



Public Administration Reconstruction and Development in Post-conflict States: A Critique of Global Trends and Experiences

Purshottama Sivanarain Reddy¹

Abstract:

The absence of peace, stability, and solidity in many states globally negatively impacts sustainable development, notably the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The volatility and instability extend beyond the individual state and to neighboring states, not forgetting the region and continent. Weak/failed and post-conflict states are considered a possible danger and threat to universal safety. Consequently, their rebuilding and transformation should be prioritized in the broader international growth/development context. This viewpoint and thinking ushered in an international accord that conclusively decided that peace and stability are vital and indispensable for global development and are critical to the 2030 international growth and development framework. It was packaged and approved as an integral part of the SDGs in 2015 by the United Nations (UN). SDG 16 endorses sustainable development through peaceful/inclusive societies, developing efficacious inclusive/accountable structures at all governmental spheres and granting access to justice. SDG 16 alludes to sustainable development not being promoted and achieved without peace/harmony. Likewise, peace and harmony cannot be attained without sustainable development. In the context of collective growth/development and a global vision of “leaving no – one behind,” it is critical that good, robust post-conflict reconstruction and development is vigorously

¹ School of Management, IT and Governance, University of KwaZulu Natal, Durban, Republic of South Africa.

promoted with a view to a better life for all. The research methodology adopted for this paper was qualitative, as it included a desktop study of pertinent international and continental literature, including, *among other things*, books/chapters in books, journal articles and reports and other publications of the international donor community.

Keywords:

post-conflict, public administration, rebuilding, reconstruction, states

1. Introduction

State fragility and conflict loom over the lives and livelihoods of at least one billion people in approximately 30 – 40 states internationally, and consequently, conflict-affected and post-conflict states are one of the major impediments to the global vision of attaining the SDGs. According to Stewart in Cenciarini (2020), 8 out of the ten poorest states internationally are experiencing social disruptions, revolutions, and civil wars with heightened social costs and gloomy developmental prospects. Fragile, conflict-affected, and post-conflict states experience considerable human and economic costs, and their unsteadiness can have major damaging consequences for neighbouring states (OECD, 2011; Chene, 2012; United Nations, 2021).

A conflict's conceptualisation is extensive and defined inversely in different circumstances and settings. The word "Post-conflict" has been extensively used academically and in policy contexts to identify states that have gone through violent conflict. The "post-conflict" nomenclature has gained momentum, given the global interest in war-ravaged societies (Lindberg & Orjuela, 2014). The theory on post-conflict reconstruction is limited, and this can be attributed to possibly a reconstruction "gap" between the projects undertaken, planned and completed. Jabareen (2013) adds that post-conflict conceptually is "defined loosely" in varied state contexts, political situations and circumstances, and it can also prove to be misleading in that although the war is over, the conflict persists. Moreover, new conflicts arise, and violence in diverse forms lingers for some time thereafter.

Following World War 2, global roleplayers (notably the United Nations (UN), World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), national and international NGOs and donor countries have devoted considerable attention and committed funds to the mammoth job of post-conflict rebuilding (Reddy & Nemec, 2021; Jabareen, 2013).

A "global peacebuilding industry" has developed consisting of major international players such as, *among other things*, the UN, international NGOs and public institutions involved in wide-ranging actions and activities that seek to avert increasing conflict and the resultant violence and work towards sustainable peace and harmony in areas

ravaged by war. The “post-conflict” notion, as highlighted by Lindberg and Orjuela (2014), includes disarmament/arms reduction; demining; reconstruction/upgrading of infrastructure; fiscal recovery/improvements, demobilisation/integration of soldiers; refugee upgrading/improvement; independent elections organisation; transitional justice processes; human rights protection and the creation of public institutions legally. Jabareen (2013) points out that post-conflict reconstruction and development have advanced to a grand strategy with a majestic narrative, and the global objectives have transitioned outside humanitarian support to embrace a novel global/regional agenda, universal security and solidity and building of democracy.

2. Post-conflict states: history, background and context

States that are capable and robust cannot just be presumed internationally as they have some history. States with inclusive bureaucracies were ushered in Europe only after the 1500s, and prior to that, the continent was governed by numerous warlords who fought each other for power and resources (Justino, 2017). Capital accumulation after that and the machinery, skills and know-how of the war ensured more robust fiscal capacity and capability.

The Treaty of Westphalia and the Vienna Congress in 1648 and 1815, respectively, formalized the organization of European states, and the basis for it was the sovereignty, autonomy/independence of the constituent national governments to act as they deemed fit jurisdictionally, without interference. The two world wars negatively impacted the governance system, with several empires/ kingdoms collapsing, resulting in the ensuing instability (The World in 2050 Initiative, 2018). The USA Marshall Plan (European Recovery Program) buttressed post-World War 2 Reconstruction in Western Europe relative to democracy and free market economies (United Nations, 2009).

International bodies/structures like the UN and allied agencies, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact provided the requisite checks/balances for the next four decades. The collapse of the Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) created challenges within and between states, resulting in general instability in the region. Competition between states then transitioned to economic development nationally. It increased economic interdependence by forging strong trading relationships using the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trades (GATT) and bilateral trade agreements (The World in 2050 Initiative, 2018).

The European and Western socio-economic systems/structures have dominated internationally for almost five centuries. During the period 1500 – 1800, trade facilitated this process. From 1800 – 1945, agriculture and the exploitation of mineral resources were under military control. Finally, after World War 2, they were exploited through economic manipulation and exploitation (The World in 2050 Initiative, 2018). Post-World War 2 ushered in a new trend where former independent colonies that had

developed economically and acquired the requisite self-confidence started becoming more assertive.

The evolution, progression and significance of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) group of states is one example of what has been happening globally. This inclination is expected to continue as more and more states start reflecting on their national and regional interests. This development will likely create concern in global affairs as the BRICS grouping has also increased recently and has included new states like Ethiopia, United Arab Emirates, Iran, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

The historic Euro – American bloc has been subject to growing political and economic pressure globally, and this has to be considered in reviewing the contemporary transnational social order, taking cognizance of the wars in Ukraine and Palestine which shattered the quest for political stability internationally. The impact is going to be quite severe, more specifically on international politics and relations, given the stances on the war and new regional and international alliances that have developed in the past year. Governments will certainly regroup after the end of both these wars, and there will inevitably be new global alliances and agreements that will surface.

3. Violence and conflict in global governance: the issue in context

States with poor governing capacity that cannot sustain peace are inhabited by almost 1.6 billion people globally (World Bank in Justino and OECD, 2016). These weak/fragile states were projected to play host to approximately half of the world's poor persons by 2018 and over 60% by 2030. The OECD (2016) has pointed out that the populace considered extremely poor and vulnerable is likely to increase from 480 million in 2015 to 542 million people in 2035. Post-World War II saw the number of refugees and the displaced population steadily increase. Justino (2017) estimated that by 2017, approximately 2.3 million refugees and 65.3 million people would have been displaced globally. Approximately 150,000 deaths occurred in 2016 internationally that can be attributed to war or terrorism, with a further 390,000 deaths ascribed to acts of interpersonal violence (The World in 2050 Initiative, 2018). Armed conflicts globally have been increasing and reached a new high of 54 in 2019, resulting in the death of 80,000 people annually. Refugees displaced transnationally have peaked at more than 80 million, of which 86% are living in developing countries (JICA, n.d.).

There is a positive linkage between the notion of fragility, violent conflict and weak governance in a country context as a sizable proportion of donor funding, which in 2012 was 12% (approximately \$127 billion), was directed, according to the OECD, in Justino (2017) at governance interventions. Reconstruction and development of post-conflict states have taken varied forms globally, reliant on the philosophies, systems and theories used, and more importantly, on the state/region/continent in question (United Nations,

2009). Nevertheless, internationally, the development and progress noted and the results have been limited and not that efficacious or resounding, despite the human, financial and technical resources directed to responding to these issues (IIAS/IASIA, 2019; Justino, 2017; Reddy & Nemec, 2021).

The notion of “human well-being” is high on the global agenda, and states tend to engage, interact, negotiate and transact predominantly around the notion of “wealth” comparatively. According to The World in 2050 Initiative (2018), productivity and growth have been prioritized, and social and natural capital has been overconsumed globally.

Fragility is an entrenched distinctive feature; virtually all battles in the first decade of the 21st century were in states that had experienced periodic conflicts earlier (World Bank, 2011). Grievances harbored over a long period have degenerated into a conflict over some time. The key drivers of conflict internationally are (UNDP, 2016):

- Catalysts: external shocks, notably political/economic/environmental and security intensifies the internal fragility factors;
- Grievances: unfulfilled demands of groupings viewed as discrimination/inequality, results in an armed conflict;
- Opportunities: for power/accumulation and livelihoods; and
- Feasibility: a government is illegitimate, weak, absent and unable to counter/contain a rebellion/revolt/insurgence and wars.

The UNDP (2016) and O’Neil and Sheely (2019) are of the firm view that violent conflicts, irrespective of where they take place impacts directly on growth and progress and may cost a state a generation of development (Ghani & Iyer, 2010; OECD, 2011; JICA, n.d.). On a global level, failed, weak and post-conflict states threaten universal security and well-being; thus, their reconstruction and development should be prioritized and placed high on the international development agenda (United Nations, 2009; OECD, 2011; Reddy & Nemec, 2021).

3.1 Governance: the source of conflict and peace

Despite all the resources and international political commitments and interventions introduced globally to enhance governance in post-conflict states, the results are far from encouraging – in fact, they have been mixed and far from hopeful (Mansuri & Rao in Justino, 2017 and IIAS/IASIA in Reddy & Nemec, 2021). Justino (2017) adds, citing Blatman and Ralstin, that there has not been adequate global interrogation of the governance intervention choices and, more importantly, which were the most effective and impactful and the reasons why. The international donor community and governments have universally viewed and responded to the notion of good governance and conflict resolution as two distinct and disparate issues. The viewpoints and thinking emanating from the research pointed to the fact that these two critical areas are broadly linked and must be rejoined concurrently (Justino, 2017). He (2017) adds that one cannot confidently state what type/form of governance would decrease conflict, given

that there are several different compromises linked to “improving governance” and, additionally, “reducing conflict” globally.

The governance system/structure is a critical consideration (O’Neil & Sheely, 2019). It has been viewed as a key area where deterrence actions can assist in transferring fierce conflict into creative discussion, debate and discourse. The positive relationship between the notion of good governance, sustained peace and stability is demonstrated in SDG 16. The emphasis on governance as an original source of conflict and peace is vital in deliberations and debates between ending conflict and development (O’Neil & Sheely, 2019).

There are three broad categories of governance systems globally in states that are impacted by conflict, according to Justino (2017). The first is marked by robust, responsible, accountable, authentic and legitimate governance institutions, signified by those that emerged and developed from the Second World War, best described as “open access societies” and “inclusive institutions.” The second category is more established “limited order societies,” signified by equally sturdy governance structures, but are extractive, commanding and greedy/destructive governance systems, consequently encouraging/promoting economic development and avoiding violent conflict over the long term. A significant number of these states (Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Angola, Zimbabwe, Pakistan and the Philippines), according to Slater in Justino (2017), have been relatively stable longitudinally as a result of strategic elite coalitions, the impact of internal/external issues and the management of different roleplayers. The third type comprises interim and generally weak and exposed governance systems often established in countries experiencing extended violent conflict, namely Somalia, South Sudan, Central African Republic of the DRC and Yemen. In these instances, violent conflict is not evident; however, the threat is constantly there, and the state authority is basically absent. In this case, some stability will possibly be attained at the sub-national level through local actions, like more efficient basic municipal services provision. Managing violence in the second and third governance categories distinguishes it from governance in peaceful contexts (Justino, 2017).

Internal deficits and discrepancies in governance can activate conflicts generally and globally, unequal distribution of gains from development, marginalization politically or internal shocks (economic shocks, disasters/catastrophes or war) (Ghani & Iyer 2010; Justino, 2017). O’Neil and Sheely (2019) point out that violent conflict tends to break out in states that are alienated, withdrawn and isolated, where diverse groupings are subject to social, political and economic disparities, as highlighted above. The systems/structures/institutions of governance and the public policymaking processes tend to favor and benefit certain groupings and exclude and discriminate against others, resulting in grievances being harbored, sometimes over a long period, fueling conflict and violence (JICA, n.d.). An implied postulation in possible policy rejoinders is that inclusion is more likely to be advanced through official and prescribed institutional transformation and platforms. Promoting and advocating inclusion institutionally through, amongst others, a system of quotas and other enhancements are

generally the initial strategies in responding to the exclusion (O'Neil & Sheely, 2019).

It is imperative to encourage and promote inclusive socio-political institutions and lessen societal disparities, as endorsed by SDG 10 and SDG Target 16.7, which is part of the global strategy (O'Neil & Sheely, 2019). Notwithstanding the total deprivation, the exclusion and equality of distinct social groupings should be addressed as part of the equation. According to The World in 2050 Initiative (2018), specific groupings that are politically marginalized are more likely to engage in armed insurgence, and this should be taken cognizance of. Economic inequality between religious, ethnic and social identity groups also tends to result in conflict (Stewart in Cenciarini 2020). It may not necessarily be economic inequality per se that is fueling the actual conflict, but related issues like access to resources, social identities and opportunities available (Ghani & Iyer, 2010; Justino, 2017; O'Neil & Sheely, 2019). Consequently, encouraging and endorsing political and economic equality within the social order of states, articulated by SDG 10 and creating or solidifying inclusive institutions as espoused in SDG target 16.7 should ensure solidity in diverse societies, thereby reducing tension and the danger of armed conflict globally (O'Driscoll, 2018).

Governance systems and structures that are incapable or averse to responding to the needs and requirements of the citizenry as a result of capacity/capability, resource constraints, lack of apparatuses for accountability and corruption contribute to growing violence and volatility in diverse conflict situations globally (Justino, 2017; Reddy, 2016; Reddy, 2018). A general postulation supporting many stabilization efforts/activities is that enhancing basic service delivery will possibly break this wicked cycle by enhancing the rightfulness of the government in office and reducing the inclination towards violent conflict (O'Neil & Sheely, 2019). However, rudimentary service access on its own is less important for fortifying legality, as opposed to, amongst others, service quality, which discharges them, inclusiveness of decision-making and ensuring that the grievance machinery is in place (O'Driscoll, 2018).

The absence of an operative, robust civic sector can also negatively impact peace, stability and governance by advocating that disputes are solved through violence instead of positive and useful debate, discussion and negotiation (O'Neil & Sheely, 2019; United Nations, 2009). The international donor community generally believes that developing the technical expertise of local civic organizations will be adequate to fortify and reinforce civic engagement, enhance governance and avert violence. Reasons for weak civic engagement include limited access to rudimentary information about rights, the absence of social networks required for evocative participation, and limited civic space. Consequently, endorsing and encouraging community engagement and developing social capital is about solidifying the civic engagement ecosystem in states, ranging from informal podiums to civic activists to conventional structures and networks (O'Neil & Sheely, 2019). The above could include ordinary citizens, traditional leaders/authorities, religious groups, non-state actors, and even weaponized armed groupings, all of which influence governance systems as they regulate large parts of the area/region and are the

“hearts and minds” of the local populace during and after the conflicts (Justino, 2017). Thus, it is imperative to be in touch with them regularly so that there is a requisite flow of valuable information that can inform critical decision-making.

The prospering states and regions also have conflicts; however, they tend to manage them much more efficaciously due to speedy and swift growth, job – creation, and well-capacitated and funded public institutions and programs viewed as part of a well-planned safety net. Ghani and Iyer (2010) add that the negative consequences of conflict globally are more severe in regions that have frail and weak public governance institutions, poor topography and layout and limited integration with markets, which are also the features that hinder their growth and limit poverty alleviation (Kamais, 2019).

Despite these so-called tradeoffs and the resultant challenges emanating therefrom, there have still been extreme demands for enhanced governance in post-conflict states (State of Palestine, 2019; Keulers, 2017; The World in 2050 Initiative, 2018; Reddy, 2018), as it will decrease the possibility of violence escalating. The most recent policy interventions in post-conflict countries acknowledged “public sector governance capacity building and reform” as a critical focus area where there is a very limited indication of what works (Brown et al. in Justino, 2017.) Policy obligations for participating in post-conflict countries must be well coordinated; capacity-building investments have to be made, and funds have to be spent effectually (O’Driscoll, 2018; IASIA 2017; JICA, n.d.; United Nations, 2021). The source of institutional capacity will be mainly drawn from its populace’s creativity and innovativeness, experience and skills. The OECD (2016) points out that the widely accepted lessons and good practices are deeply rooted in having a known sustainable capacity to reflect, learn and undo glitches creatively.

Public administration education and training in post-conflict countries are critical to capacity development to promote organizational effectiveness, largely dependent on public functionaries’ values and attitudes, which must be prioritized (UNDP, 2019a). Tertiary institutions in post-conflict states should ensure that the curriculum and basic study programs are philosophical and reflect their public sector requirements (IASIA in Reddy & Nemec, 2021). The IIAS/IASIA has highlighted in Reddy and Nemec (2021) that primary, critical political skills and competencies should be incorporated, empowering public functionaries to reflect and deliberate innovatively, critically and creatively. They should be empowered and capacitated on best public governance practices, advocacy, leadership, and human relations and function as a collective to attain well-defined, clear and distinct goals in taking the aspirations of the new political regime forward (IIAS/IASIA in Reddy & Nemec, 2021; O’Neil & Sheely, 2019). Donor communities are under considerable pressure as they often face requests for competing demands, that is, the need for basic capacity building instead of immediate relief and the discharge of basic services.

Progress has been made in several interventions that have sought to respond to

critical facets of governance in post-conflict states. The focus has been on local governance/decentralization (OECD, 2011; United Nations, 2021), solidifying accountability, developing local capacity for communal action, scope/legality of public institutions, facilitating enhanced flow of information and interventions designed for amending rules/norms that define governance structures/systems, including institutions and relations viewed as being informal (Justino, 2017). The reconstruction of core government functions (CGFs) deemed open, legitimate/responsive is essential in a state moving out of a conflict. The UNDP (2019b) has pointed out that the evidence of the positive linkage between public spending, institutional rebuilding reform and resilience is limited in post-conflict states.

4. Sustainable development in a global context: SDG 16 in focus

Sustainable development is a situation where states benefit from economic prosperity, achieving the requisite social cohesion and safeguarding environmental sustainability longitudinally. Globally, the “triple bottom line” is the social, economic and environmental goals and the 2030 agenda, accentuating that human, social and economic development must be underpinned by good governance and global cooperation. According to The World in 2050 Initiative (2018), the SDG goals enhance four dimensions: good governance, prosperity, social inclusion and environmental sustainability. The SDGs are widespread, holistic and all-inclusive, as they apply to developing and developed states, and all goals must be attained harmoniously. The 2030 global agenda and the 17 goals from that are a social contract states have entered globally, with the express intention of “leaving no one behind,” implying that no country or region is expected to lag in the broader schema of things.

The clear and unambiguous insertion and inclusion of “Peace” in the global SDG Agenda indicates that inclusive, all-encompassing, and peaceful societies are critical for sustainable development (O’Neil & Sheely, 2019). The absence of violence is a prerequisite for peace. Conflict and violence are not characteristic of a global world where democracy exists and independent state institutions have been established (JICA, n.d.). Equally, political participation and inclusion are fundamental to social cohesion and to facilitating democratic transformation. The World in 2050 Initiative (2018) points out that sustainable development cannot be attained without “sustaining people,” necessitating peaceful and inclusive societies. Equally, conflict prevention and consolidation of peace will not be achieved in the absence of sustainable development. Consequently, sustainable development and sustaining peace must be realized in tandem (JICA, n.d.).

SDG 16 seeks to lessen violence meaningfully by working collaboratively with governments and the local citizenry to secure permanent resolutions to issues of conflict and uncertainty. It is directed at creating peaceful/non-violent societies to facilitate

sustainable development, safeguard justice, and create inclusive, all-encompassing public institutions in all governmental spheres (UNDP, 2016). Target 16.1 is dedicated to reducing violence, which harms public health globally.

SDG 16, by advocating justice, peace, and sturdy public institutions and the SDG on equality additionally, is critical to the central principle and adage of “leaving no one behind,” proving that Agenda 2030 responds to contemporary debates and a crucial gap in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), adopted by the UN and operational during the period 2000 – 2015 (Reddy & Nemec, 2021). The priority accorded to attaining peaceful societies, decrease in violence, inclusion and social justice through response governance is a critical shift in the international development schema (The World in 2050 Initiative, 2018). Good governance was fleetingly mentioned in the Millennium Declaration in 2000; however, no distinct MDG was explicitly designed to focus on governance aspects (Reddy & Nemec, 2021), political inclusion and the scourge of corruption. There is currently no general agreement that governance goals detailed in SDG 16 are not simply much-required developmental outcomes but essential facilitators/enablers for attaining other goals, which are a critical component of the 2030 global development agenda. An operative public administration system is pivotal to peace, human rights and security (Keulers, 2017). Internationally, public administration in post-conflict states, which is robust and sturdy, is critical for responsive public policymaking to sustain socioeconomic and political solidity (IASIA, 2017).

5. Post-conflict states: the nexus between public administration, reconstruction and development

There is a positive linkage between public administration and the notion of good governance, and it essentially implies that the following aspects will be pursued in the context of a post-conflict state (OECD, 2011; Chene, 2012; O’Driscoll, 2018; State of Palestine, 2019):

- rule of law nationally/internationally and safeguarding access to justice is endorsed/encouraged;
- decisive reduction of corruption;
- public institutions developed at all levels/spheres are operative, transparent and accountable;
- ensure inclusive, responsive, approachable, participatory and demonstrative decision-making/policymaking at all levels/spheres;
- extending/reinforcing the participation/involvement of the developing countries in international public institutions/structures, thereby promoting best practices; and
- free/guaranteed access to data/information and essential liberties in accordance

with nationwide legislation/universal agreements.

5.1 Reconstruction and development themes, principles and mechanisms

The four related components of post-conflict reconstruction have been summarised by Jabareen (2013) as follows:

1. Political reconstruction: creation of a capable/legitimate state. Capacity development/development of systems that support local institutions and technical skills transfer are crucial. Relevant policies are endorsed based on the “effective intervention requires that there is a functioning governance accepted by the population and supported by the international community.”
2. Economic reconstruction: physical infrastructure; appropriate rules/ institutions for a market economy. There must be peace and economic plans/strategies for a self-sustaining economy to discharge essential services, reestablishing critical infrastructure and institutional capacity to enhance the welfare of the populace.
3. Social reconstruction: responding to urgent local needs; rebuilding local communities and leadership to enhance national security/stability. A lively civil society and the inculcation of a political culture that nurtures voluntary cooperation are required.
4. General security provision: a key precondition for large-scale rebuilding and the creation of an orderly and secure location/environment.

Jabareen (2013) adds that the principles and instruments guiding reconstruction are:

- Indigenous priorities, integrative management for relief actions, resource redistribution for rebuilding, selectivity of resources allocation, participatory ownership, commitment/leadership;
- partnership/collaboration, sustainability for lifelong impact, assessment/best practices for local conditions;
- results attained;
- flexibility to exploit opportunities/maximize efficiency/accountability/transparency to prevent corruption.

Public administration transformation is essential and fundamental for rebuilding post-conflict states globally. Thus, this needs to be prioritized in the wider notion of “leaving no one behind” and in the universal pursuit of the SDGs. The requisite government leadership has to be in place to develop the required state capability to strategize, co-ordinate, interconnect and implement the SDGs as espoused in the 2030 international development framework/agenda (UNDP, 2019a). Taking cognizance of more recent developments, the Ukrainian and Palestinian wars, it is critical that the core components of SDG 16 be critically examined and reviewed and taken to its logical

conclusion in terms of creating an international social order free of tension, conflict and wars.

The crucial tasks and challenges faced by post-conflict states, particularly in the developing world in the broad context of public administration, include, amongst others, an obstinate state sector that is not responding to universal changes, be it political or economic; widespread corruption impacting negatively on states; uncompromising and intricate public leadership and complex laws/legislation/management processes and procedures and a struggle to transform the public institutions concerning their conduct, character and ethos (State of Palestine, 2019; Chene, 2012; O'Driscoll, 2018). Political volatility in post-conflict states is a barrier to state-building actions and activities.

There are key challenges that have to be responded to in transforming public administration as part of post-conflict reconstruction and development globally, as highlighted by the UN and UNDP in Reddy (2018), namely:

- Effective and operative leadership that seeks to change state functionaries' views/attitudes/conduct in democratic settings to enable them to perform efficaciously.
- A positive linkage between leadership and institutional development has to be developed, and appropriate legal/political structures must manage conflict.
- Developing functional operational systems/structures that promote all-embracing institutional growth, responding to state necessities and historical values of fairness/justice, morality/uprightness, and commitment, which have to be indoctrinated.
- Human resources consolidation, notably values, beliefs, approaches and capacities of public functionaries, should be changed to be efficient in a democratic context.
- Developing systems/structures for inclusive governance and the decentralization process is advancing public participation.
- Enhancement of citizen-centered service delivery as this constitutes the basis of robust democracies and a public sector which is open, responsive and stable. Fair and efficient public policies should reinforce and underpin the public sector.

A viable post-conflict state must have some pre-determined criteria critical for development and, more importantly, ensuring longitudinal sustainability. Political solidity and stability can be achieved by promoting and encouraging communal trust and the requisite confidence amongst all the key roleplayers and stakeholders in a state to enable development, ensure an autonomous ethical code relative to public policymaking, and inspire dialogue and discussion between the populace, thereby taking cognizance of their needs and facilitating growth to attain them (United Nations, 2009; State of Palestine, 2019). Wars, battles and skirmishes must be confronted by

others, complementing the critical rules of national legislation, rule of law, and court verdicts, eliminating unlawful weapons movement, and favoring short-term development policies/strategies. Global actions and activities should be directed and channeled to endorsing and ratifying peace, reconstructing states that have been impacted in terms of conflict, and enabling developmental/humanitarian actions as a result of the people movement (State of Palestine, 2019).

It has been emphasized in several quarters internationally by authoritative sources (IASIA, 2017; State of Palestine, 2019; Keulers, 2017; Reddy & Nemec, 2021) that in post-conflict states, a strong, robust and sturdy public administration is critical for public policymaking to reinforce and enhance stability politically, economically and socially, relative to the SDGs. Despite inadequate resources, public policies impacting the SDGs must be connected within the wide-ranging milieu of an open, transparent, and accountable government and technological development. The 2030 international development agenda has placed a robust and operative public administration as a prerequisite for peace, human rights, development/growth and safety/security. Keulers (2017), supported by JICA (n.d.), is of the view that the essential performance of public administration reconstruction and development to ensure that it is focused and efficacious is imperative in any post-conflict state internationally relative to regaining its status as a government in power; ensuring the resilience and pliability of its public institutions; safeguarding its flexibility and agility and the restoration of trust, and in the final analysis promoting social cohesion. An operational and functional public administration is urgently needed as it is mandatory for all states universally to work towards achieving the 2030 international development schema and attaining the 17 SDGs (State of Palestine, 2019; Keulers, 2017; United Nations, 2021).

5.2 Sharing best practices in post-conflict reconstruction in a public administration milieu

If it is going to be efficacious, the progression of post-conflict recovery comprises numerous diverse sectoral interventions that are communally and reciprocally supportive and prudently aligned with each other. The physical reconstruction has to factor in the social order and ensure state legality and legitimacy. Drawing on successes and lessons learned and following a critical review of the literature globally, several recommendations have been put forward as best practices in policy interventions in governance, in post-conflict reconstruction and development, namely (OECD, 2010; OECD, 2011; Chene, 2012; Justino, 2017; O'Driscoll, 2018; O'Neil & Sheely, 2019; Kamais, 2019; United Nations, 2021):

- A fundamental weakness of current governance interventions is that they are generally disconnected and not in sync with the political settings on the ground, wherein implementation has to take place. The political dynamics must be understood so that the governance intervention is rooted in the political settings in which they are being applied and executed. There must be consultations among the key role-players/and stakeholders to determine the

critical workings that should be in place to ensure positive socioeconomic change.

- The state emergent from the conflict has to have dedicated leadership in place to facilitate the setting up of operative, responsible and resourceful governance institutions/structures discharging public services. The leadership in the post-conflict phase should be real/operative and dedicated to responding to inequalities/exclusion and promoting discussion and debate.
- Civil society capacity-building efforts should be prioritized as they develop the efficacy of public institutions and introduce checks and balances in government, promoting trust and accountability. Developing capacity is a longitudinal issue that the donor community has to factor in, and there must be a local commitment to the process.
- Governance interventions have promoted the decentralization of policymaking/decisionmaking and “good governance” and “good” institutions from below ascending upwards. The focus should be mainly on multi-level governance in states where conflict is likely. Local initiatives factoring in power structures and resultant benefits at the subnational level and their informality can endorse social cohesion.
- Authority in post-conflict states is quite often disjointed; government interventions have heightened political/institutional decentralization through (I) enhancing public services provision where the national governments are ineffectual/weak, (II) facilitating local participation/autonomy in decision-making by drawing on social groups/communities in resource division, and (III) power redistribution supports sharing authority locally, responding to ethnic/religious divisions and tensions and promoting inclusive local governance.
- The local populace, private sector, and civil society’s organs should be integral to the rebuilding, which is crucial to developing pertinent and applicable reconstructive initiatives. Solidification of local institutions assists in maximizing the longitudinal benefits of humanitarian assistance and donor funds usage. The international role-players should be open, flexible, and agile in the face of evolving post-conflict dynamics. They should depart from pre-conceived ideas and notions of the reconstructive process.

6. Challenges in post-conflict reconstruction and development: lessons learnt and good practices

There are distinct challenges in post-conflict reconstruction, but some of the lessons learned and the resultant good practices can overcome them (Rose-Ackerman, 2008; International Labour Organisation, 2010; OECD, 2010; Chene, 2012; Justino, 2017; O'Driscoll, 2018; O'Neil & Sheely, 2019; Kamais, 2019; Samoré, 2023):

- Post-conflict reconstruction is a prolonged and long-drawn-out activity/process, and the international donor community should be ready and organized to sustain and support the complete cycle of reconstruction, or this could hinder their progress. Investment/outlay should match/meet the populace's aspirations rather than the donor agencies' mission.
- The donor community approach could be problematic if only physical reconstruction/investment is prioritized and not emerging challenges to the rule of law and good governance, notably corruption. Corruption is deeply rooted in post-conflict states, and the donor community needs to take firm and decisive action to counter this scourge. More significant investment is required to oversee the implementation and monitoring bodies.
- Reinstating/reestablishing legitimate and inclusive state institutions capable of allaying obstinate tensions while undertaking the crucial task of rebuilding is critical. Political/economic reconstruction is based on personal security and human rights deference. State legitimacy is not secured through post-conflict rebuilding, but by the populace's determination that the services are being discharged fairly/equitably.
- Political institutions must be legitimate and competent, and this can be secured through an election. Democracy should shift relations both within government and civil society and be a platform for partnership/dialogue between all roleplayers/stakeholders and the creation of applicable operative governance structures, the rule of law and other civil society institutions.
- A post-conflict state signifies a divided society where social relations have been weakened due to uncertainty and lack of trust. It can be intimidating to work with development partners and different social groupings, communicate with them and encourage them to participate politically. Key to social reconstruction is nurturing a communal society and building trust.
- War negatively impacts a state's productive capacity, as it results in population displacement, malnutrition, and hunger. The breakdown of the public sector due to the war and the possible privatization of state-owned entities can result in job losses and unemployment. Enhancing food security and social provisioning is rudimentary to universal post-conflict reconstruction and short-term stability, reintegration and socioeconomic progress.
- Post-conflict reconstruction, linked to economic development, has prioritized

re-establishing livelihoods. Microeconomic reconstruction/recovery should be a priority, thereby boosting the development/growth of the private sector and facilitating economic recovery, advancement and stabilization, which has to be meticulously linked to reconciliation/inclusion.

- The special needs of women, children, the elderly, and the infirm should be prioritized as they constitute a significant part of the populace. There has to be a balance between trying to focus on the diaspora and responding to local needs. All rights have to be respected, and the role of women in reconstruction and economic development should be endorsed.
- Post-conflict reconstruction facilitates the transition to sustainable peace following the ending of hostilities. It also promotes socioeconomic development; however, this cannot be done in isolation, as the government does not have the requisite capacity. There has to be a strategic partnership between the government, private sector and organs of civil society.

Post-conflict states have diverse and varied challenges, and so do the lessons and good practices. There are some globally shared principles and values that are critical, namely trust/legitimacy of public institutions; committed leadership; political/management will; security; capable public service; efficacious discharge of rudimentary services; the rule of law; transparency/accountability; access to information; public participation; ongoing dialogue between government/civil society, and general mediation capacities.

7. The corruption conundrum and challenge in post-conflict societies

The positive causation between the concept's fragility, post-conflict and corruption is not too difficult to understand, assess and quantify globally. Post-conflict contexts are generally categorized by high and increasing levels of corruption and conflict (Chene, 2012; O'Driscoll, 2018), resulting in fragile public institutions. The large amount of donor funding that is readily available and can be accessed provides ample opportunities for corrupt public functionaries to engage in immoral, unethical and crooked activities (Rose-Ackerman, 2008).

Corruption is a significant issue, particularly in post-conflict states, undermining state legality, worsening poverty, creating uncertainty between the different societal groups and resulting in unsustainable development. Conflict-affected and post-conflict states are, according to the UNDP and African Union in Reddy & Nemec, 2021, viewed as the most corrupt internationally, and this is detrimental to government/society relationships. This aspect is more marked and visible in states subjected to high levels of violent conflict and struggling to reestablish public trust, reconstruct public institutions and recover economically (Lindberg & Orjuela, 2014). These states are

characterized by rampant corruption, limited state legitimacy, poor capacity, weak and vacillating levels of the rule of law, and increasing levels of insecurity (O'Donnell in Chene, 2012). The prospects for corruption in these states are high due to a blend of weak governance structures, limited absorption capacity, massive financial inflow from the international donor community, and ongoing pressure to disburse funds.

Corruption in post-conflict societies may jeopardize its legality and acceptability, thereby hindering the rebuilding efforts, resulting in grievances, and impeding the reconciliation process (Lindburg & Orjuela, 2014). Corruption is expected to damage the state's fragility on a longitudinal basis. Limited capacity and legitimacy, and the lack of efficacy are the key characteristics of post-conflict states, and consequently, this weakens and undermines their capability and readiness to govern as they are all impacted by corruption. Chene (2012) is of the view that corruption is likely to weaken both the legality of the state (recognition of the right to govern) and state effectiveness (the capability to govern). Discernment of high levels of corruption by the citizenry will erode the conviction in public institutions and, additionally, in the political system, which is then likely to undermine government institutions and state endeavors to organize the populace to fight the scourge of corruption. In many post-conflict states, the government does not exist and cannot discharge unfailing community services. In some areas of the country, state legality and legitimacy must be built rather than rebuilt (Chene, 2012). Consequently, it can be seen that corruption is viewed as a possible source of conflict, failing government and driving dissatisfaction or as a means to avert conflict by corrupting rival challengers for power. Political leaders buy off weak politicians with money, promises of upcoming jobs/positions or possible business ventures (Rose-Ackerman, 2008).

The recipe of weak government institutions and governance structures, low engagement capability, and an enormous amount of external aid provides ample prospects for corruption and abuse of power with very limited chances of being caught and subject to consequences management (O'Donnell in Chene, 2012). Additionally, these risks are further aggravated by a severe struggle for political and economic power.

Despite anti-corruption activities progressively and increasingly being combined with post-conflict programs and the usual wartime structures and practices, corruption continues to prevail (Lindberg & Orjuela, 2014). It has to be pointed out that interventions in anti-corruption activities in post-conflict states experience a particular set of trials and challenges, compounded by a severe struggle for economic and political authority and power. Rose-Ackerman (2008) points out that if the scourge of corruption is not arrested in post-conflict societies longitudinally, it will delegitimize the state, resulting in increasing and ongoing public protests and violence.

8. Conclusions

Given the globally acknowledged international development framework and the resultant SDGs that are going to serve as international benchmarks and catalysts to drive the process, the reorganization, transformation and reformation of the public administration of post-conflict states and societies must be prioritized and placed high on the global development agenda. The conception of “leaving no one behind” in the collective pursuit of the SDGs should be taken seriously, more specifically SDG 16 and a concerted effort should be made to ensure post-conflict states are also on track in terms of attaining the goals so that the citizenry can enjoy an enhanced quality of life. More specifically, the mandatory government leadership has to be in place with the required political will and requisite state capacity to plan, manage, harmonize, bring together, connect, and attain the SDGs in post-conflict states.

Notwithstanding the above universal development framework and agenda, serious global development challenges are likely to emerge from the current wars that have erupted in Ukraine and Palestine, which will have severe implications for the new global social order.

The core components of SDG 16 have to be critically examined, reviewed and taken seriously to its logical conclusion to create an international social order free of tension, conflict and wars. More importantly, the reconstruction and development embarked on in post-conflict states has to be focused, successful and have the desired impact in moving forward to more robust, stable and operative states and societies globally. Key to a successful post-conflict reconstruction for any state globally is a strategic partnership that has to be developed between the government, private sector and civil society.

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