

【論文】Peacebuilding and Social Capital :
The Post-Conflict Reconstruction Case of the Karenni Community in Myanmar (Go Takahashi)

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The Post-Conflict Reconstruction Case of the Karenni Community in Myanmar

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平和構築とソーシャルキャピタル
—ミャンマーのカレンニーコミュニティの紛争後の再建事例—

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Abstract

Peacebuilding is the building of a relationship of trust and reciprocity. One of the major challenges faced in the peacebuilding process is the gap between reconstruction policies and the unchanging reality at the grassroots community level. This study explains the conditions under which inter-ethnic cooperation can be promoted in conflict-torn and divided societies such as Karenni and clarifies how Karennis influence the venue for reciprocity relationships from the perspective of social capital that incorporates a social network theory into analysis of the social structures. Ethnonationalism is a major barrier to advancing the process of social integration beyond ethnic control. In particular, it is difficult in a homogenous rural society with a small population and little movement between ethnic groups where ethnic control is prominent. This research with collected data illustrates the need to create weak ties, modifying their strength and frequency to promote independent relationships for practicing reciprocity in social spaces. Workspaces function more appropriately as a venue for interdependent relationships across ethnic groups than in neighbors and volunteer organizations. Volunteer organizations can be social institutions that encourage inter-ethnic cooperation by recurring horizontal reciprocal relationships only when widespread support and response from the general public is obtained at the grassroots. Stakeholders of the international community need to design and promote schemes that invest in the development of inter-ethnic cooperation that changes local space. Systematic observation of inter-ethnic interaction in the different socio-spatial environments is useful to uncover the mechanism for peacebuilding through social capital.

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1. Introduction

Peacebuilding is about relationships through trust and reciprocity. One of the major challenges faced in the peacebuilding process is the gap between reconstruction strategies and policies and the unchanging reality at the grassroots community level (Woolcock and Narayan 2000). It may make sense to bring together top political leadership through a diplomatic approach to peacebuilding, but peace cannot be maintained in the face of divergence and isolation at the community level. Field experience in the UN PKO missions proves that conflicts have the potential to reignite if grassroots support is not provided to build trust (Galtung 1978; Uesugi 2019). In such cases, even long after a peace agreement is negotiated, people in the community continue to suffer from physical, emotional, and social injuries, and to harbor a deep lack of trust and sense of division. The prejudices cultivated by extreme forms of violence do not disappear with a message from political leaders alone; they require that carefully considered peacebuilding strategies be implemented over the long term at many levels in the community (Fukuyama 1999). In fact, this means incorporating the perspectives and experiences of local people, not just local leadership. In addition to the long-term goals of societal interests and peacebuilding players, people's short-term needs must be considered. Ensuring the stability and quality of life at the individual level is essential for the stability of society. What should be seen from the perspective of the community in the context of peacebuilding? Ledwith (2005) warns that it should pay attention not only to the political context, but to the practice of well-developed theories. This implies elucidating in the process why we do what we are doing. A micro perspective can facilitate a deeper understanding and generate realistic and ongoing peacebuilding initiatives (Galtung 1990). It is necessary to clarify how people experience their daily lives in post-conflict situations. Conflicts foster fear and hatred, resulting in the destruction of social fabric and network in the community. The destruction of trust brings about a change in relationships, and suspicious becomes part of the obstacle for peace. Greater integration among international, national, and local strategies is required for sustained and sustainable peace.

Despite intensive efforts to rebuild Karenni since the ceasefire in 2012, society remains deeply divided. Under the influence of the armed independent organization, major local elites continue to stick to a ethno-nationalist vision of what Karenni's basic nature should be (Kramer and Smith 2018). In a society where ethnonationalism remains strong, support is needed not only from the political elites but also from the general public who are willing to cooperate between ethnic groups for peacebuilding. Karenni is striving for a peaceful society where democratic governance and equal human rights are guaranteed without discrimination as a marginalized community. In an atmosphere of intensified nationalism under conflict and repression by the central government, under what circumstances can the minorities of Karenni society build social networks and cooperation with dominant ethnic groups? Understanding the mechanisms that people commonly use to develop interethnic cooperation leads to reconstructs the theory and elements of interethnic relations in post-conflict divided societies that are becoming more and more common in today's world.

This research focuses on two themes. The first is to use the theory of social networks and social capital to identify what are the conditions for creating inter-ethnic cooperation. The second is to clarify how Karenni's ethnic context influences the venues

that promote reciprocity relationships. Using the qualitative analysis from the interviews and observation on the social elements brought about by the complex cultural and political backgrounds in Karenni, this research analyzed how ethnic relationships and venues, which lead to peacebuilding, contribute to inter-ethnic connections that are necessary for forming stable and heterogeneous community spaces by extending social network theory to the issues of cross-ethnic cooperation.

2. Background: Karenni community

Creating diverse spaces for interethnic cooperation is essential for peace and stability in Myanmar. With non-Burma people making up for one-third of the population, the need for it is urgent. Conflicts have been going on for decades near the rural borders where ethnic minorities live: Kachin and Shan state in North, Kayah and Kayah State in East, Mon State in South and Rakhine and Chin State in West. The local people have been plagued by government failure, political alienation and neglect, and military rule. The path to sustainable peace in Myanmar challenges the values of the Burmese military government, which sees diversity as a threat against Burmese ethnocentrism and ethnic identity as a tool to fuel competition for divide and conquer between groups for scarce resources such as allocation of entitlements in a zero-sum game in which a profit of one group inevitably means a loss of another group. Mottos like ‘Master race we are, we Burmans’ are a proof for excluding ethnic minorities from the mainstream of society in Myanmar (Walton 2013).

Kayah State, historically known as Karenni, provides an example of the reaction to the reform dilemma faced by people of Myanmar’s ethnic nationality. Originally, Karenni was used as a general term for people living in the area, not as a single ethnic group.¹ Meanwhile, Kayah is a self-proclaimed Burmese word meaning “human”. The name of Kayah was forcibly given by the central government of Burma after achieving independence in 1948; the idea was to dilute the state’s ethnicity and promote integration as a way of Burmanization. Today, the name of “Karenni” is often seen as a term for ethnic category building in the process of the resistance movement, but it is actually the generic term of the political, cultural, and social community of the region (Dudley 2000). Therefore this study uses the name of Karenni as it is based on the perspective of local people. Karenni is located in the eastern end of Myanmar, bordering Mae Hong Saw in Thailand in the east, Shan State in the north, and Karen State in the south. Governed independently by a lord called *Saopya*, Karenni did not succumb to any external forces. Even during the British colonial period, Karenni was granted independence, and in 1875 an agreement was reached between the British Empire and the Burmese dynasty to allow Karenni independence. No delegation was dispatched from Karenni to the 1947 Panglong conference, the basis of the founding of Burma, which aimed to unify the country with the ethnic minorities as a nation. Until Burma became independent of Britain in 1948, Karenni remained independent (Lehman 1967).

With Burma’s independence from Britain, the Burmese established an Anti-Fascist People’s Freedom Federation (AFPFL) government, while the Karenni forces countered it by forming the Karenni Resistance Government (KRG). Burmese troops invaded Karenni territories in August 1948. The struggle between the Karenni resistance and successive Burmese military regimes has continued into the twenty-first century.

The Karenni Resistance Government was reorganized in 1957 as the Karenni

National Progressive Party (KNPP). Today, the KNPP is Karenni's leading armed force, but several Karenni resistance organizations that have separated from the KNPP have been confronting the Burmese government for many years, which also complicates local conflict factors. A prominent example is the Karenni National Liberation Front (KNPLF), which separated from the KNPP in 1978.

Burmese central government leadership aimed to conquer Karenni as its own territory since the battle began in 1948. Starting in the late 1960s, Burmese troops carried out "Four Cuts" operations in non-Burman inhabited areas, targeting civilians for military attacks. The intent was to cut off supplies and support to armed resistance organizations, including food, funding, information, and conscription. The Burmese government conducted the first large-scale scorched earth operation in Karenni from 1974 to 1975 as part of these "Four Cuts" operations. In 1995, after a ceasefire agreement between Burmese and KNPP was abandoned, the Burmese junta launched a full-scale attack to further strengthen its control in Karenni.

The Junta has used multiple tactics, including direct attacks, large-scale displacements, and pressure on armed and militia groups in response to a ceasefire agreement to confront KNPP. Under these circumstances, military control was strengthened through human rights violations perpetrated on people in Karenni by soldiers; consequently, the number of internally displaced persons and refugees fleeing to neighboring Thailand increased. In 1996, many Karenni residents who were thought to support the KNPP were expelled. Their numbers exceeded 37,000 (Kubo 2014). Besides, large-scale human rights violations such as forced labor, theft of food, materials, and money, torture, extrajudicial killings, and burning of villages were reported in Karenni during the conflict.²

The Junta boasts that it maintains domestic stability and unity through a ceasefire agreement with armed groups and brings modernization and development to border areas where many ethnic minorities live. However, even if they are officially regarded as ceasefire zones, the reality is that most of the areas remain in conflict.

The Karenni People's Liberation Front (KNPLF) agreed to a ceasefire with the Burmese junta in 1994 and, in 2005, worked with the Burmese army to attack the KNPP bases. Word was that the Burmese army had promised to grant favors to the KNPLF. The Karenni National Democratic Party (KNDP) also joined the Burmese army around 1994 in exchange for the right to control conflict areas. A joint unit of the KNDP and the Burmese army raided a refugee camp on the Thailand side of the border in 1997. The organizations that have agreed to a ceasefire with the military government were urged to oppose non-ceasefire organizations, causing conflicts between the same ethnic groups. Also, the Burmese military administration has given control of specific areas and resources to organizations and militias that have split from the KNPP, further outlawing remote and marginalized areas.

The conflicts, which span more than half a century, appear to have come to an end with a ceasefire agreement between the KNPP and the Thein Sein administration in 2012. Karenni is an example of the failure of the central government's political, cultural, and economic integration policies in a multi-ethnic state. These policies such as the Burmese way to socialism³ and Burmanization with discriminatory citizenship law⁴ have contributed to Karenni being among the poorest regions in Asia as well as conflict-prone areas such as Chin, Kachin, Kayin, Mon, Rakhine and Shan in Myanmar.

In demographics, Karenni accounts for 58 percent of the population, with Shan (14

percent), Karen (7 percent), and Burmese (15 percent).⁵ The ethnic groups stipulated in the Myanmar Constitution are called Taing-Yin-Tha (TYT), and the other ethnic groups are non-TYT.⁶ Buddhists and Christians each make up 48 percent, and the rest are traditional animism.⁷

3. Social networks and social capital for peacebuilding

Over the last decades, the concept of social capital has had great momentum in terms of its effectiveness for social scientists as well as policymakers. One of the widely used definitions of the term comes from Putnam. He defined social capital as “features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions” (Putnam 1993, p.167). International organizations also contributed to defining social capital. The World Bank (n.d.) focuses on the function of institutions in its definition of social capital as “the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society’s social interactions.” And OECD (2001, 2019) highlights network aspects of social capital, defining it as sharing norms, values, and understandings that facilitate cooperation within or among groups. Various scholars argue that the answer to improving social life and well-being lies in the generation of social capital (Patrick and Wickizer 1995; Lomas 1998; Takagai, Ikeda, and Kawachi 2012; Bai, Du and Wan 2020). Fukuyama (1995, 2000) boldly conceived social capital as voluntary and social ties for well-being.

From a peacebuilding perspective, social capital has special relevance because it deals with issues like relationships, networks, and trust. Social capital refers to all the knowledge and skills found in a group, and all the connections among individuals, family, friends, and groups (Putman 1995, 2021; Muntaner 2001). The concept is used to describe many phenomena of social relationships at the individual and social levels. Social capital is perceived as a complex web of connections between groups and people who facilitate the solution of collective problems. Some social scientists describe social capital in terms of resources that are embedded or accessible through personal social networks (Lin 2001; Durlauf and Fafchamps 2004; Aldrich 2012; Sato 2019). Social capital is conceptualized to include factors that influence social structures, levels of trust, norms, mutual support, and functional integration for collective actions. Using a social capital framework makes it possible to discuss societal and collective problems using the concepts such as trust and shared values, social cohesion, participation in civic activities and collective behaviors, networks, reciprocal support, and positive identities.

The connections between culturally different people in society and the general public affect ethnic mobilization and the sensitivity of society to ethnic groups. Portes (1998, p.6) considered social capital to be “for the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of memberships in social networks or other structures”. The concept of social capital becomes clearer, especially when the benefits that result from social networks and ethnic cooperation can be obtained. Granovetter (1973) reveals that the benefits from social connections are transmitted through weak ties that are not in close and frequent contact. Loose informal connections can be a glue between different ethnic groups in social spaces and promote social integration (Burt 1992, 2005). Loose ties are promoted by institutions, which are based on acquaintance-based relationships rather than on relationships with homogeneous strong ties such as kin and friendships.

Therefore, institutions must be diversity-oriented and contain norms that are not tied to specific ethnic groups. Individuals also acquire weak ties through various opportunities such as volunteers, workplaces, and neighborhoods, which promote cooperative relationships in social spaces. In social spaces with such institutions, people from different backgrounds interact and build repetitive reciprocal relationships, which fosters trust, promotes interethnic cooperation, and creates a peaceful society.

This study focuses on the strong exclusive bonding aspect and the weak non-exclusive and open bridge aspect of social capital with a social and cultural view. While bonding relationships create homogeneity in closed spaces and hinder democracy, bridging relationships promote diverse democracy across ethnic groups in open spaces (Putnam 2000, 2021; Woolcock 1998; Ostrom and Ahn 2009; Inaba 2013)

From a network perspective, socialization within a group for peacebuilding during conflict creates a closed relationship linked to a narrow nationalist ideology and escalates the conflict (Paffenholz 2009; Xavier, Teresa and Torlo 2011). And also most socialization activities do not lead to the mass movements needed for peacebuilding that can affect the peace process at the macro level due to too sporadic and insufficient coordination (Maddison 2016). Besides, the mobilization for peace faces a difficult situation when basic human needs such as foods and security are not met and access to the judiciary is lacking. Therefore, the bridge social capital is often damaged or broken during conflicts, which limits the impact on the peace process, but in the medium to long term, it will have the critical meaning in the process after the conflict or after serious human rights abuses.

4. Methods

This research is based on interviews conducted mainly for a total of 6 months in 2017, 2018, and 2019. The interviews are about personal network information and the reciprocal relationship of who receives or gives what benefits. The purpose of this study is to explore the usefulness of social capital theory in post-conflict ethnic societies to explain the conditions under which an ethnic group can benefit from relationships with other ethnic groups for peacebuilding. It means to investigate how conflict-damaged social space can help minorities to develop interethnic cooperation networks. I also focus on social network theory, taking into account the Asian tradition of leveraging personal networks to address the unreliable public arenas (Varshney 2002). Taking a social network approach to deciphering inter-ethnic relationships means combining in-view and observation to focus on concrete relationships in social space.

Many of Myanmar's studies on ethnic conflict have focused on the structure of conflict between the government and the ethnic elites, meanwhile, there are few studies to pay attention to the role of people's relationships in social space. And also, the research in post-conflict society of Karenni is few because it was not until 2015 that foreigners were not allowed to visit Karenni officially and legally. The data was collected by conducting intensive interviews with 12 organizations and 26 informants, as well as observing them. The research was conducted in 14 villages, talking with a total of 140 villagers including observing them. These surveys were conducted in a free-form and semi-structured questionnaire to protect minority vulnerabilities and to understand their social relationships. The research also uses a snowballing technique to ask local key persons to introduce me to the minority network. To protect personal

privacy, the survey was conducted with official approval from the UN University for Peace's Research Ethic Review Board including an informed consent form.⁸ This research uses generalized names such as a returnee, anonyms or pseudonyms for persons even if the permission is obtained.

In a field survey, I stayed at the home of a large family to understand the actual ethnic environment in the community. This approach helped to build trust with not activists but the general public. The Karenni culture, in which the neighborhood frequently interacts through local well water use, tea visits, and barter networks, provided an opportunity to observe social behaviors in the neighborhood. The research also worked with several non-nationalist Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) to investigate the role of social groups in the post-conflict peacebuilding process. The researcher frequently dropped in at and observed markets, farms, and private offices. The survey measured the strength of ties by examining the degree of emotion and trust, and the interaction actions that characterize social capital ties, and also focused on their ethnic and social backgrounds.

The research was conducted mainly in two Karenni towns, Loikaw and Demoso, and focused on living spaces where ethnic interactions occur. This helps to compare the views and behaviors of ethnic groups in Karenni's demographic, socio-economic, and politically different spaces. Loikaw has historically played a central role in Karenni where many ethnic groups coexisted before the conflict, and as such, it is a city where mutual exchanges between ethnic groups are active. Demoso, on the other hand, is a small village with a population of less than one-tenth that of Loikaw, but during the conflict, it became the center of clashes between the central government and the Karenni army, and many land mines remain buried underground in which opponents of Karennism and fusionists are considered enemies.

5 Social capital spaces in Karenni

Karenni was originally a community of reciprocity. Due to its ethnic background, in the traditional community, middle-aged Karenni believed that they could seek help from their closest neighbor before relying on their relatives. Community natural resources are commons, and normative structures that rely on reciprocity relationships with good neighbors had protected people's lives. During the conflict, the political elites emphasized the ethnic differences, disrupted the mechanism of community interdependence, and increased violence in rural areas (Galtung 1990). The nationalist government of Burma manipulated property rights and human rights and robbed Karenni of them. As a result of the Burmanization policy, the local community was weakened as part of the homogeneous community development strategy.

Civil society acts as bridging social capital in its social space (Putnam 1993; Cohen and Rogers 1993). A few pieces of research have been done on how volunteer organizations help the general public build cross-ethnic ties. Varshney (2002) argues that Indian civil society formed common interests among people of different backgrounds, thereby promoting interethnic peace. However, Karenni's organization without deep roots is different from Indian civil society, which has the tradition from the 1930s. Burmanisation policy restricted public participation in society until the 1990s (Burma Ethnic Research Groups 2000). In the early days, the tendency of individuals based on ethnicity to participate in social group organizations meant that Karenni's new

organizations were ethnically strong. Some were associated with Karenni nationalist groups, fueling conflict and overwhelming mixed local groups against ethnic monopolistic capitalism (Burma Issues 2008).

Karenni people who suffer from memories of life during conflict, propaganda, poverty, the influx of rural areas, the outflow of intellectuals, and nationalist rule are interested in forming ties. Data collected on the effectiveness of neighborhoods, volunteer organizations, and workspaces in building interethnic cooperation suggest that minorities could use reciprocity to build bridging networks in diverse social spaces. Individuals with many choices of access to social space can acquire more weak ties (Burt 1992). Diverse work environments have a significant impact on building interdependent relationships between individuals with different cultural backgrounds as volunteer groups and neighborhoods also do. As ethnonationalism grows, social spaces are socially and culturally occupied by homogeneous people, limiting the choices of access from outsiders. Minorities living in Karenni had to work for livelihoods, but there was a large difference in the range of workplace choices depending on the sites. Prior to the ceasefire, there was no freedom of choices in Karenni's work environment dominated by an ethnonationalism atmosphere. The Burmese government's socialism and Burmanization policy restricted the movement of ethnic groups in society and intensified ethnic conflicts with frustration for manipulated society.⁹ Even today, Karenni's workspaces continue to be under ethnonationalism pressure.

Since the large-scale democratization movement and general elections in the 1990s, many civil society groups have been established in Karenni with the cooperation of international agents, who have provided diverse spaces and fostered inter-ethnic cooperation by having the role of bridging with weak ties in Karenni society. Like a spider web, it contributes to the expansion of networks within the community.

Post-conflict Karenni is still suffered by politicizing social spaces that limit their ability to foster inter-ethnic cooperation by ethnonationalism forces such as KNPP, even in diverse organizations predicted by social network theory to create across ethnic cooperation.

6. Dilemma and potential of citizen's organizations

During the conflict, the general public of Karenni expected the role of NGOs, civil society organizations that creates mixed spaces that transcend ethnic groups as institutions for peacebuilding. Expectations are diminishing as the formation of an integrated society after the conflict progresses. In fact, many people in Karenni think that NGOs are not meeting their needs. Since the 1990s, stakeholders in the international community have helped Karenni to establish many advocacy groups to promote the ideals of a free democratic society for peacebuilding.¹⁰ Advocacy groups were expected to build reciprocal relationships and become a segment for peacebuilding by facilitating horizontal interactive communication in social spaces. The mid-level segment requires bottom-up support from the general public at the grass-roots (Aldrich 2012). The expectations were disappointing, however, while activists in the advocacy network established many bridging networks in and beyond Karenni, and enjoyed the benefits of them, relationships with the general public became hierarchical, and the form of communication became rigid. The negative comment heard in my interviews was that advocacy groups were vulnerable to opposition from authorities.

The case of Meh Mo¹¹, a refugee returnee to Karenni, illustrates this in a nutshell. She sought help from several advocacy groups that supported land ownership after the Burmese government robbed her of her original land and housing, but she was unable to return to her hometown for three years after the conflict. The Karenni, who are far from the local groups, pointed out to me that the volunteer groups were not interested in the needs of the locals, only the intentions of the donors in the international community. Some informants sternly accused volunteer activities of being opportunistic. Gu Gu¹², a young entrepreneur returning to Karenni, was indignant that international donors and their affiliates were corrupt and would not support local entrepreneurs like himself. His dissatisfaction resonates with many Karenni youth generations.

International organization reports point out that many NGOs are looking only at donors and lack the ability to build adequate reconciliation with the community (Raul 2010). There are also reports that NGOs are fueling the division of society by creating a new “haves” such as employment privileges and “have nots” in a fragile society after conflict (Abom 2004). After all, by imposing their goals, donors hamper the development of local volunteer organizations that act as bridges for inter-ethnic relationships. The interviewees repeatedly complained about the current situation in which support for minorities who have suffered locally during the conflict has been neglected. The World Bank’s Social Capital Report (2000) emphasized the importance that international stakeholders need to develop strategies in their development projects to incorporate bridging ties into existing local bonding relationships in a transparent and impartial manner with a suitable monitor mechanism.

A mixed background returnee¹³, who founded the youth association in Karenni, shared her successful experience by organizing the conference and networks among young people to create support the interactive communication in heterogenic groups and horizontal reciprocity relationships with me. She is proud to have captured and fulfilled the needs of young people in Krenni to interact with each other regardless of their ethnicity and share their interests and concerns with each other. Grassroots volunteer groups that can respond to local voices and provide ethnically agnostic benefits can create bridging ties through repetitive horizontal reciprocity.

The role of women's groups is also very important in the process of inter-ethnic cooperation (Babaei and Gill 2012; Ashley and Marie 2017; Clarke, Sein Myint and Siwa 2019). I show one example of the women's organizations¹⁴ that address individual issues with the benefits of networks between memberships in a transitional society. After the conflict, a women's group founded in the heart of Loikaw succeeded in creating an ethnically diverse space and attracting a large number of members from different cultural backgrounds. The network also provided opportunities for bartering daily necessities, even increasing profits among members, creating horizontal reciprocal relationships, and increasing bridging spaces. It also provides opportunities to learn various cultural customs and acquire individual skills such as sewing and contributes to the fusion of social spaces. Many interviewees appreciated the women’s organizations to meet their urgent needs in their daily life. Volunteer organizations that can have a positive impact on real-life are institutions that promote interethnic cooperation.

7. Closed neighborhoods in social spaces

Post-conflict Karenni society is changing its social space by accepting refugees,

evacuees, and new migrants. Such changes make it difficult for minorities to build inclusive relationships in their neighborhoods. Minorities, especially those forced to leave their places of residence due to political pressure from nationalism, have their homes and lands owned or nationalized by the Burmese.¹⁵ Many evacuated people were unable to return to their former homes due to Burmese government policy, and such treatments have left the relationship between Karenni and Burmese in particular tense. Moreover, such a reality is changing the relationships of minorities in society and hindering the development of ties in social spaces. Many of the minorities I interviewed recognized the relationships with the new neighborhoods as superficial, limited to greetings even though they can interact with each other. It clearly shows the characteristics of the neighborhood in social spaces during the process of regional integration.

Among the informants are Karennis couple, Nor Nor and Min Kha, who remained local during the conflict. As they are a couple of ordinary peasants, they have a deep connection with the Karenni society as hereditary genuine Karenni. They showed blatant disgust when the Burmese came home. As a host family, they took care of me as a foreigner very kindly, but they used to distract the topic when it came to Burmese people in everyday conversation. Their presence helps explain the tensions facing the post-conflict community. They live in an ethnically closed and homogeneous community and have no incentive to promote inter-ethnic cooperation in an exclusive atmosphere. At the extreme, Nor Nor even believed that refusing to associate with Burmese could prevent new settlers from coming in and protect the lives of their existing communities.

Burmese Karenni returnee, Paw Law¹⁶, confessed that his relationships with the neighborhoods were tense and suffocating. Although he was a Burmese, he had no connection with the Burmese elites and had few relatives, hoping that he would start a new life in post-conflict Karenni society. However, he was disappointed with the status quo, lamenting the Karenni people's refusal to engage in reciprocity relationships and practices. In particular, when he greeted his neighbors, he felt alienated from their intentional use of Karenni language. The exclusive ethnic language used by neighbors is seen as a symbol that neighbors ignore his existence and refuse to form weak ties that transcend cultural differences and build relationships. Lack of interethnic cooperation and relationship ties in social spaces led Paw Law to leave Loikaw and move to Yangon where the Burmese are the majority.

The cases of Nor Nor, Min Kha and Paw Law are typical examples of the dark side of social capital created by ethnicity and the closed bonding ties that hinder the building of relationships in the neighborhoods while ethnic ties are solid. Meanwhile, Karenni minority and Christian Rose¹⁷ felt the need to build relationships that are common in Karenni society for ensuring a better life. She was born ill and had difficulty walking freely, but was also aware that she needed wide social supports from various opportunities. She prioritized building a stable life rather than sticking to ethnic closed relationships. She actively contacted the Burmese people in her neighborhoods and built interdependent relationships, such as serving foods and requesting repairs to the fence for them. Her relationship-building policy was very clear with the provision of favors based on the act of expecting a return. "They help me because I help them". It means that her commitment to relationships is not based on friendship, but in a realistic and practical sense. Like Tucker's (1950) Prisoner's Dilemma game players, Rose

understood the mechanism by which building interdependencies separate from the sense of favors leads to efficient profits from the network. By forming weak ties with her neighbors, she enjoyed the benefits of social networks.

8. Possibilities for interethnic interaction and reciprocity in social/workspaces

The mixed social spaces had the lowest ethnic selectivity and relatively individualistic norms. The mixed social space, which most facilitates collaborative interethnic behaviors, promoted repetitive interactions and interdependence between colleagues from different backgrounds on a horizontal basis.

Lin (1991) found that people with similar social and functional positions can promote horizontal reciprocity and increase social capital. The workspaces provide opportunities for network interaction that leads to the acquisition of such diverse ties in social space, modifying the strength of ties (Glanovetter 1995). There is much support for a workplace that encourages professional engagement, such as commitment to tasks, to contribute to the development of weak ties that transcend ethnicity.

Cases of minority in Karenni provide the evidence that workspaces function as an institution for bridging inter-ethnic exchange. For example, the non-TYT minority Maw Moe¹⁸ had a limited connection with her neighborhood, but her workplace served as a place to foster relationships for practicing reciprocity. She despises nationalism and such connections, focuses on building inclusive relationships at her social spaces including the school, her workplace where she taught her students the importance of being independent of ethnicity and was proud of her professionalism and criticism on ethnonationalism. Her attitude and behaviors that she builds interdependent relationships with her colleagues through tea meetings and visit to each other were contrasted with the ones of the parents of her students and school's administration staffs who were entrenched in narrow ethnonationalism views. Some of the Non-TYT people had left the community due to a lack of relationships, but the connections she has made through the workplace have become weak ties and bring many benefits to her life. Of interest to social network theory, minorities use the freedom of social spaces to form ties of varying strengths, building weak to moderate connections that meet the desired level of inter-ethnic cooperation (Burt 2001; Szreter and Woolcock 2004; Spognardi 2019).

Cases of majority prove the same. Some people have the belief that their expertise in the workspaces guarantees their livelihoods and connects them with the community. Burmese and Buddhist Sae Reh¹⁹ ran a shoe store in Loikaw. He has a sociable and open personality. While belonging to the majority groups of Myanmar, he does not attempt to take advantage of it, but rather he is proud to have Karenni and Muslims as his customers. A post-conflict Burmese migrant, Mu Rar²⁰ was proud to be accepted into Karenni school as a teacher due to not his ethnicity but his professionalism. He married a Karenni woman, and in a conservative and ethno-centric society of Karenni, it was a testament to his acceptance in society. Burmese Maw Lu²¹ lived better than his neighbors due to ethnically discriminatory housing allocations by ethnonationalism policies. However, she was opposed to such ethnonationalism assignments and relied on the work environment to gain psychological and material supports by varying strengths ties across ethnic groups. On traditional holidays, she celebrated together with her colleagues, making traditional foods. She has established a comprehensive sense of ethnic identity. Such connections, unlike many Burmese settlers who struggle in

Karenni society, provide Maw Lu with fulfilling days as a member of an integrated society.

Emigration to social spaces dominated by a homogeneous ethnic group poses the challenge of scarce opportunities to gain horizontal-base reciprocity relationships to bridge. However, heterogenous people can participate in the process of integrating social spaces by coming into contact with various networks through activities in their daily lives and particularly through interaction in the workspaces. A Burmese²² who emigrated to Demoso after the conflict was concerned about the lack of communication with his neighbors, but through the timber industry, his business, he formed relationships with the community with ties of various strengths. In this way, the work settings provide an opportunity for inter-ethnic cooperation even in a small community dominated by an ethnic group. In reality, many people choose an area where their ethnic group is dominant and go to work from there, or even if they settle, they choose to leave in a short period as Paw Law did. Granovetter (1995) points out that ethnic connections through acquaintances are essential for the social integration of minorities as initial contact.

In a 2016 United Nations survey, all ethnic groups in Karenni showed a positive attitude towards interethnic cooperation in social spaces. Approximately 80 percent of Karenni and Burmese also agree to share social spaces with other ethnic groups. A very high percentage of people also agree to accept different ethnic groups in their workplaces. On the other hand, 78 percent of Burmese in Karenni answered that ethnicity was an important factor in employment. Few non-TYTs stated that ethnicity was a condition of employment. And also, half of the Karennies demonstrated that they did not accept Burmese as their friends in their social spaces. 37 percent of people in Karenni said that they considered ethnic in choosing friends for reciprocity relationships. In this survey, Christians were also shown to be more tolerant of ethnicity than Buddhists. The youth generation and those with higher education in Karenni were more willing and open to interacting with people from different backgrounds.

High unemployment and a dominant nationalist atmosphere impede the process of expanding social networks and social integration. High unemployment limits employment opportunities to bonding ties and ethnic elites are only interested in mobilizing their compatriots (Granovetter 1995). It exacerbates the relationship between the ethnic elites and the general public and poses a great risk to the stability of society. For the work environment to have the function of promoting the development of a democratic space through the building of relationships across ethnic groups, it is necessary to create transparent and equitable employment opportunities that transcend the control of ethnonationalism.

9. Conclusions and further study

This research discusses the reality and potential of interethnic exchange through the venues of neighborhoods, volunteers, and the work settings in the views of social networks and social capital. The Karennis ethnic context creates an exclusive and closed space on the dark side of social capital, as discussed in the relationship of neighborhoods, and has a negative impact on peacebuilding by hindering the inter-ethnic relationships. In the post-conflict Karenni community, it illustrates the need to create weak ties with adjustable strength and frequency to promote inter-ethnic

cooperation for reciprocity. It also argues that for minorities, the workspaces function more appropriately as a venue for interdependent relationships across ethnic groups than in neighborhoods and volunteer organizations, and ensuring access to such places is essential in the social integration process of peacebuilding. It indicates the potential of workspaces as institutions for producing “good” social capital. Volunteer organizations can be social institutions that encourage inter-ethnic cooperation by repeating horizontal reciprocal relationships only when widespread support and response from the general public is obtained at the grassroots.

In a deeply divided society after conflict, ethnonationalism is a major barrier to advancing the process of social integration beyond ethnic control. In particular, it is difficult in a homogeneous rural society with a small population and little movement between ethnic groups where ethnic control is prominent. It is possible to find clues to solutions that cannot be seen in political, economic, and cultural contexts by deciphering the mechanism of the social space integration process from the perspective of social capital that incorporates network theory into the analysis of the social structures as this study shows. Social capital is the cornerstone of the elements that form the relationships between ethnic groups in social spaces. Moreover, while external support can sometimes create friction with local intentions, as this study has shown, it is undeniable that it plays an important role in the process of social development. It is important that stakeholders of the international community can design and promote schemes that invest in the development of inter-ethnic cooperation that changes the local social space, as well as carry out appropriate monitoring in accordance with local needs and abilities. Institutions, norms, and networks based on reciprocity relationships form social capital and lead to peacebuilding.

These findings require further research on creating grassroots cooperation between ethnic groups in a post-conflict situation. The theoretical insights gained in this study will need further verification to clarify the conditions under which minorities can generate interethnic cooperation in deeply divided communities that have just recovered from violent conflict. Systematic observation of interethnic interactions in the different socio-spatial environments, and a study of Karenni and beyond, is useful to uncover the mechanisms for peacebuilding through social capital.

Endnote

1. “From war to peace”
2. Human Rights Yearbook 1997-98, National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma.
3. Socialist policies were implemented by the military government from the 1960s to the 1980s.
4. The classification law of ethnic groups by the military government. It restricts full citizenship to groups that do not meet the “taingyintha (race)” requirement.
5. Center for Diversity and National Harmony (2015). The state of social harmony in Kayah state. Yangon. Myanmar. This survey was supported by the United Peacebuilding Fund.
6. Center for Diversity and National Harmony (2015).
7. KAYAH STATE SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS (2013). This study was conducted by the survey team in Karenni supported financially by the European

Union. The team members are from International Service (AVSI), Action Contre la Faim (ACF), Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE), Mercy Corps, and Metta Development Foundation. man Rights Yearbook 1997-98, National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma.

8. The Research Ethics Approval was issued on October 10, 2017 by UN University for Peace.
9. "From war to peace"
10. "From war to peace"
11. Interview on 7/10, 2017.
12. Interview on 13/10, 2017.
13. Interview on 25/10, 2017.
14. Interview on 19/10, 2017.
15. "From war to peace"
16. Interview on 26/10, 2017.
17. Interview on 13/10, 2017.
18. Interview on 18/10, 2017.
19. Interview on 25/10, 2017.
20. Interview on 19/10, 2017.
21. Interview on 18/10, 2017.
22. Interview on 23/10, 2017.

(Appendix A) Informants list (※no particular order)

N°	Name (pseudonyms)	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Place of residence	Organization	Role
1	Naw	F	30s	Karenni	Loikaw	Karenni Evergreen	Director
2	Soe	M	10s	Burma	Loikaw	Loikaw University	student
3	Aung	M	20s	Karenni	Loikaw	Youth group of KNPP	coordinator
4	Meh Mo	F	20s	Karenni	Loikaw	-	former refugee
5	Mary	F	20s	Karenni	Loikaw	-	former refugee
6	Sae Reh	M	20s	Burmese	Loikaw	Buddhist youth group	coordinator/ a shoe store
7	Maw Lu	F	30s	Burmese	Loikaw	Karenni Evergreen	staff
8	Eh	M	20s	Karenni	Loikaw	Kayah Earthright Action Network (KEAN)	Coordinator
9	Khu	M	20s	Karenni	Loikaw	Independent journalist	-
10	Ko	M	50s	Karenni	Loikaw	Kalyana Mitta Development Foundation	Executive Director
11	Innocent	F	40s	Karenni	Loikaw	Union of Karenni State Youth	Coordinator
12	Rose	F	50s	Karen	Loikaw	Church group	Coordinator
13	Koo	M	50s	Karenni	Loikaw	Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP)	Director
14	JR	M	40s	Burma	Loikaw	Loikaw Forest Department	Administrator
15	Maw Moe	F	40s	Non-TYT	Tetanga	local school	teacher
16	Anonymous	M	30s	Burmese	Demoso	-	timber industry worker
17	Nan	F	30s	Karenni	Tokyo	Refugee	Office worker
18	Byar	F	30s	Karenni	Yangon	Ethnic Nationalities Affairs Center	Policy Analyst
19	Kyi	F	40s	Burma	Yangon	-	Policy Consultant
20	Su	F	50s	Burma	Yangon	British Council	Manager
21	An	F	60s	Karenni	Loikaw	-	Daughter of former Saopva
22	Gu Gu	M	20s	Karenni	Loikaw	kantarawaddy times	young entrepreneur
23	Nor Nor	F	40s	Karenni	Loikaw	-	host family/farmer
24	M in Kha	M	40s	Karenni	Loikaw	-	host family/farmer
25	Paw Law	M	40s	Burmese	Dimawso	-	migrant/farmer
26	M u Rar	M	30s	Burmese	Loikaw	local school	migrant/teacher

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Group Name	Participants Gender composition	Age range	Location	Character of Organization	Foundation year
Karenni Evergreen (KEG)	M:8 F:6	20s ~ 50s		CSO Environment organization	
Daw Soe Bee		30s~60s	Daw Soe Bee	village elders	
Daw Ta Ma Gyi		20s ~ 60s	Daw Ta Ma Gyi	village elders	
Kaylayar		30s~60s	Kaylayar	village elders	
Par Laung		40s~50s	Par Laung	village elders	
		40s~50s		village elders	
Boe Lyar		40s~50s		village elders	
Karenni National Woman Organization		20s~50s		Woman group	1990s
kantarawaddy times		30s~40s			1980s
Kalyana Mitta Development Foundation (KMF)		30s~60s		CSO Aid organization	1980s
Noe Koe		40s~50s		village elders	
Kayah Earthright Action Network (KEAN)		20s~40s		CSO Human rights organization	
Kayah Htar Ni Company				Private sector Industrial company	
Kayah Youth Research & Development Center (KYRDC)		10s~20s		Youth group	2000s
Union of Karenni State Youth (UKSY)	M:5 F:2			Youth group	
	M:8 F:2	30s~60s		village elders	
	M:6	40s~60s		village elders	
Lo Law Tee	M:14 F:4	30s~60s		village elders	
Baw La Khae	M:15 F:4	20s~60s	Baw La Khae	village elders	
	M:4 F:1	20s~60s		village elders	
Khon Tar	M:10 F:2	20s~40s	Khon Tar	village elders	1940s
Daw Pa Pa	M:8 F:1	20s~40s	Daw Papa	village elders	1940s

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