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Department of Political Science
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Tutor: Maria Småberg

Timing Reconciliation

- Case Study Sudan -

Photo: Marija Sunnliden (Kurmuk, Sudan, March 2009)

Marija Sunnliden

Abstract

This study analyses the importance of timing reconciliation in a conflict/peace process in order to reach a sustainable peace. There is a main divide in how the different scholars in the conflict resolution field define reconciliation in being a goal or a process, or both. Mostly reconciliation initiatives are worked with during the post-settlement period but in the protracted conflicts of today the conflicts do not have a "wave-like" timeline and the post-conflict period maybe never comes. I believe that the peace building society puts to much focus on the peace agreement and the post-settlement period when more focus on the peace process before is needed. I start the thesis with an analysis on the theoretical framework and then I continue with a case study on Sudan. A country in an unstable post-settlement period.

Keywords: reconciliation, peace process, Sudan, peace agreements, conflict transformation

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Acronyms

CAR	Central African Republic
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
GoS	Government of Sudan
GoSS	Government of Southern Sudan
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IGADD	Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development
INGO	International Non Governmental Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSCC	New Sudan Council of Churches
OXFAM	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
SCC	Sudan Council of Churches
SPF	Sudan Peace Fund
SPLM/A	Sudan People´s Liberation Movement/Army
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children´s Fund

Contents

1   Introduction

Many peace agreements have been signed over the years but unfortunately many of them collapse and new conflicts arise and instability is again a fact (Lederach, 2005: 41; Lederach, 2005: 46; Kriesberg, 2007(2)). Most of the armed conflicts today are internal and intractable and there are many peace workers in action trying to facilitate peace talks and negotiations that could lead to a sustainable peace. The actors are many both when it comes to the peace workers and the parties in the conflict itself and enemies might even be neighbours on the same street. If the conflict is present over a long time a culture of war is created and solutions are harder to reach in the web of conflicts and relationships. One element in a peace process and in the conflict resolution field is reconciliation. No matter what definition scholars in the field give to the word reconciliation probably most of them would agree that it is needed somehow in order to reach what Galtung calls a positive peace. The state when the capacity to deal with conflicts non-violently and creatively not only a state of absence of violence (Galtung, 2001: 3). Most of the time activities concerning reconciliation are conducted after a peace agreement has been signed. To work with reconciliation as a goal has been the most common. Several theoreticians argue that reconciliation is both a goal and a process in itself but there are differences in what their focus is. Concerning all the collapsed peace agreements, can timing reconciliation in the process be a core issue to reaching sustainable peace?

1.1   Statement of purpose

At first the purpose of this study is to analyse the theoretical framework concerning the timing of reconciliation initiatives in a peace/conflict process and discuss the different arguments stated by the scholars. In most of the cases of conflict-ridden societies reconciliation is something initiated in the post-conflict society. In spite of this we see a great deal of agreements collapsing. I will analyse what the scholars say about the relationship between the time of reconciliation initiatives and a sustainable peace. My aim is to compare the different scholars and hopefully contribute with some new perspective on how to approach the issue of timing reconciliation in a peace/conflict process.

The purpose of the case-study is to apply some of the theories and hypothesis to a process that has given the people of Sudan a peace agreement that now might be on the edge of a collapse. I will map the reconciliation initiatives conducted in Sudan before the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in 2005 through a three level approach. The top-level, the middle-range-level and the grassroots-level.

Through that approach I will be able to make a comparison between the different levels and compare at what stage in the timeframe they have been conducted.

There are many different definitions about what reconciliation is and many ways how to work with it. But I think there is a lack of mapping the initiatives, especially when it comes to those conducted in the conflict process, before the peace agreement has been signed. I believe there is a need to know more about the timing of reconciliation initiatives in order to work with them in the best possible way.

My research questions that will lead the process in this thesis are:

➢ Has the timing of reconciliation initiatives in Sudan affected the CPA and the post-settlement period?

1. What do the different reconciliation theoreticians argue about the timing of reconciliation initiatives?
2. Is there a connection in between a successful peace agreement and the timing of reconciliation initiatives according to the theoreticians in the field?
3. Have there been any reconciliation initiatives in Sudan before the Comprehensive Peace Agreement 2005? When and on what levels of society?

1.2   Method

Something very important when doing a scientific research is to thoroughly describe what method is used to make it accessible for the readers and to be able to call the process scientific (Teorell; Svensson, 2007: 54). My first step in this thesis will be to analyse what the main reconciliation theories and hypothesis say about the timing of reconciliation in a peace/conflict process and then discuss the different scholars arguments. I will also at that point of the thesis make a short illustration about how scholars' in the field define the word reconciliation and explain what definition I will refer to throughout this thesis. My aim is to focus a bit more on the theoretical discussions about the issue of timing reconciliation. Following the theoretical discussion I will choose the most relevant theories and continue down from the abstract level of research to the reality of one case (Teorell; Svensson, 2007:46). I will delimit my analysis and do a qualitative case study (Johannesen; Tufte, 2003:56). The case being the peace process which lead to the Comprehensive peace Agreement 2005 in Sudan.

My ambition is to map what has been achieved when it comes to reconciliation initiatives in Sudan before the CPA was signed in January 2005. I will start the case study with a short background about why I have chosen this specific case and then I will analyse the case through John Paul Lederach´s pyramid of approaches to building peace (Lederach, 1997: 39). The pyramid divides society in three levels: The Top Level, the Middle-Range Level and the Grass-Root Level. I will map what has been initiated when it comes to reconciliation activities from the leadership on the different levels and make a

comparative study between the levels and also a comparative study of when in the process they have been initiated.

1.3   Material

The material I will use for this thesis will be secondary material, both the theoretical and empirical. The theoretical material I have chosen from well recognized theoreticians in the conflict resolution field, consisting both of printed books and scientific articles from journals like *International Journal of Peace Studies* and *Political Psychology.* An example of a theoretical book that I will use is *Reconciliation, Justice and Coexistence,* edited by Mohammed Abu-Nimer. It consists of articles written by several other scholars.

The empirical material I am using for the case study on Sudan is mainly gathered through available internet archives. To find scientific material about what has happened on the grass-root level is hard but I have come across a base line study on what has been conducted concerning local peace processes in Sudan from the beginning of the 80s until today. The main source for gathering empirical material about Sudan has been The Sudan Open Archive (www.sudanarchive.net). The Rift Valley Institute is the organisation behind the web site, they have a big network of partnerships with many academic institutes and different organisations which makes this possible. The empirical material, as the theoretical, not being primary but secondary is of course a challenge in authenticity (Teorell; Svensson, 2007: 104). Especially when it comes to what has been conducted at the grassroots level in Sudan where many things are not documented. For the analysis on the grassroots -level I rely heavily on the base line study and their results.

Earlier this year I visited Sudan to conduct a pre-study for a Swedish organisation called InterAct, together with SCC (Sudan Council of Churches) Northern Region. The purpose for my visit was to map what has been done recently concerning reconciliation initiatives in 6 specific states of Northern Sudan. The primary material I gathered during this study was not specifically made for this thesis and despite the amount of interviews made I consider them to not be useful for any generalisation in this thesis. The visit though and all the preparation around it has given me a basic knowledge about the current situation in Sudan and inspired me to write this thesis.

1.4   Delimitations

At first my intention was to conduct a comparative study in between reconciliation initiatives before two different agreements in Sudan but I had to delimitate myself in order to be able to work this thesis through. I then decided to

concentrate on only one peace agreement and my aim is now to compare what has been conducted on the different levels of society at different times in the process. The choice I have made in just looking at one case, and not doing a study with several cases, definitely limits me to making any generalisation in the broader perspective (Teorell; Svensson, 2007: 68). In comparing the different theories and hypothesis about timing reconciliation I could reach a result on what the experts in the field mostly argue to be the ultimate way when to work with reconciliation. A result on what the empirical material says about the reconciliation initiatives in Sudan before 2005 is also possible to reach. Despite of the limitations for any broader generalisation about timing of reconciliation my hope is to contribute to the discussion about the place for reconciliation in the conflict resolution field.

1.5   Theory

The theories and hypothesis I will be using in this thesis will be thoroughly gone through in my theoretical discussion in the first part of the thesis. My aim in choosing theories has been to choose those theoreticians that are the most known in the conflict resolution field because I believe that they reflect what is also conducted when it comes to reconciliation initiatives in the contemporary peace processes.

There is a main divide in the field of reconciliation theories in between those who look upon reconciliation mainly as a goal in the process of peace and between those who focus on it as a process in itself (Bloomfield, 2006: 6). Among those who have a holistic view of reconciliation there are theoreticians that argue reconciliation to be the overall process where negotiations and peace agreements are just a part of it. And on the other side you have those who argue that reconciliation is the ultimate goal of the process and the main criticism against them is that they are idealistic and that reconciliation as an ultimate goal is not possible. The scholars I refer to in this thesis are all arguing differently about the timing of reconciliation at different stages in the time-frame of peace-building. The divide I make when separating them into "goal" and "process" focused scholars is not representing two completely different ideas in the theoretical framework but arguments that are more or less focused on either one.

There are other discussions going on in the peace building field when it comes to reconciliation theories. One of them is the "peace versus justice" debate which partly has its roots in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It evolves around the amnesty given for truth-telling, a trade-off between justice and peace (Bloomfield, 2006: 18). This is also a discussion which comes out from the question about what is most important to focus on when it comes to building a sustainable peace. But I have chosen to focus on timing reconciliation and not to discuss this debate.

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2   Theoretical framework

Concerning reconciliation as a part of the conflict resolution field there are academics who look upon it as an element in the conflict resolution field as any other. And then we have those who argue reconciliation to be the heart of peace building (Ramsbotham; Woodhouse; Miall, 2005: 231). The different suggestions about the definition of reconciliation are many. I believe it might be because it is a difficult issue to work with and because it can involve many different initiatives that have reconciliation as the base to work from but is not necessarily called reconciliation initiatives.

2.1   Definitions of reconciliation

When studying reconciliation literature the impression I get is that there are as many definitions as scholars writing about it and many writers almost have to excuse themselves at the beginning because of all the confusion about the definition. One of the biggest reasons for the confusion of the term reconciliation is the conflicting definitions about reconciliation as a process or as a goal (Bloomfield, 2006: 6). The scholars referring to reconciliation as a goal argue it to be an end-state that can be achieved. In arguing reconciliation to be a process the scholars either take the view of seeing it as a process that ends with reconciliation as a goal or they argue the process of reconciliation to be the overall process in peace building. Despite the different arguments about reconciliation and time I would still say that there are some core definitions that come back again and again in the theoretical framework of reconciliation. Four of them are justice, truth, mercy and peace (Lederach, 1997: 30; Huyse, 2003: 24; Kriesberg, 2001: 60;). Lederach argues reconciliation to be the meeting-place of the four elements, considering reconciliation both to be a focus and a locus. A focus on relationships and a space for encounter (locus) for building them (Lederach, 1997: 35).

Many of the scholars in the reconciliation field have a relationship oriented definition of reconciliation arguing it to be a relationship-building process (Bloomfield, 2006: 8). Even the conflicts themselves are somehow built on relationships I believe, broken ones though. The definition of reconciliation to be a relationship-building process is a general definition.

Johan Galtung, one of the founders of the conflict resolution field, makes a short definition: "Reconciliation = Closure + Healing; closure in the sense of not reopening hostilities, healing in the sense of being rehabilitated" (Galtung, 2001: 4). He has a sort of an end-state approach in this statement even if the healing process can go on for a long time.

Forgiveness is something that is central to the definition of reconciliation for some scholars and practitioners. Desmond Tutu, the chairman of the South African TRC, is one of those who believes that there is no future without forgiveness (Tutu, 2000). But Bloomfield argues that detaching forgiveness from reconciliation would make it more realistic to work with for victims who would not think about forgiveness as possible (Bloomfield, 2006: 25). He divides reconciliation into political reconciliation, a top-down process from the national level, and interpersonal which is a bottom-up process and argues forgiveness not to be an element of political reconciliation (Bloomfield, 2006: 28-29).

Speaking about definitions of reconciliation coexistence is a term that must be mentioned, in many cases coexistence is referred to instead of reconciliation. Minimalists argue for coexistence instead of reconciliation, that people would at least tolerate each others existence (McCandless, 2001: 213). For enemies to agree on coexistence might be easier than to reconcile. It is a less loaded term that more people are able to accept and thought of as a more achievable end-state (Bloomfield, 2006: 13-14).

Despite the different definitions of reconciliation, initiatives are promoted any way (Bloomfield, 2006: 10), some sort of necessity is shown in this I believe. The definition of reconciliation that I will refer to throughout this thesis will be a relationship oriented and holistic definition. Reconciliation as a process of relationship-building (Bloomfield, 2006: 28; McCandless, 2001: 213; Lederach, 1997: 24), a transformation from unjust relationships to more just ones (Assefa, 2001: 181). Relationships both being the basis of the conflict itself and its solution (Lederach, 1997: 26; Fisher, 2001: 35), I consider to be the core of reconciliation. I will relate to Lederach´s definition of the primary goal and key contribution of reconciliation throughout this thesis: "...to seek innovative ways to create a time and a place within various levels of the affected population, to address, integrate, and embrace the painful past and the necessary shared future as a means of dealing with the present" (Lederach, 1997: 35).

2.2   Reconciliation as a goal

Referring to reconciliation as a process has become more and more common according to many scholars in the conflict resolution field but still the main focus on conducting reconciliation initiatives is in the post-conflict society (Ramsbotham; Woodhouse; Miall, 2005: 210). There is a major difference between those who suggest that reconciliation among other things is better to wait to work with until after the conflict has been settled and those who argue that it should be worked with from the start of the interventions of peace-building (Ramsbotham; Woodhouse; Miall, 2005: 209). When it comes to different forms of interventions the question about if the time is ripe arises and Johan Galtung is one of those who says that if it is done too early it might not work (Galtung, 2001: 20). The issue of victims not being ready is an argument that is being pointed out in this discussion (Huyse, 2003: 32). And it is a delicate issue that I believe should

not be left out from the discussion about the timing of reconciliation initiatives. But how it is being approached I believe depends on the view the practitioners and scholars have on the conflict and the process of building peace. The traditional way in the conflict resolution field is looking at the timeline of a conflict as a wave-like line, with the peace accord at the top and the reconciliation initiatives at the end (Lederach, 2005: 43; Ramsbotham; Woodhouse; Miall, 2005: 11). I believe that approach puts the focus on whether the time is ripe and makes it even more important. But considering all the intractable conflicts that involves many actors and which represents most of the conflicts of today the timeline is not wave-like but more a spiral-like timeline. When is the time then ripe if today one village is destroyed and the next month another?

Truth and Reconciliation Commissions have been conducted after conflict-settlement in at least 25 places since 1974 (Freeman; Hayner, 2003: 124). The TRC in South Africa is widely known as a way of working with reconciliation and is the most high profiled of it´s kind (Bloomfield, 2005: 5). What distinguished it from other TRCs was the official character, all the summits were open to the public (Tutu, 2000: 115) Desmond Tutu was the chairman of the committee and even if he argues reconciliation to be a long and maybe painful process that can go on for generations he still emphasizes forgiveness to be a crucial element but not the end of the process (Tutu, 2000: 286-287). I still put him with the others who look upon reconciliation mainly as a goal because of his focus on forgiveness as inevitable. The critique the South African TRC has received except for the justice versus peace debate is that it was a top-down approach only (Kriesberg, 2007(2): 324). I believe it might be that it is in the post settlement period where the specific reconciliation approaches in the broader perspectives are possible at the, when a state of security has occurred.

Galtung is talking about "positive peace" as the state when also structural and cultural violence has ended (Ramsbotham; Woodhouse; Miall, 2005: 11, Galtung, 2001: 3). He considers the state of positive peace to be were reconciliation can be reached. Reconciliation he argues to be a process with many kinds of approaches needed to be able to reach a closure (Galtung, 2001: 4). Galtung´s explanations of reconciliation show an approach to it as a process with an end state. He is one of the scholars that has had a great impact on how the international community has been working with conflict resolution in peace-building. Reconciliation being a part of the resolution field has most of the time been worked with in the post-settlement period. Another scholar referring to the post-conflict society as the place for reconciliation is Luc Huyse. He argues that the timing of when reconciliation processes are initiated has an impact on the outcome but he only refers to the post-conflict society and there he says that most of the time other issues are being put first at the expense of reconciliation. (Huyse, 2003: 27) In this I conclude that he does not see it as something that can start earlier. But if other things are taking the attention of time and money in a post-conflict society, like Huyse argues, then reconciliation might be better to start with earlier in the process if reconciliation is considered to be a relationship building process. Having started to build a relationship I would argue it to be easier to work with the other issues in a post-conflict society.

Mohammed Abu-Nimer though argues that reconciliation becomes most crucial in a post-settlement phase and that reconciliation can be reached first after the basic needs are met and structural changes are made (Abu-Nimer, 2001: 245-246). These changes do not usually occur before a conflict settlement has taken place. He also points out that without addressing physical reconstruction in the society the communities will not accept a reconciliation process (Abu-Nimer, 2001: 247), also something that in most of the cases belongs to the post-settlement period. I believe that his view of the timing of reconciliation initiatives in a peace/ conflict process is that it is a matter of the post settlement period at the end of the conflict wave-like timeline because of all the things he brings up as necessary for a reconciliation process to start. He does speak of reconciliation as a process but comes back to the end-state approach when referring to reconciliation as something that can be reached and maintained. A reconciling process that leads to a goal when the parties are being reconciled. Abu-Nimer though argues that it is necessary with a functioning reconciliation process for the peace agreement to be implemented (Abu-Nimer, 2001: 246). He does not say that the reconciliation process should start earlier than the peace agreement in order to have an impact but to be conducted at the same time as the implementation of the agreement.

David Bloomfield, another scholar in the field, argues reconciliation to have a different nature on the different levels of society and that it can be an end-state at the personal level but not at the national, questioning if a nation can really heal itself (Bloomfield, 2006: 10). But when discussing the timing of reconciliation in his report he argues that bottom-up approaches, both cross-community and individual, can start even during violence because they do not need the same legitimacy as the approaches on the national top-level of society (Bloomfield, 2006: 25-26). But these bottom-up approaches are many times said to not be sustainable without being a part of the top-level´s framework. Bloomfield´s approach in dividing reconciliation in two different kinds I believe might be acceptable for the broader public but it is more likely that he refers to coexistence on the national level and not reconciliation. Something interesting though in his approach is that he is saying that bottom-up initiatives can be conducted even during violence, on the grassroots level and the community level. There is a dilemma though in them needing to be a part of the top-level´s framework and even be conducted simultaneously as top-down approaches in order to be sustainable.

2.3   Reconciliation as a process

It appears that most of the scholars would argue reconciliation to be a long process in itself and at the same time an end-state. But there are also those who emphasizes on the process part. Approaching with a big perspective on reconciliation we have Daniel Bar-Tal who argues that reconciliation is the overall process where negotiations, mediation and conflict resolution are just parts of it (Bar-Tal, 2000: 351, 362). But he also argues that the process of reconciliation is

not needed in all conflicts but just in the protracted ones that last at least for two decades (Bar-Tal, 2000: 355). This is a different approach than many others who do consider reconciliation to be needed in order for sustainability. Considering the timing of reconciliation initiatives in the big process of reconciliation Bar-Tal says that it is a process that can start even before the negotiations themselves have started. When the conflict resolution process, that usually leads to a peace agreement, also has started and is running he argues the reconciliation process to become even more effective (Bar-Tal, 2000: 356). Through that statement I believe him to consider that simultaneous processes are giving the best support to each other and not sequencing processes. Also he argues that the time should be ripe and have a societal climate of openness though in order for the reconciliation process to start (Bar-Tal, 2000: 361). So at the timeline there is a moment when the overall process of reconciliation starts according to Bar-Tal.

Louis Kriesberg is referring to reconciliation as an important part in reaching a state of coexistence, I believe him to have a sort of minimalistic approach to reconciliation. He argues reconciliation to be a set of processes on different levels of society where people restore relationships that they believe to be minimally accepted and coexistence to be when they can live together without destroying each other (Kriesberg, 2001: 48, 60). Kriesberg has a view of that different levels of reconciliation can be reached and that the process can go on for several generations (Kriesberg, 2007(2): 322). When it comes to timing reconciliation he argues that actions that foster reconciliation do not need to await the ending of a conflict, these initiations in an early state of conflict he says might even affect the struggle itself in being preventive. (Kriesberg, 2007(1): 16; Kriesberg, 2007(2): 323). I believe that the timing of reconciliation initiatives could then according to Kriesberg have an impact on a peace agreement and it being successful or not. He does argue that success is never complete for any single mediation led to an agreement, there will always be people on both sides not agreeing. But instead he points out the importance of being aware of the consequences of a number of different efforts made (Kriesberg, 2007(2): 247. I believe his approach of bringing the focus of peace building away from the peace agreement, being one of the most important elements in peace building, is a good challenge in exploring new possible ways to work.

J. Lewis Rasmussen is another scholar who is working with the United States Institute of Peace and their conflict management program. He, along with several others, also considers reconciliation both to be a process and an outcome. Rasmussen though has another view on relationship building and reconciliation. He refers to relationship building as important but as a separate part from reconciliation and says it can be a precursor to reconciliation (Rasmussen, 2001: 115). So in this case he argues that relationship building could be initiated even during the process of negotiating a peace agreement but he does not call those reconciliation initiatives that for example Lederach would have done. Even if Rasmussen in his discussion about reconciliation and timing is referring to relationship building as something that must be initiated before reconciliation, he still considers that both of them should not be postponed until the post-settlement period (Rasmussen, 2001: 114).

John Paul Lederach is one of the best known and cited scholars and practitioners when it comes to reconciliation (Brounéus, 2003: 15). His knowledge and arguments are both based on scientific studies and primary experience from many years of working with reconciliation. He argues reconciliation to be a process that could go on for many years and generations and he has a broad perspective when it comes to reconciliation initiatives and time (Lederach, 1997: 77). The characteristics of interventions conducted by the international community in conflict societies are often shaped by short term and crisis approaches and conducted in the post-settlement phase, something that Lederach argues is not building a sustainable peace in divided societies. The time frame of peace-building and the link between the different interventions and initiatives must be focused on according to Lederach (Lederach, 1997: 74). He argues conflicts to be always present and that it is a question of transforming them into a spiral of peace and development instead of a spiral of violence and destruction (Lederach, 1997: 75). Lederach emphasizes on conflict transformation and not conflict resolution when it comes to peace-building. He argues peace agreements to be one of the platforms for conflict transformation and constructive social change rather than the solution and that it puts the conflict within a new context that requires more negotiations (Lederach, 2005: 47). Constructive social change in this case referring to when relationships are moving from that which destroys to that which builds and when relationships collapse the centre of social change does not hold (Lederach, 2005: 42-43, 75). Lederach considers relationships to be at the heart of peace-building. Concerning the timing of reconciliation in a peace/conflict process Lederach argues reconciliation to have a place in every stage of peace-building, that it is central to conflict transformation and that it is not limited to the post-settlement restoration period (Lederach, 1997: 150-151). To conclude Lederach argues conflicts to be built on relationships, peace to be built on relationships and reconciliation initiatives to be platforms of relationship building that is needed throughout the whole process of conflict transformation. The initiatives are needed as much as the solutions. The future of fighting parties in protracted internal conflicts is interdependent, the relationships will always be there moving in some directions (Lederach, 1997: 27).

Lederach´s theory is: "Transcending violence is forged by the capacity to generate, mobilize, and build the moral imagination" and "the moral imagination requires the capacity to imagine ourselves in a web of relationships that includes our enemies; the ability to sustain a paradoxical curiosity that embraces complexity without reliance on dualistic polarity; the fundamental belief in and pursuit of the creative act; and the acceptance of the inherent risk of stepping in to the mystery of the unknown that lies beyond the far too familiar landscape of violence (Lederach, 2005: 5). In putting this theory to practice he argues the actors on the middle-range level of society to be the most important actors in the web of relationships calling it the middle-out approach or web approach (Lederach, 2005: 79-80, 82). Not top-down or down-up approach but to start in the middle instead.

2.4   Conclusion

My conclusion of the framework of reconciliation is that most of the scholars refer to reconciliation as a process and an end-state at the same time. What divides them are the arguments about when reconciliation initiatives can be conducted in the time-frame of peace-building. I would agree with the scholars criticism against the thought of reconciliation as an end-state because that might be something that will never be possible for some people and considering relationships being the core of reconciliation and their need of continually being worked on to be sustained. Relationships are dynamic, always moving towards some direction, building or destroying.

Concerning the time-frame of peace-building reconciliation has been and is still considered to begin where conflict resolution ends and if initiatives are begun before, they are just looked upon as seeds to what will come (Brounéus, 2003: 52). Even Galtung who seems to argue reconciliation to be an end state also says that gathering parties around the table can even happen in war zones and some reconciliation takes place, but just as an introduction to the real thing (Galtung, 2001: 21) Cease fire and peace agreement negotiated at the top-level and then the implementation and a possible moment of consolidation. If the peace agreement needs the support of the people why not start with the people to gain a base to stand on? Bar-Tal together with Lederach emphasizes on the specific need of focusing on reconciliation when it comes to intractable conflicts and not conflict resolution to be the core issue (Bar-Tal, 2002: 352; Lederach: 2005: 42). To speak about reconciliation in the field of conflict prevention and not only as part of the post-settlement period (Huyse, 2003: 28; Bronéus, 2003: 9), I believe we must consider to be important to focus on, even in violent conflict societies. But it all depends on what definition we give to reconciliation.

Commitment to a relationship oriented approach always entails risk (Lederach, 2005: 163) but I believe it also entails gains. As stated earlier in the thesis I stick to the definition of reconciliation to be a relationship building process. The perspective I will have in approaching the case of Sudan will be through applying Lederach´s theory of the moral imagination and web approach where he argues that the middle-range level is the most important to build from. And the perspective of of the process as such will be the one of Bar-Tal where he states negotiation and mediation to be a part of the overall reconciliation process. The reason why I choose these perspectives to approach the case of Sudan is because I consider them to be the most helpful in answering my questions. Using the theories of reconciliation as something conducted only in the post-settlement period will not be appropriate to apply in the process before.

3   Case Study Sudan

Sudan gained it´s independence from the colonial powers in 1956 and has been at war more or less ever since then. The conflict between the government in the North and the Southern armed groups has received the biggest attention. The first conflict lasted from 1955 to 1972 when a peace-agreement was signed in Addis Abeba and in 1983 the conflict arose again which lasted until 2005 when the CPA was signed. But it has not only been the Southerners that have been in conflict with the government but also other marginalized groups in the country. Sudan consists of a web of different conflicts rooted in its formation as a state, marginalisation, inequalities in the local and global economy, poor governance, environmental issues like drought, resources disputes, tribal issues, myriad of different ethnic groups and so forth. It is complex and not easy for any one to solve.

3.1   Contemporary Sudan

Sudan is in a very fragile situation at the moment concerning the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The biggest fear right now according to both the international community and the Sudanese people is that the CPA would collapse. Several indications that a collapse could be the case have been noted. In many parts of the country there is renewed fighting at the moment. The cattle-raids have taken another shape and become more and more hostile and unpredictable. The tribal fighting has even increased since the signing of the CPA and cross-border fighting is again a factor disturbing the peace (Thomas, 2009: 28).

The arrest warrant for president Hassan Omar al-Bashir accusing him for a number of things that was issued on the 4th of March by the ICC was not making the situation in the country easier but the tensions right now are something built up from many sources. The entire region is not stable and people fear that they will face a regional conflict. To be able to understand the complexity of the conflict we need to have e regional perspective (Lederach, 1997: 12). The borders of Sudan have split ethnic groups since the independence and people refers primary to their tribes and not to what state they belong to. The tribes have been used by the different presidencies in the neighbouring countries in fighting each other. Rebel groups are just switching "commanders" more or less in the disputes (Giroux; Lanz; Sguaitamatti, 2009: 6-7). It is a web of conflicts not only inside Sudan but over the borders and in the neighbouring countries like Chad and CAR among others. It is a web of state and non-state actors and systems of so called regional conflict complexes are present where there are significant links between

the conflicts (Giroux; Lanz; Sguaitamatti, 2009: 2, 8). Borders that are drawn are not guaranteeing a peaceful coexistence especially if they separate people from the same tribes as in this case (Kriesberg, 2001: 51). The borders of Sudan and the neighbouring countries are not being controlled properly so the trade of military material across the borders has been easy and been facilitating the regional aspect of the conflicts (Giroux; Lanz; Sguaitamatti, 2009: 12).

According to The Global Peace Index from 2008 Sudan was ranked the third most non-peaceful country after Iraq and Somalia (GPI, 2008: 9). The GPI has 24 selected indicators that measures ongoing conflicts, measures societal safety and security and measures militarization (GPI, 2008: 5-6). There is a massive military build-up along the border of the North And the South of Sudan, the demarcation of the border is a sensitive issue concerning all the oil wells, and a lot of money is put on arms and redeployment of the military on both sides (Thomas, 2009: 17, 22).

3.2   The Comprehensive Peace Agreement

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in Nairobi, Kenya, on the 9th of January 2005 between "The Government of the Republic of The Sudan" and "The Sudan People´s Liberation Army" ending two decades of war (1983-2005). In the agreement there is one short note about reconciliation that they agree to work with: *"The parties agree to initiate a comprehensive process of national reconciliation and healing throughout the country as part of the peace building process. Its mechanisms and forms shall be worked out by the government of National Unity"* (CPA, 2005: 17) This is what they agreed on initiating after the peace agreement had been signed but something they have neglected since then (Thomas, 2009: 27, 30).

The CPA is a peace agreement that ended a long civil war in Sudan between the North and the South. But it was a bilateral agreement between 2 systems in a country with 7 different arrangements (Matus, 2006: 36). The name of the agreement saying it to be comprehensive is misleading when referring to the state of Sudan where the war between the North and the South has just been a part of a broader web of conflicts (Thomas, 2009: 11, 32; Al-Mahdi, 2006: 74). An agreement that does not consider to approach the broader society or root causes is very fragile (Simmons; Dixon, 2006: 63). The local conflicts in Sudan were not separated from the conflict between the North and the South but very much related anyway the CPA left a myriad of armed conflicts not being addressed (Bradbury; Ryle; Medley; Sansculotte-Greenidge, 2006: 9, 20).

Good development through the CPA has for example been the cease fire between the SPLA and the North, better mobility in the South, better focus on education and health supplies in the South (Thomas, 2009: 15). But it is at this moment the referendum for Southern Sudan where the Southerners will vote to separate or to stay united has become the most important part of the peace process (Thomas, 2009: 10, 27). But little is being done to be prepared for the end of the

interim period in July 2011, time is now critical in the case of Sudan (Thomas, 2009: 34). But my aim in this thesis is to look at what was done in the process before the so called comprehensive agreement.

3.3   Lederach´s pyramid

Lederach´s pyramid of approaches for building peace, where he has split society in three levels, and the way he advocates for the peace process to be rooted in the grassroots level or the communal level is broadly accepted by now (Ramsbotham; Woodhouse; Miall, 2005: 229, Fitzduff, 2001: 268-269; McCandless, 2001: 214; Brounéus, 2003: 32)

On the top level we have the political leaders, the military leaders and the high religious leaders. The initiatives are high level negotiations and they emphasize reaching a cease-fire. This is also the level where just a few from the whole population are situated. On the middle-range level Lederach put the ethnic and religious leaders. The academics and the intellectuals and humanitarian leaders like chairmen of bigger NGOs. They consist of a little bit more of the population but we find the masses at the grassroots level. The leadership there can be many different types but for example we have the local leaders, community developers, refugee camp leaders, leaders of local NGOs and so forth. The pyramid both illustrates the levels and the distribution of the population in a society. (Lederach, 1997: 39-39)
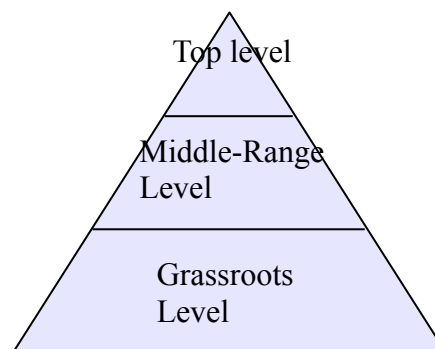
What Lederach wants to emphasize is the importance of the middle-range leaders. They are the connection between the top-level and the grassroots level and not necessary controlled by the authority (Lederach, 1997: 41-42). There are people who argue that a top-down approach is the best for the peace process and there are those who argue that the bottom-up approach is the best (Huyse, 2003: 25). Lederach argues that more focus should be on initiatives at he middle-range level and also Bloomfield points out the importance of the interaction between the approaches that he argues will enhance the strength of both (Bloomfield, 2006: 29). Considering the contemporary peace-building field middle-range leaders and grass-roots leaders play a greater role than before (Kriesberg, 2007(1): 17).

3.4   Reconciliation Initiatives

According to a survey from 2004 reconciliation initiatives are the third most supported areas in peace building after political development and socio-economic

assistance (Bloomfield, 2006: 5). The fact that reconciliation initiatives have been conducted in the case of Sudan before the CPA agreement was signed is evident. I will analyse the timing of reconciliation initiatives on the different levels counting from 1983 when the conflict again arose until the signing of the CPA the 9th of January 2005. Considering the difficult task to separate initiatives being on the middle-range level or the grassroots level I have chosen to analyse the initiatives that are crossing the borders of the different states to be middle-range. Most of them have participants that refer to the criteria of middle-range leaders. There are several reasons why it is difficult to clearly separate the different actors in the processes in Sudan but the main reason is that they are many and there are actors that easily tend to change position. Sudan is an example of a complex web of actors and a complex web of conflicts.

3.4.1   Top Level

The actors at the top-level in Sudan between 1983 and 2005 consisted mainly of officials from GoS and SPLM/A. Since the beginning of the 80s no specific reconciliation initiatives have been conducted at the top-level. But in this analysis I will use Daniel Bar-Tal´s approach and say that the negotiations and peace talks are a part of the reconciliation process as a whole (Bar-Tal, 2000: 351). In doing so I am not neglecting the importance of specific reconciliation initiatives at the top level of society, the negotiations are just one part of it. Important elements like communication, trust and relationship-building that are present in negotiation processes I would argue are very similar to some of the definitions of reconciliation. Negotiations on the top level are mainly a part of diplomacy which is an institution itself (Leguey-Feilleux, 2009: 1). But in the internal conflicts of today we have actors on the top level that are not a part of the organized institution of diplomacy but still actors in the negotiations on Lederach´s top level. TRCs and public apologies are examples of initiatives on the top-level of society (Bloomfield, 2006: 25), but that has not been conducted in Sudan. After the CPA was signed there were politicians expressing the need of it like As-Sadiq al-Mahdi, the chairman of the Umma party (Al-Mahdi, 2006: 75), but still nothing like the TRC has been conducted in Sudan on the national level.

In the case of Sudan the biggest negotiation process that have had a significant impact on the top level has been the IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development) process which led to the signing of the CPA. It started out as an regional initiative in 1994 then called IGADD (Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development) which led to a Declaration of Principles. IGAD is a regional organisation that addresses issues of common concern in the Horn of Africa (Prendergast, 1997: 155). The IGAD process consisted of several peace talks in several places though the initiative started out in 1994 the process did not move forward until the year of 2002. Dr Mohamed el-Mukhtar Hussein, one of the key members of the Government of Sudan´s delegation in Machakos and Naivasha, says that the relationship between John Garang and the vice-president Ali Osman al-Taha was a key factor in finalizing the CPA in 2005 (Hussein, 2006:

19). And throughout the interview with General Lazaro Sumbeiywo, who served as the mediator in the IGAD process, in the 18th issue of Accord I found it obvious that relationship-building is something very important also at the top level of society (Simmons; Dixon, 2006(1): 22-27). Relationship building, that most of the scholars consider to be the core of reconciliation, is just another element pointing at Bar-Tal´s theory where he argues that negotiation is just a part of the overall reconciliation process.

Why did the process start again at this time, in the year of 2002 and not earlier? The ICG report from 2002 argues that SPLA was interested because of their longer-term military vulnerability, GoS because of the US war on terrorism and because of the difficult security situation in the oilfields, which are a great deal of the resources in Sudan (ICG, 2002: 15). In this report ICG also believed IGAD to not be capable of finalizing a peace process (ICG, 2002: 16), but that showed to be a wrong assumption when they signed the Machakos protocol on 20th of July 2002 (ICG,2003: 1). But unfortunately the comprehensive element of the IGAD process was left out when not linking the process of Darfur and the Eastern part of Sudan to it (ICG, 2003: 1-2). Concerning the timing of this as a reconciliation initiative at first I believe the process itself went too fast, did not have a holistic view of the situation and the timeframe, and it was not inclusive.

From all the civil wars in the world that took place during the 20th century and that had reconciliation events initiated, 64% did not return to war. But among those countries where no events were initiated only 9% did not return to war. The events referred to in this case are the ones conducted on the national level so this shows the importance of specific reconciliation initiatives on the national level. (Brounéus, 2003: 25) Arguing negotiation and mediation to be reconciliation initiatives in an overall reconciliation process does not exclude the importance of dealing specifically with reconciliation at the top-level of society I believe.

3.4.2 Middle-Range Level

At the middle-range level there are the initiatives among the ethnic and religious leaders, academics, intellectuals and humanitarian leaders like chairmen of bigger NGOs. There are three specific characteristics that Lederach describes them to have. First they are in contact both with the top-level leadership and the grassroots leadership. Second, their position is not based on military or political power. Third, they tend to have pre-existing relationships that cut across the lines of conflict, for example people with the same profession or believe but belonging to different sides of the conflict. (Lederach, 1997: 41-42) Lederach argues this to be the level where it is most important to emphasize when it comes to peace building and reconciliation. He considers the actors fitting the description above to be the key actors in building a sustainable peace. The question is what happened in Sudan before the CPA on the middle-range level?

Prendergast considered the initiatives on the middle-range level in Sudan to be very limited referring to what had happened before 1997 (Prendergast, 1997: 156-157). Before 1997 an IGAD resource group had brought together Sudan experts to assist the IGAD process and New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) made some efforts to maintain contacts and build relationships between actors at the middle-range level. The UNICEF, UNDP and the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs worked with humanitarian diplomacy and problem-solving workshops which are a part of the approaches Lederach puts on the middle-range level (Prendergast, 1997: 157; Lederach, 1997: 39).

At this level something happened in 1999, more initiatives were made. The Wunlit Peace and Reconciliation Conference was initiated by NSCC and it ranged over the borders of different states, included the participation of specific ethnic leaders and aimed to have a broader impact of reconciliation in the South. It is the best known and documented initiative that took place during the war between the North and the South (Bradbury; Ryle; Medley; Sansculotte-Greenidge, 2006: 158; NSCC, 2002: 31, 58). Paul Murphy calls it effective grassroots peace activity and NSCC also calls it grassroots peace-building (Murphy, 2006: 65), but considering the participants like military commanders, community leaders, chiefs and intellectuals I would argue it to belong to the middle-range level in this analysis (Bradbury; Ryle; Medley; Sansculotte-Greenidge, 18). After the Wunlit covenant that formed an agreement between Nuer and Dinka tribes in Upper Nile state and Bahr el Ghazal state, both in Southern Sudan, there were 10 more meetings that reaffirmed the covenant or brought further dialogues (Bradbury; Ryle; Medley; Sansculotte-Greenidge, 2006:158-169). This was a so called people-to-people initiative that was going to spark more and more of those especially on the grassroots level though.

Concordis International is an organisation that has initiated processes to build relationships on the middle-range level in Sudan starting a programme in 1999. Their aim was to build relationships between key players at this level in order for them to discuss issues in a non-threatening environment and also to get them in contact with the broader society. But unfortunately the relationship between these track-two initiatives and the IGAD process has not been close. The lack of contact in between the different initiatives on the different levels has been something that has characterized the process in Sudan before the CPA. The two leading parties, the SPLM/A and the GoS, excluded other parties during the whole process. (Simmons; Dixon, 2006: 62)

Darfur and Kordofan were states in the North of Sudan, now they a split into smaller states. There were not many initiatives conducted at the middle-range level but between ethnic groups from these states there were 19 initiatives in between 1993 and 2005. But only one was held 1993 and the rest from 1999 and later. In these cases they were supported by the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement (SPLM), the Government of Sudan (GoS), USAID, NSCC, UNDP and so forth. Dialogues and small negotiations that led to some good outcomes like written agreement of tribal leaders to work on reconciliation and restoring relationships and specific local agreements. (Bradbury; Ryle; Medley; Sansculotte-Greenidge, 2006: 161-165) The initiatives supported closely by GoS

or SPLM might not belong to the middle-range level considering Lederach´s explanations about the leadership on this level. In the case of Sudan before the CPA the middle-range level does not seem to have had a lot of attention. Not many initiatives on this level so considering Lederach´s theory this process was not a stable and multiplying one. No real attempts of reaching the moral imagination.

3.4.3 Grassroots Level

At the lowest but the most populated level of society we have the grassroots level. Peace must be built also from bottom-up not only top-down approaches. A strong process at this level will be a threat to leaders who want to fight and it lays a foundation for national reconciliation (Brounéus, 2003: 37). This level represents people who might have a hard time on day-to-day basis struggle for survival and it represents people who have had a close encounter with violence. They are so close to the conflict itself but so far away from the tables of decision making. According to several of the scholars this is the level were reconciliation initiatives can be conducted even during violence.

Since the second war between the North and the South began in 1983, until 2005 when the CPA was signed, reconciliation initiatives have been conducted at the grassroots level and some even before that. It is hard to map all that has been conducted and some are not documented at all. According to Rift Valley institute ´s base line study from 2006 many peace-building and conflict transformation activities have been supported in Sudan at the local level before the CPA was signed. They argue that the interest to support the local level was big because of all the potential local conflicts that could disturb the process of peace agreements (Bradbury; Ryle; Medley; Sansculotte-Greenidge, 2006: 6). Many INGOs work with the civil-society but in many cases it is hard to define who is a representative of the civil-society or not. There are cases when the traditional leaders are approached as being a part of the civil society and then the next day they appear to be warlords (Bradbury; Ryle; Medley; Sansculotte-Greenidge, 2006: 14).

To separate what has been conducted at the middle-range level and at the grassroots level is not an easy task in the myriad of peace-building efforts. The study from the Rift-Walley institute that has mapped local peace processes includes mostly the grassroots level but also the middle-range level through the participation of specific ethnic and religious leaders and intellectuals (Lederach, 1997: 41). Sudan being the biggest country in Africa and with a lot of different leaders at different levels makes it hard to distinguish them from each other.

Most of the initiatives at the grassroots level were conducted in Southern Sudan between the different ethnic groups. The only reconciliation initiatives conducted before the CPA was signed that included communities on the Government side and communities on the SPLA side was in the Nuba Mountains and in Abyei, areas close to the border (Bradbury; Ryle; Medley; Sansculotte-Greenidge, 2006: 21). My aim is to analyse the timing so I will just shortly describe when and where initiatives were conducted.

The Nuba mountains are situated in the Kordofan state where 7 local initiatives were conducted in between 1995 and January 2005. Almost all of them with parties from the Nuba mountains. As mentioned earlier this was one of the places were people from the parties who signed the CPA were attending. The GoS, SPLM and UNICEF were the big initiators and some of the focus was on cross-border and interfaith dialogues. (Bradbury; Ryle; Medley; Sansculotte-Greenidge, 2006: 171-173)

In Equatoria being one of the States in the South 19 local peace meetings were conducted in between the year of 1983 and January 2005 that accomplished dialogues, cessation of hostilities, return of abducted children, forgiveness, reconciliation in between local communities and so forth (Bradbury; Ryle; Medley; Sansculotte-Greenidge, 2006: 147-150). From the initiatives 9 of them were held 2002 and later, which is only 3 years before the CPA was signed. Still in the South but closer to the border is the Upper Nile state and the documented initiatives there counts up to 38 meetings in the earlier mentioned time period but with a start in 1994. The initiatives covering for example sharing of natural resources, women dialogues, a covenant of Peace and Reconciliation in Liir 2000 (Bradbury; Ryle; Medley; Sansculotte-Greenidge, 2006: 150-157).

In 1997 New Sudan Council of Churches initiated a reconciliation process between Dinkas and Nuer in Southern Sudan (Chigas, 2007: 560). After having tried since the beginning of the 90s this was a successful initiative and it led to the Wunlit Covenant in 1999 mentioned at the middle-range level (Murphy, 2006: 65). NSCC continued with more initiatives on the grassroots level in the *Upper Nile* area of Southern Sudan 1999/2000. The reconciliation initiatives conducted by the NSCC on the middle range and grassroots levels, people-to-people peace making, were inclusive dialogue meetings to deal with different issues. Something of specific interest was that in the people-to-people initiatives in Southern Sudan women played a leading key role (Itto, 2006: 57; NSCC, 2002: 44, 48). From the year of 2002 and three years ahead a Sudan Peace Fund was created by the USAID. The SPF started to support the people-to-people process and they were able to spread the initiatives (Murphy, 2006: 66). The people-to-people dialogues in the south preceded the negotiation talks between the South and the North but the dialogues were between the southerners and reconciliation between them. Concerning the timeline of peace building in the case of Sudan the process on the grassroots level started before the process on the top-level.

Between the year of 2002 and 2005 eight local peace talks were held in Bahr el Ghazal, another state in the South, mainly by NSCC and Sudan Peace Fund (SPF) but also UNICEF, PACT Sudan (Coalition of INGOs and NGOs) and OXFAM were supporters. The outcomes were a series of community peace agreements, initiations of peace councils at the local level, reconciliation and restoration of free movement and so forth (Bradbury; Ryle; Medley; Sansculotte-Greenidge, 2006: 160-161). Like in Equatoria the main part of the known initiatives were during the last three years before the CPA. Some other grassroots initiatives in Bahr el Ghazal were the "peace-markets" which formed free passage for trade between the ethnic groups. They are considered to have prepared the

ground for normalisation of relations as much as sponsored peace-talks (Bradbury; Ryle; Medley; Sansculotte-Greenidge, 2006: 74-75).

In Southern Sudan there were some general local processes that included both actors from the middle-range level and the grassroots level. NSCC and SPLM were also here the big supporters but also SPF, PACT, Norwegian Church Aid and Danchurchaid. For example these included dialogues between political and social leaders, women´s representatives, civil and military authorities, intellectuals and so forth. (Bradbury; Ryle; Medley; Sansculotte-Greenidge, 2006: 174-175)

In the Northern, Eastern and Central regions there were only 4 local peace processes documented between 1976 and 2003 and they were mainly supported by GoS (Bradbury; Ryle; Medley; Sansculotte-Greenidge, 2006: 173-174). Considering the local conflicts in the east of Northern Sudan this is very little attempts to work with reconciliation at the grassroots level.

Darfur is the place in Sudan that absolutely has got the biggest attention in international media during the last years but still the situation is bad. When it comes to reconciliation initiatives conducted in the area of Darfur before 2005 there seems to be many of them compared with some states of Southern Sudan, but still they were different. The first documented local peace process is from the year of 1957 but between 1983 and 2005 there were 33 initiatives in Darfur. They consisted of ceasefire agreements, dialogues between different ethnic groups, solving blood money disputes, agreements about wells and pastures but some were not carried through. Most of them were supported by GoS and traditional rulers. In 2002 there was also an agreement that brought ceasefire to the Nuba mountains supported by US, UK, Norway, and Switzerland The initiatives differ from the initiatives in Southern Sudan concerning the aims and outcomes. In Southern Sudan, specifically when in comes to the people-to-people initiatives, many of the cases were to see a broader impact. Not only to build relationships in between some groups but to work with reconciliation in the entire South. And the initiatives in Darfur appear to have been less successful according to Bradbury (et al). (Bradbury; Ryle; Medley; Sansculotte-Greenidge, 2006: 165-171)

Most of the reconciliation initiatives that were conducted at the grassroots level in between the year of 1983 and January 2005 were situated in Southern Sudan. There were very few that included representatives from both of the parties in the peace process at the top-level, SPLM and GoS. It is hard to measure if the initiatives on the grassroots level had any impact on the CPA and the IGAD process and the contemporary situation in Sudan. Concerning the timeframe most of them seem to have been conducted during the last five year before the CPA.

Local peace-building cannot be a substitute for a national peace agreement as Bradbury etc. argues (Bradbury; Ryle; Medley; Sansculotte-Greenidge, 2006: 9), but I would argue that a peace agreement cannot succeed without the support of the masses and be sustainable in a society with a protracted conflict. Local processes are limited in how they can affect structural changes in the society because of being far from the decision tables but they can still have an impact on the processes. The actors on the top-level of society are also somehow members of the grassroots level, they all come from somewhere being connected with the

masses. But what can make the connection better is probably what Lederach suggests, the middle-range actors capturing the moral imagiation.

3.5   Conclusion

In the fragile case of Sudan there have been reconciliation initiatives before the CPA was signed in 2005 but what is interesting in this case is the distribution of them on the different levels of society and the lack of connection between them. There were reconciliation initiatives conducted both at the top-level and at the grassroots level but they were not linked (Bradbury; Ryle; Medley; Sansculotte-Greenidge, 2006: 20). The participants may learn about reconciliation and might even become reconciled but without dialogue and connection with the other levels, especially the top level with the decision makers the impact is very limited when it comes to the wider situation (Legey-Feilleux, 2009: 342). Lack of communication breeds distrust (Chigas, 2007: 564). Trust is something there is a big lack of in Sudan, even less now than during the war. Something that I got reminded of several times during my visit in Sudan earlier this year.

The core in Lederach´s theory about the actors at the middle-range level is that they are the ones keeping the web of relationships together and in this case there were a lack of initiatives conducted at that level. My conclusion here is that according to him this peace process before the CPA was weak and did not build sustainability. The IGAD process in itself was not inclusive and has got a lot of criticism because of that. The people-to-people initiatives by NSCC were first of all aiming at uniting the people in Southern Sudan (Bradbury; Ryle; Medley; Sansculotte-Greenidge, 2006: 55), and sort of not inclusive them either even if they aimed to unite different tribes in the south they lacked the bigger picture of the situation and the timeframe.

The initiatives on the middle-range level and the grassroots level were conducted at the same time period as the top level talks but they were never directly linked (Bradbury; Ryle; Medley; Sansculotte-Greenidge, 2006: 20). The middle-out approach was missing almost completely in the process before the CPA was signed. My conclusion concerning the initiatives is that one big issue was the lack of communication in between the levels and not so much the timing itself. Considering the lack of initiatives on the middle-range level the question about the timing comes back, what if there were no lack of them. Would the current situation in Sudan look different? It is important on all levels to form places of encounter were people can meet. Helping the parties to meet under non-threatening informal circumstances re-humanizes the conflict and people might start to look at each other as human beings and not only the devil incarnate (Chigas, 2007: 566; Simmons; Dixon, 2006: 62)

Our focus now is on the CPA and whether it will collapse or hold for the future to come. No agreement ends all conflict (Kriesberg, 2007(2): 327). I believe that too much of attention has been given to agreements made, in the conflict resolution field. Conflicts will always be there, it´s a matter of transforming them

to be non-violent. A focus on conflict transformation rather than conflict resolution. There is no possibility to satisfy all parties so therefore the focus I believe should be on creating a place to meet in the middle of all the important elements of peace building.

4 Concluding remarks

Timing reconciliation, knowing when to start with the process is not an easy task. We learned in the first phase of the thesis that most of the reconciliation theoreticians argue reconciliation to be both a process and a goal, but also that some argue it to be the overall process. The timing did not only differ on the timeline but also from the different levels. To start earlier at the grassroots level was something mentioned especially by Bloomfield who divided reconciliation into political reconciliation and interpersonal reconciliation. The answer is that there are many views but some scholars like Lederach argues the timing to matter.

When it comes to peace agreements and reconciliation the arguments ranged all the way from reconciliation being important to be initiated before the peace agreement was signed all the way to it being initiated after the peace agreement has been signed. If there is a connection in between a successful peace agreement and the timing of reconciliation is hard to generalize in this case. It would take many case studies to do that. But the conclusion I can make here is that the process that was before the CPA led to an agreement on the paper but not to a sustainable peace. The CPA left a web of conflicts without addressing them. But I believe that Lederach would say that the moral imagination was missing during the process. There were initiatives conducted on the different levels but a connection between them was missing. In that case it is not only the timing that is important but also the communication between the different levels.

In the intractable internal conflicts we have today the conflicts do not just have one peak but form more like circles and circles again. I would argue that the earlier trust is built in the relationships the better. There are lots of fears in protracted conflicts and trust needs to be built (Fisher, 2001: 41). If peace agreements are signed but no trust and relationships built people will continue to live in fear. It might be the long and hard way to go but reconciliation takes time, maybe a process that never really ends. We all live in a web of relationships either they are destructive or healing and growing. What matters is how we take care of them. And where else if not in protracted conflicts should we emphasize on them to take a positive turn towards a sustainable positive peace.

For further analysis and studies I believe it is needed to explore the peace-building field before the settlement of an agreement and not only to put the efforts in the post-settlement phase. Even if there have been wars ever since the very beginning of life itself and people have through different approaches solved them or not, it still seems like we are just in the beginning of learning how to work with peace-building.

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