



Assessing Reconciliation: Actors, Risks, and Assets

Reconciliation Landscape

A number of challenges concerning reconciliation persists in the world. There is no shortage of conflicts among different actors or values. The Middle East and North Africa are facing aftermath of “Arab Spring,” which resulted in increasing divisions among different perspectives of social development, which is exemplified in coup d’état and subsequent political disorder in Egypt. Many developing countries are still facing immense challenges concerning national and social integration, democracy, and development. It goes without saying that the urgency of contemporary global crisis is compelling enough to reconsider ongoing conflicts and ways to reconcile them.

Reconciliation has received recognition as a way to address past crimes, prevent potential conflicts, and provide a foundation for future peaceful development and cooperation. However, despite generally acknowledged importance of theory and practice of reconciliation for individuals, societies, and states, its precise meaning remains rather obscure and vaguely defined. It is still widely debated whether reconciliation should be viewed as a transitional stage on the way towards future goals or a process valuable in itself.

A more commonly agreed fact, though, is that reconciliation is a multi-faceted process. It encompasses religious, social, economic, political, legal, and psychological aspects. How do we bridge conflicting values and traditions? How do we address past injustices through reshaping our social conditions, political practices, and economic opportunities? How is it possible to punish perpetrators of crimes without jeopardizing future inclusive growth and social and political development? Should victims of past injustices forgive their oppressors and on what conditions should they do so? This is only a small portion of questions raised by theory and practice of reconciliation.

This workshop aims at addressing some of the complex questions reconciliation possesses to us. It may be too naive to hope to answer all of them here, but to glance at

an immense complexity of reconciliation landscape is a task sufficiently meaningful in itself for serving as a catalyst for this workshop.

Workshop Design

This GRM International Workshop will be structured around five presentations and further round-table discussions of each topic they touch upon. Broadly speaking, the presentations will cover two separate themes related to reconciliation.

The first section of the workshop will focus on structural aspects of reconciliation practices. Hence, Naomi Nishi will talk about distribution of political resources in Thailand and a peculiar effect it has on reconciliation between Muslims and Buddhists in this country. Marie Taketani will look at role of the reconciliation through looking back the history of the conflicts of the Northern Mali and analyzing actors that deeply affected to the conflict from 2012 to 2013.

The second theme will touch upon the question of actors of reconciliation. Reviewing potential benefits and limitations different actors can pose to reconciliation attempts, three presentations will highlight roles of media, civil society, and international actors in assisting and shaping reconciliation in precarious environment. Nikolay Shevchenko will assess international actors' potential to assist post-Qaddafi Libya in its attempt to address past injustices and reconcile former enemies. Toshie Inui, will address the conflict between the local government and people in Rwanda about the water supply and its causes and solutions from the perspective of a foreign actor. Moriyama Takuya will examine role of civic movement in reconciling uneven wealth distribution and poverty in Turkey.

The workshop will be conducted in two days, each day corresponding to one of the two themes outlined above. Each round of presentations will be followed by a round-table discussion to which invited guest-speakers will contribute.

Goals and Objectives of the Workshop

The objectives of the GRM International Workshop are:

- To provide a forum for debates on reconciliation for people with different backgrounds, from theoretical and applied perspectives of social and natural sciences.

- To create a deeper understanding of potential risks, limits, and contributions of different actors, policies, and practices to the process of reconciliation.
- To provide new insights for more pragmatic understanding of the current world by bringing the concept of reconciliation.

About the GRM Program

In Global Resource Management (GRM), which is funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan, we pursue the object to understand specific problems by moving beyond the dichotomy of state and private, and also social and natural sciences. Each region we are now working on, Africa, Middle East, Asia, is in rapid economic, social, political, and cultural transition. Conflicts and frictions among various ethnic and religious groups within these countries and regions typically arise from inequalities in the distribution and ownership of resources and in access to infrastructures. The GRM program seeks to address these issues and strives to realize a harmonious co-existence of multiple cultures by providing solutions founded on sustainable development, human security and a fair and reliable distribution of resources.

It is often assumed that unequal distribution of wealth may be solved by further development in technology and economic growth. This so called trickle-down effect type distribution might work, as long as exponential growth continues. However, most developed countries are experiencing a prolonged state of stagnation, exemplified in a large amount of national debt, high unemployment rate, shrinking and aging population, and decreasing economic growth. While several developing countries are experiencing rapid growth, they cannot escape from facing same problems unless they find more sustainable alternative way of development.

In order to bring about positive breakthroughs to the modern world where economic growth is stifled, we need to overarch existing ideology or methods, unifying the physical, social, and spiritual dimensions. Our workshop welcomes fresh ideas and viewpoints from students and scholars working in both social and natural sciences.