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Campaigning for Peace:
Can liberal and traditional peace-making solutions work together in illegal weapons collection and awareness raising actions?

Introduction

It has been widely accepted by many peace and conflict studies researchers that peaceful solutions are far more successful than violent ones when it comes to achieving the ultimate goal of peaceful end. In fact, Chenoweth and Stephan (2011) have gone so far to establish that nonviolent movements twice as successful as violent movements on average whilst military violence aimed for establishing peace usually results with complete failure.

Jackson (2014) is noting that history teaches us that one violent event will set a foundation for another one to follow. This was the case with the relation between the World War I and the World War II and also with the case of the World War II and the war in former Yugoslavia. One of the first signals of the upcoming war in the 1990s Yugoslavia was the propaganda machinery used by all sides when the violent events from the World War II namely atrocities and genocide became the prime-time news story. Past violence was in fact used to instigate the new one. This statement was also confirmed by Walter (2004) who said that violent conflict is the strongest forecaster of future armed conflicts in the areas experiencing poor economic situation and deprivation of personal freedoms.

That being said, it is clear that there is a firm connection between means and ends and that there cannot be any division between the two, as also noted by Schock (2013:279). Peaceful means the likes of peaceful reintegration and/or reconciliation process will inevitably achieve more peaceful ends as oppose to using violent means the likes of military actions that incline towards producing violent ends. This exactly is the biggest problem with violent solutions as they usually provoke violent resistance, dehumanisation and brutalisation as noted by Van Creveld (1991).

However, this leads us to the question on whether the non-violent solutions the likes of territorial settlements or weapons collection campaigns are indeed peaceful means that will

eventually lead to peaceful ends? For example, Boix (2003) considers territorial settlements as positive since they eventually lead to establishment of separate peace. Still, like in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina those territorial settlements following the war can be unjust so today, as per 1995 Dayton agreement Bosnia and Herzegovina is divided 49% vs 51% between Serbs on one side and Bosniaks and Croats on the other whilst the overall population distribution is in fact approximately 30% vs 65% respectively as reported by the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2016). Similarly, the question is if the illegal weapons collection campaign will be fully successful if the complete trust hasn't been established between all stakeholders namely peace project implementing agencies and all the target groups. In that sense, the success and sustainability of separate peace by default is quite questionable following the war which was proved in years to come in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

It is also for this reason that even though it is generally accepted that nonviolence is a way forward and without a doubt a better solution for peaceful processes as oppose to military violence that we still happen to experience cases which are recognising pacifism philosophies as naïve, idealistic and unsuccessful. Therefore, this paper intends to discuss what is it that makes peaceful initiatives and in particular weapons collection campaigning successful. Could it be that that even peaceful means and solutions could be enforced by the international community? Could it be that sometimes even the peaceful means are in fact violent? Is this the reason why they fail eventually?

Peaceful interventions

Majority of the peaceful interventions in support of rebuilding democracy are linked to the strengthening of the non-governmental sector as the mechanism to back up democratization and peaceful development. It is for this reason that in the process of peaceful reintegration, various international organizations and donors the likes of UN and OSCE have supported civil society organizations following the war in both Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina making them well structured so that today these particular NGOs and persons emerged from this process are the leading power behind majority of citizens' initiative in the entire region.

According to Hammet & Marshall (2017) NGOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina tend to use very

similar approach to promoting peace by encouraging dialogue, tolerance and reconciliation. Most importantly, such peace building projects aim to enhance the trust between the conflicted groups and prevent conflict recurrence. However, since the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina two decades past the war hasn't significantly improved Hammet & Marshall (2017) are reporting that some NGOs believe that the terms like 'reconciliation,' 'dialogue,' and 'tolerance' are being imposed by the Western donors and as such are meaningless and 'cheap'.

It seems that the international community is forgetting that justice can be understood in multiple ways so different groups of people utilise it differently. It is why today in Bosnia and Herzegovina there are three histories, three cultures and three opinions formed by Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs respectively. Therefore, when it comes to peaceful reconciliation Lundy & McGovern (2008) claim that this process should be done in sympathetic fashion in regard to past conflicts even though just claims and righteousness can be overlooked. However, the word 'reconciliation' itself could be the problem as it contains the connotation of forgiveness without accountability for war crimes and this is something that different ethnicities of Bosnia and Herzegovina are still not ready to accept.

That said, it seems that what every single peaceful initiative in post-conflict country should primarily focus upon is to enhance the understanding and subsequently the trust. Peace building interventions and projects should first and foremost address the local needs as oppose to offering the "copy-paste" solutions tested somewhere else in the world. Therefore, each peace building project should be specifically tailor-made to answer to the needs od each specific case since only the establishment of the feeling of national ownership would see the citizens backing up the entire pacifist process. In order to achieve that goal, all peace building interventions should be multi-sectoral. Even though that NGOs are recognized as a guiding force behind peaceful democratization processes no project will be successful if not fully institutionalized. All projects should be therefore done in partnership between civil society and government sector so to ensure complete institutionalization. International community in this case can only be regarded as the project donor supporting and answering to the local needs and never as an implementing agency. Otherwise, peace building process will eventually fail that could once again lead to the armed conflict. This is particularly important should it happen that the peaceful process haven't establish the trust between conflicted

groups of people and ultimately solve the problem of illegal weapons possession as a precondition for conflict recurrence.

All that was noted basically describes two approaches to peace-making actions one being participatory putting the emphasis on community namely NGO and governance involvement and the other one being the standardized international i.e. Western peace process. The first one is often referred to as traditional peace whilst the other one is called the liberal peace. Both approaches have their advantages and limitations and as Mac Ganty (2008) is suggesting that the co-existence of the two models is the most acceptable solution so that alternative approaches from traditional peace interventions could be combined with the clear structure of liberal peace thus by making complementary relationship.

The example of Bosnia and Herzegovina is quite interesting when it comes to applying peace-making interventions. The influence of the Western prescribed peace in this country has been extremely dominant. Chandler (2000) is saying that the international community went so far to engineer new political institutions, disbar elected politicians, rewrite school curricula, impose budgets and finally design a new flag. However this dominant Western approach to peace-making is slowly changing and thus by opening room to more customary i.e. traditional peace interventions. This is particularly related to the issue of peaceful interventions concerning possession of illegal weapons.

Following the weapons embargo imposed by the UN Security Council Resolution 713 from the September 1991 which in fact provoked weapons smuggling into Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia there were no clear figures nor the clear estimates about the quantities of illegal weapons in possession of civilians once the war ended. Since this problem represented a threat that could cause a recurring conflict international community opted to implement peaceful intervention namely illegal weapons collection campaign. However, the illegal weapons collection campaigns implemented basically reflected the two peace-making approaches.

Liberal peace: "Operation Harvest"

Liberal peace, as noted, in its very essence is a concept where Western states and international organizations promote their version of peaceful interventions without adequate understanding

of tradition and indigeneity of local community who are to benefit from such peace action. Such actions are done in a fairly structured and standardized way and therefore leaving no adequate options for adaptation to certain time and space continuum. Even when local communities are involved in such actions e.g. via local NGOs they too are expected to merely transmit the messages of respective peace action instead of receiving and accepting it.

Such standardization of liberal peace is particularly noticeable with the Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) actions. Mac Ginty (2008) is stating that the liberal peace is operationalized in highly standardized formats that leave little space for alternative approaches to dispute resolution whilst Darby (2003) and Guelke (2004) are saying that such peaceful interventions tend to be non-reflexive and uniform and therefore not providing best practice sharing.

One of such DRR peaceful intervention was the NATO organized weapons collection campaign in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1998-2004. Even though originally said that this action was to be done in cooperation with local authorities it still kept all the attributes of being standardized Western imposed and military supported liberal peace operation. During the process of implementation international community influenced the peace actions so much that it caused the resignation of Bosnia and Herzegovina political and military leader and abolished the highest military authority being the Supreme Defence Council, as also noted by Mulchinock (2017). Operation Harvest even included individual incentives in the form of raffle tickets therefore turning towards weapons buy-back programmes and options. In doing so this military supported peace intervention was bound to never be understood as national ownership programme by the locals. Even the actual campaign name was the problem since if any kind of foreign military forces the likes of NATO or SFOR is to "harvest" weapons in anyone's country there is very little chance that you such action will be welcomed by local community. On the contrary, locals will not feel of such an action as their own and therefore seize the implementation meaning that the sustainability of such actions is extremely limited.

Traditional peace: "Less Weapons Less Tragedies" campaign

Prior to presenting specific example of traditional peace-making it needs to be noted that the terms 'traditional' and 'indigenous' are not interchangeable. Mac Ginty (2008) explains that

even though overlapping, traditional peace means that a practice has a heritage of significant duration whilst the indigenous suggests that a practice is locally inspired.

There are two main points to be considered when discussing traditional and/or indigenous peace and those are local involvement and sustainability. In terms of local participation, it needs to be understood that it cannot happen if the peace project was planned, funded and managed from an outside source (like in the case of Operation Harvest). On the contrary, local involvement needs to take place at every single level of peace project development, implementation and monitoring. In that sense, local community will propose the best solution to fit its needs and eventually enable sustainability which is another important factor. The logic behind sustainability is that community needs to take part of the entire peace process so that their capacities are strengthened in such way to be able to take over the peace project implementation without the support of international community.

Lately, following the recognized faults of the prevailing Western peace-making approach many international organizations, countries and NGOs have noted interest in traditional peace-making interventions. Many researchers have also emphasized the importance of culture and tradition as part of peace-making projects. Avruch (1998) believes that if the conflict is located to a specific culture then the proposed intervention should also be respectful of that particular culture. Lederach (1995) talks about a very significant notion which is against the external conflict resolution professionals having a monopoly of peace-process expertize and instead emphasize local peace-process inputs.

At the institutional level, many international organizations dealing with conflict resolution have also increased their attempts in practising traditional peace-making ideas. One of them is the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) via the established Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Recovery who in fact funded the illegal weapons collection and awareness raising campaign in Croatia which learned from the faults of the operation Harvest in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

"Less Weapons Less Tragedies" campaign started in 2007 with the Memorandum of Understanding signed between an international organization namely UNDP and the local institution namely Croatian Ministry of Interior. Most importantly, this campaign put emphasis on the awareness raising which then resulted with the excellent respond from the

citizens in returning their illegal weapons. It used participatory approach so all the activities were implemented with support of NGOs particularly involving war veteran, youth and women civil society organizations. It appreciated the culture of local population so for instance in one of the campaign phases the emphasis was put on children and comic books as an innovative tool in weapons collection and awareness raising. Another point to be appraised is that this campaign practised permanent weapons amnesty embedded and institutionalized in the Croatian Law on Weapons. It accepted local peculiarities so the weapons were not collected publicly but instead police officers in unmarked vehicles and wearing plain civilian clothes were collecting weapons which citizens wanted to surrender without pressing any charges against them. The campaign opposed the until then standard weapons buy-back programmes and instead used collective incentives meaning that instead of individually rewarding citizens for doing something moral and surrendering their illegal weapons, the campaign rewarded cities and communities which collectively returned the largest quantities of weapons and financed the implementation of Community Safety Projects. As of 2014, the campaign reached the goal of full sustainability so UNDP withdrew from the campaign as an implementing partner and since then the only project lead is the national authority i.e. Croatian Ministry of interior. Because of all this, "Less Weapons Less Tragedies" campaign was noted to be the most successful UNDP weapons collection campaign and therefore this best practice model was used and adapted all across the South-East Europe. As a result of this, UNDP later on supported implementation of "Choose Life, Not Weapons" in Bosnia and Herzegovina and "Respect Life, Return Weapons" campaigns in Montenegro.

Conclusion: Co-existence between liberal and traditional peace

As already noted, the biggest advantage of liberal peace-making interventions is that they are strategically conceived and highly structured. On the other hand, traditional peace benefits from local involvement and sustainability. Therefore, it seems that it would be reasonable to explore if the two models could interlink and complement each other. Mac Ginty (2008) suggest the time has come to consider finding a synthesis between Western and traditional versions of peace. The example of presented illegal weapons collection and awareness raising campaigns goes to show that liberal peace-making process can co-exist with traditional forms. It seems that the international organizations as carriers and promotors of liberal peace could

play a significant role in providing the environment for deployment of traditional peace mechanisms and alternative approaches into the pre-structured and standardized Western peace-making templates. That said, it needs to be noted that UNDP used all the previous experience of the liberal peace oriented "Operation Harvest" and customise its positive structural points to incorporate and appreciate inclusion of local aspects of traditional peace-making methods thus by creating national ownership and sustainability of "Less Weapons Less Tragedies" campaign.

The co-existence between liberal and traditional peace is therefore clearly possible and it is just that main stakeholders need to find and utilise strengths and opportunities in adding traditional peace modelling into standardized liberal peace dynamics. Two main points recognized during the UNDP exit strategy where connected to the financial costs and the success recognition. Use of traditional peace modelling namely the support received from the Croatian Ministry of Interior aided UNDP to reduce the cost of the campaign via devolved responsibility concept which requested less capacity involvement from the UNDP as oppose to the fully Western peace-making process. Most importantly, UNDP received wide national project acceptance and this is what the powerful international actors are aiming for as this is something that creates opportunity for future best-practice sharing like in the case of "Less Weapons Less Tragedies" campaign.

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