAS project started in October 2013. The way the project was designed with a close and strong focus with the Government of South Sudan (GoSS). However, due to the outbreak of the conflict in 2013, that changed.

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“As the project was just starting, the conflict broke out and we decided to not work at the government level anymore... of course the government is allowed to attend meetings, but due to the political development, USAID is not in a position move funds or do our operations through the government. The focus has shifted, and we work exclusively in the community level. It is very important because it's a very positive tool to have and offers flexibility needed” (Interview with an officer of USAID, Juba).

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The shift drew attention of the international actors from formal systems of the government and more to the community and domestic thus, defacto inclusivity. The strategy therefore has focused more on community centered approaches.

There are also external actors who have a mandate to not only make the living conditions of conflicting communities better but transform the communities while doing so. Search For Common Grounds (SFCG), a United States based INGO, in South Sudan has from the get-go focused on working with communities,

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“We stepped in to respond to these challenges and promote peaceful coexistence between Madi and Acholi, creating a six-month pilot project called “**Together We Can**”, with support from UNDP. Leveraging the potential of existing grassroots networks, we trained leaders from Magwi and Pageri, helping them identify the root causes and the consequences of the conflict affecting their communities. We created safe spaces where both sides could meet to discuss their shared problems and begin rebuilding trust between them. For many people from Pageri, our initiatives represented the first time they were able to spend a night in Acholi land without fearing for their lives. The dialog sessions were widely praised by local authorities, including the Magwi County Acting Commissioner.” (Interview with program officer at SFCG, Juba).

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Domestic actors in South Sudan have always fought for more visibility and inclusivity. One of the advantages of domestic organizations as argued by Donais, (2009) is their ability to effectively reach the communities who suffer through the everyday conflict and peace (Richmond, 2009). The domestic organizations experience conflict both as victims and responders.

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“If something happens to you as an aid worker or to your family, you are compelled. You are much better equipped to respond compared to others who did not have that foundation in the community. Most times the first responders are national organizations it's just that it is not documented into this grand mechanism. I will say that a lot of the work that national NGOs don't get appraised into the bigger picture. If you interview organizations, they will tell you that they started as a group of young men or women to respond to a particular need in this area and then gradually evolved into what they are now. So, they were formed to represents a particular problem identified in the community.” (Interview with a representative from NGO forum, Juba).

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Organizations such as South Sudanese Network for Democracy and Elections (SSuNDE) is a national non-governmental organization that promotes active participation of citizens in peace-building and democratic political process and provides impartial and professional reports and recommendation about those processes to South Sudanese public. The strategy used in peacebuilding is divided into three aspects that is, some of the strategies used include: civil society strengthening through highlighting interdependence (this is especially in the lake regions). Here, SSuNDE meets with local communities and discusses what it is that unites them, for instance roads and water points, and also discusses ways of strengthening these dependencies by improving the areas which bring the different communities together. They also perform constituency dialogue in tackling governance programs. This dialogue is done in partnership with governmental bodies at the local level. This is to provide a platform where the legislators can dialogue with the communities on the different needs and issues that they face. They are also engaged in evidence-based advocacy and collection of data through opinion polls and surveys, and the shares this information with different organizations, such as different local government bodies and security sector institutions.

The above strategies are also compared to the strategies of Community Empowerment for Progress (CEPO). Their strategies were almost similar, that is working from the bottom-up. This includes Community peace dialogue – which involves the community to promote ownership; community consultation for peace; conducting of both national and subnational campaigns and consultations on behalf of the government and other international organizations. Thus, SSuNDE and CEPO present a more community centered and engaged approach, however, it should be noted that SSuNDE are privileged to use state resources and institutions to also conduct their work unlike other domestic grassroots organizations.

It is also important to acknowledge that currently many INGOs are engaging directly with communities, beyond the humanitarian dimension. Although a practice that is new to many of these INGOs, it remains prescriptive.

### **Building relationships; Domestic organization cooptation**

As peacebuilding needs to work in the restoration of legitimacy within the political processes and institutions, it also needs to enhance trust between individuals and between groups in a society. Thus peace-building results in the bringing together of different actors and key players who are engaged in the re-building of a country. Thus, this process will require the level of the actors working together as the process takes its form from a deep and long-term transformations that requires an integrated approach engaging a diverse range of actors (InterPeace). The emphasis here is on cooperation.

Empirical evidence supports the theoretical claim that there is barely any meaningful partnership that fosters productive interaction, observed by the international as well as the internal actors/organizations of peace in South Sudan. Here, partnership is taken to mean a form of engagement where two or more actors of peace share ownership, as well as the responsibility for managing the peace objectives of the country as equal partners.

South Sudan is currently undergoing a massive proliferation of non-governmental organizations. Some are seen as sincere, while others are seen as opportunistic, a sentiment expressed by international donors. This fear is maintained for both international and internal organizations operating within South Sudan. This has been an advantage as well as a disadvantage in that the management and the running of such organizations, especially in such an unstable country as South Sudan, can be difficult. The influx of these organizations does not seem to help in fostering

any relationships, partnerships and collaboration within the internal organization and between the internal and international organizations. It leads to some opportunistic organizations as well as groups, which are inclined politically assuming the role of peace actors and in turn making this partnership seem difficult, impossible and apparently futile.

This is not to say that there is a complete lack of collaboration. For instance, women organizations within Juba seem to have mastered the art of working together at least in some aspects to bring about change. Organizations such as Eve organization for Women Development, women for women international and South Sudan's Women Empowerment network have partnered specifically in political policy advocacy both to the international members such as IGAD and TROIKA, as well as their government counterparts i.e. SPLM-IG and even opposition groups, largely represented by SPLM-IO. Few other attempts have been made on the partnership and incorporation of strategies especially efforts directed from the domestic and peace from below. Peace Pax has also been known to engage in collaborative work, thus organizing a workshop that lasted from 2012 to 2015 to strengthen women's leadership skills and to raise their participation in political decision-making and in handling security issues.

This lack of cooperation is mainly seen when it comes to specific projects that are implemented in communities. Here, it is observed that the strategies used by some international organizations have a sense of '*humanitarian angle*'. International organizations are believed to be offering what is known as 'bandage solutions' such as building schools, as opposed to teaching the community how to build, manage and maintain schools, these however remain important.

However, domestic organizations, for the most part engaged with the communities on a discussion level, whether on behalf of other international community or by themselves. Their lack of financial flexibility and capacity limited their impact in physical development and special impact. Despite these, they remained well apt to the challenges facing the communities at a deeper level.

As an illustration of the command on local dynamics, I will demonstrate using the Integrated Development Organization (IDO). IDO is involved in community engagement mostly in internally displaced people (IDP) camps around Juba. They also focus on the youth and representation of women as a way of impacting the community in a positive way. The strategies involve using community man power to manage their resources. This is seen for instance in a water pump project which was built in a Malakal in 2016. IDO finds it necessary to have a water management committee which will be engaged with tackling the day to day issues and that is tied up and concerns the water source. In this strategy, they train community leaders on how to manage disputes and build their knowledge on mitigation. IDO therefore mostly facilitates a development action plan where they involve the communities in developing and implementing solutions on a day to day basis. Thus, the community takes the lead in identifying the needs and solutions for their specific contexts. IDO then steps in with the facilitation of and providing different resources and capacity building. They therefore call for international – domestic coordination, but more importantly a call for to local-local coordination and partnership as well. Some of this lessons learnt have now, and recently, being applied to communities by INGOs. An avenue where both internal and external organisations can seek partnership.

Another illustration was an event arranged by the Screen of Rights, which a domestic organization is run by lawyers who aim to give free legal advice. This conference aimed to tackle hate speech which is rampantly spreading in Juba, and the rest of South Sudan. Issues raised include the need for laws to address hate speech which do not currently exist in South Sudan. The problem of the hate speech, which is more prevalent on the streets, is that it is harder to control than when it is encountered online. Another aspect is fact that the hate speech has become accepted as common



language. This has therefore led to the perpetuation of different forms of discrimination in South Sudan. The participants of this conference included teachers and students from local universities, shop owners and business men from surrounding areas, as well as other local community groups and NGOs. The main strategy used by Screen of Rights focuses on working on peace-building by providing training and workshops to citizens, communities and youth groups in several areas in Juba. Interestingly, the participation at this conference catered for a bottom-up process, where the organization was interested in influencing the people who interact with day to day hate speech in their communities and neighborhoods.

Engagement of international organisations on such occasions has proved substatively important in providing capacity training and materials to such domestic organisations to conduct such exercises. Often, the need will be identified by the local organisations and motivated for intervention by the domestic organisations on one had, or the INGOs will make a call for a bit of a local partner to implement suggested activities, or for these local organisations to submit proposals which will go through approvals and acceptance by theid donors. Although this model is familiar to many donor-NGO relationship, it does provide the challenge of the projects/ solutions going through the process of constant [need] for exchange that then impacts on the diffusion of behaviors and the general outcome of the peace, contributing to the initial localization of norms and a hierarchical guardianship in peacebuilding.

Looking at some cases of engagement with international organizations such as UNMISS, the focus balances between community-level peace education and more towards engaging political semi-elites i.e. the local government leaders from the different counties. The paper is not claiming the engagement of the local in such levels. For instance UNESCO hosted a similar conference in August of 2017 with a slightly more open participant pool of about 200 delegates who were drawn from academia, online activists, youth organizations, representatives of traditional media, media development organizations representatives, government representatives, UN agencies, diplomatic missions and various other actors and stakeholders. The paper is however arguing that despite this, it remains that such an engagement is occasionally open, and its inclusion is largely at a participatory level.

### Subservient role of the domestic organizations

There is a subservient role of the local turn that can be seen in the power that both the international actors and peace-builders hold over and against the domestic (internal actors). There is increasingly a growing trend in peace-building in the appreciation for power asymmetry and inequality between international actors, who often are the users of the liberal framework, and the in-domestic actors whose efforts and capacity often fall shorts of intended objectives. This has led to the current tendency in South Sudan to prioritizing the state as the key focus of peace interventions and aligning peace-building with state building. This leads to the prominence of the view that domestic actors are used as subcontractors and entities which have to be trained and conformed in order to make a contribution. This is a prominent position held by a number of the peace actors in Juba. Thus, international strategies (mainstream) strategies in peace-building are presented as the dominant one. The reality still stands, that of the local turn being viewed as subservient to the liberal peace-building approach in the contemporary peace-building mechanism (Thelen 2000). This presented a disconnection with the citizens to the peace processes. The extent to which this high level interaction has influenced contemporary peace is not in doubt, however, the outbreak of war in 2013 reiterates the need for a multi-level and integrated approach to tackle complex issues, especially in an era where domestic actors have considerable agency and influence.

The lack of partnership does not happen by coincidence. Richmond & Franks (2009); Chandler (2010) have argued that the lack of a 'radical nature in the local turn and hybrid formations of international/ liberal and local/non-liberal institutions, practices, and values will continue to subvert the local turn'. With careful examination of the case of the international community and the elites of South Sudan response to the ongoing conflict, there remains a power play in the peace process.

In their own lifetimes, most South Sudanese have lived through a multiplicity of episodes of war. These peace processes, as with the wars, have reshuffled political alliances and positions, creating winners and losers in the architectures of power. Since the 1980s, these agreements have reshuffled power between circles of notorious elites. The agreements have often been made behind closed doors, in foreign lands, based on decades' worth of old relationships that have hugely excluded the people and communities, as they are seen to be actors of low influence. Political processes still reign. This is illustrated in the August 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, where there was minimal inclusivity of internal organization/ groups and civil societies. As expressed by members of Screen of Rights, most peace agreements have not addressed the psychological issues adequately. The international community also only focusses on the political conflict, forgetting the more deeply rooted cultural conflict that happens on the ground. Although this was later on reversed in the high Level Revitalization forums that have since taken place in Addis Ababa, which call for inclusivity and participation, albeit with great difficulty most of these domestic organizations have, at least, earned an observer role in the peace talks.

The subservient role of domestic organizations can also be observed in the funding of peace organizations. International organizations remain well funded, well trained and the elites remain well connected. However, the domestic are often side lined and their ideas barely recognized, while they lack capacity in term of management, financial and innovative peace-building methodology.

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"If funding is for education or maybe agriculture. In order to survive they will basically modify the scope to fit the funders so that they become agriculture based organizations. In order to do that they move to the national level because the infrastructure of the donors does not really trickle down to the community level. When they come to the national level they will lose their identity to some extent because you have to fit into this design that is compatible to the donors otherwise you cannot get any money. Of course the intention is when they get the money, they will be able to stand on their own two feet, and they will go back to their mandate. Not many go back. The thing is that the relationship between I NGOs and national organizations, is sort of more competitive and also sub contractual in nature." (Interview from Government representative).

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Grassroots Relief & Development Agency (GREDA) is a domestic organization that has spent 7 years focusing on the youth and community leaders. Domestic organizations such as GREDA remain poorly funded and this affects their performance. Some of the activities that are entrenched in their strategy involve facilitating dialogue, where they seek to speak to the communities about existing issues that bring about conflict and arranging sport activities which brings the communities together and builds rapport and relationship. GREDA believes that funding both domestic and international organizations will in turn influence the communities in different ways to cultivate a culture of peace, as forces will be acting from the political top and from the communal bottom in efforts to achieve peace. Until 2017, GREDA had not received funds from the Multi-donor trust fund that was set in 2006. They hold the belief that it is due to the small nature of their organization, as compared to other well established organizations that may trace their influence to political elites.

The IDO expressed their sentiments that majority of people in South Sudan are voiceless and that they (the citizens) should be one of the targets of the international community. However, this does not only apply to international organizations but also to domestic and national governmental departments. This demonstrates a disconnection between the international and the grassroots organizations and the domestic organization with the grassroots organization. IDO has also expressed that in their experience, access to international organizations mostly happens as far as funding is concerned. Moreover, allocations of these resources are determined by the access to the authority that an organization has. National non-governmental organizations, with links and ties to national and provincial governments, enjoy more resources like funding and available training more than their local and community counterparts. Thus the impact of national domestic NGOs is far stronger than the communal ones. This means that communities that do not have access to these national domestic NGOs do not get to be beneficiaries of their work.

It also remains true that the funding of domestic organizations affects their level of influence by promoting (or the lack of promotion) of the organizations capacity. In the organizations that were covered, some were found to hold more capacity in terms of resources and influence, as they were well known and better funded. Thus, the top-down processes, were more accessible to them.

There has been issues of funding when it comes to the operationalization of such collaborative efforts. Domestic organisations also maintained that in their experience, when donors do provide funding, it comes with a strict procedure on how they should utilize the funding and on what projects. This most often hard to coordinate, especially when they, as a domestic organization, disagree with some of the projects proposed. However, some donors are flexible and are often open to changes. In this organization, the international actors are important as they are a source of funding for all their activities. However, while they receive funding from the international donors, most of their activities come already structured.

## Conclusions

The discussion above give three observable facts. That is there are different approaches and strategies used by international and domestic organizations; there is lack of general partnership and cooperation; the passive role occupied by the domestic organizations in main stream peace-building and the difficult operationalization of the partnership between the domestic and international organizations/ actors of peace. This is therefore a disconnection of the top-down and bottom-up approaches employed by both the domestic and international actors. Some major noticeable effects are;

From the above, there is a realization of the failures of the liberal peace framework to attain and secure peace in South Sudan. The intention of the local turn to bridge this gap has met with different forms of obstacles that has led back the liberal peace framework. Despite the potential for meaningful local efforts in contributing to peacebuilding, the gap between the top-down and bottom-up approaches remains large and worrisome. The persisting gap is exacerbated by the challenges facing domestic organizations and the difficulty of operating during the current war. Issues of funding, coordination, lack of skills, and security render domestic organizations largely dependent on international actors. The challenge moving forward for both domestic, national, and international peacebuilders in South Sudan is to narrow the gap between their efforts in order to more effectively and sustainably solve the crisis. To do so, international organizations must understand the position that the domestic occupies and include them in their mainstream strategies and programs.

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