

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND

**DEALING WITH ESTRANGED POLITICAL
RELATIONSHIPS: A PREREQUISITE FOR SUSTAINABLE
PEACE IN SOUTH SUDAN**

A Dissertation submitted by

Sam Angulo Onapa
MA in Peacebuilding, Coventry University

Faculty of Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences and Education (HASSE)

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Philosophy

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Statement of Original Authorship

I certify that the work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

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Date:

April 16, 2020

Thesis by Publication Statement

In line with the University of New England's Higher Degree Research thesis by publication guideline, Chapters 4-7 of this thesis are presented in a journal article format, hence a different format and style of referencing and repetitive explanation of the sampling strategy. However, the numbering was amended to match the thesis format. Chapter 6 was published in the African Security Review journal Volume 28, 2019 - Issue 2. Chapter 4 was accepted for publication by the Peace and Conflict Studies Journal, and the Editors final copy editing for publication was completed as shown in the email at the end of the chapter. Chapters 5 and 7, yet to be published, were submitted to the journals of Nationalism and Ethnic Politics and African Security Review, respectively.

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List of Abbreviations

ABC	Abyei Border Commission
ANC	African National Congress
ARCSS	Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan
AU	African Union
AUCISS	African Union Commission Inquiry on South Sudan
AUHIP	African Union High-Level Implementation Panel
CAQDAS	Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CBT	Calculus-Based Trust
CEPO	Community Empowerment for Progress Organization
CNPC	China National Petroleum Company
CoHA	Cessation of Hostilities Agreement
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DTB	Deterrence-Based Trust
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
EU	European Union
GoS	Government of Sudan
HCSS	Hybrid Court for South Sudan
HLRF	High-Level Revitalisation Forum
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IBT	Identification-Based Trust
ICC	International Criminal Court
IGAD	Intergovernmental Agreement on Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KBT	Knowledge-Based Trust
LAPSSET	Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia-Transport
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
NAS	National Salvation Front
NCP	National Congress Party
NIF	National Islamic Front
NLC	National Liberation Council
NRM	National Resistance Movement
PCA	Permanent Court of Arbitration
PCRD	Post Conflict, Reconstruction and Development
PDM	People's Democratic Movement
R-ARCSS	Revitalized Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan
R-TGoNU	Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
SPLM-FDs	SPLM Former Detainees

SPLM-IG	SPLM in Government
SPLM-IO	SPLM in Opposition
SSDA	South Sudan Democratic Army
SSDF	South Sudan Defence Force
SSLM	South Sudan Liberation Movement
SSNDA	South Sudan National Democratic Alliance
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TFA	Transitional Financial Arrangement
TPLF	Tigrayan People's Liberation Front
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMISS	UN Mission in South Sudan
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Forces
USA	United States of America

Abstract

This thesis investigates the role of estranged political relationships among key leaders of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) in perpetuating violent conflict in South Sudan and identifies potential strategies to constructively address, and ideally overcome, the estrangement. Previous studies suggest that the conflict was a result of one or more factors including competition for natural resources, ethno nationalist divisions, historic intra-SPLM conflicts and the ensuing power struggles. While several studies to date have pointed to distrust, lack of trust-building and failure to address historical conflicts as reasons for the protracted nature of the conflict, they do not specify the matrix of the problem nor how to solve it. This research examines the interconnectedness between longstanding historic conflicts, intense distrust between SPLM leaders and their respective factions, the consequent power struggles and the seemingly habitual recourse to violent conflict. It then explores and evaluates a range of potentially suitable strategies to apply with a view to breaking this destructive cycle of civil war. The thesis systematically categorises the conflict into root causes (primary causes), underlying core problems (secondary causes) and the triggers (tertiary causes) that result in the violent conflict. The research involves the review of secondary literature as well as primary source documents where a thematic analysis of data is used to identify recurring patterns in the causes of the conflict. In an explanatory case study, twenty-nine participants were selected and interviewed from the categories of: parties to the conflict; the mediation team; eminent persons; scholars; and civil society organisation leaders. The transcribed interview data was uploaded to Nvivo computer analysis software and a three-stage coding analysis including, data cleaning, structural coding and synthesis into the dominant themes, was applied. An analysis of the data revealed six major themes: historical conflicts, estranged political relationships, power struggles, control of resources, ethnic

violence and the mixed role of regional and international partners. The thesis shows that power struggles leading to the violent conflicts in South Sudan were manipulated by estranged leaders whose rivalry has its roots in historical conflicts. Following this political sequence, there was ethnic violence involving the political elite and ethnic groups from both sides, and deep-rooted distrust among the political elite that makes trust-building necessary. Additionally, regional and international mediation partners were found to be culpable in contributing to the protraction of the conflict. The thesis lays out a trust-building process and recommends a hybrid transitional justice approach to the conflict.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Violence and failed agreements have defined the conflict trajectory in South Sudan for the last five decades. This paradoxical situation where South Sudanese citizens are subjected to civil war instead of the long-cherished peace has prompted growing interest, speculation and research into the causes of the intractable conflict. At the centre of the disputes and failed agreements is the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) which carried the mantle of liberation from Sudan beginning in the year 1983 to independence in 2011. The literature to date has focused on historical conflicts, power struggles, control of resources and ethnicity as causes of the conflict. Distrust among the SPLM party members and the lack of trust-building have been cited as major obstacles to the peace processes. However, a thorough understanding of the origins of the distrust and a proposal for a systematic trust-building process to address it are lacking in recent studies. To address the gap, this thesis explores these particular aspects and the role of estranged political relationships and distrust in perpetuating the conflict. To facilitate this enquiry, the thesis draws on theoretical frameworks to underpin the research, develops a research design for the investigation and discusses the findings leading to recommendations for policy and practice. This chapter lays down the significance and purpose of the research.

1.1 Significance for Human Security

This thesis focuses on the role of the SPLM party leadership that has dominated the political landscape in the southern part of Sudan since the second civil war erupted in 1983. Since their inception the SPLM has been characterised by internal disputes and power struggles

that ultimately plunged the youngest nation into a civil war, just two years after independence. Despite the optimistic expectations, the situation reverted to hopelessness in December 2013 when power struggles ensued among the SPLM/A leadership, resulting in a civil war marked by tribal violence (Brosché and Höglund 2016:77; Johnson 2014b:169–70). The return to civil war is a paradox that has left a question as to why a leadership that had endured a long, treacherous civil war and achieved its goal for independence would in just two years, return to a senseless civil war within the fledging state, despite the goodwill of the citizens and the international community. As a result, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in its report of May 2019, estimates that “nearly 2.3 million South Sudanese have fled to neighbouring countries and 1.87 million remain internally displaced in South Sudan due to violent conflict throughout the country”. Furthermore, the UNHCR rates South Sudan as “the largest refugee crisis in Africa and the third-largest refugee crisis in the world” after Syria and Afghanistan (2019). However, Central African Republic, Somalia and Burkina Faso are some African countries listed by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) (2020) with the potential to exceed the South Sudan humanitarian crisis per capita. According to an earlier report by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (2018), approximately 400,000 lives were ultimately lost due to the outbreak of the South Sudan civil war in December 2013. This humanitarian catastrophe is exacerbated by the ethnic violence between the Dinka and the Nuer groups that spontaneously followed the outbreak of fighting.

The escalation of these humanitarian crises is attributed to the protracted nature of the conflict whereby, the parties to the conflict have exhibited intransigent positions during negotiations. For example, the mediation process brokered by the Intergovernmental Agreement on Development (IGAD)¹, in response to the December 2013 conflict, led to the

¹ Eastern Africa regional body including Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Eritrea and South Sudan

Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) of August 2015 and the formation of a power-sharing government between the factions of SPLM-In Government (SPLM-IG) led by the incumbent President, Salva Kiir; SPLM-In Opposition (SPLM-IO) led by former Vice President, Dr. Riek Machar; and the SPLM-Former Detainees (SPLM-FDs) led by Pagan Amum, former Secretary General of the SPLM (Brosché and Höglund 2016:78). However, the agreement lasted only until July 2016 before fresh fighting broke out (de Vries and Schomerus 2017:333–34). Renewed efforts by IGAD, and supported by the Troika², the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN), among other partners, yielded the Revitalized-ARCSS (R-ARCSS) which was signed in September 2018 (International Crisis Group 2019:13). One year and a half later, the new agreement is still facing serious implementation hurdles as some of its vital components, such as the security arrangements and the contentious issue of the state boundaries, are lagging behind (Hauenstein, Joshi, and Quinn 2019:27–29; International Crisis Group 2019:13–14). Despite the formation of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity in February 2020 (R-TGoNU) (UN News 2020), there is scepticism among the South Sudanese population as to whether the new government will weather the challenges that befell the unity government that collapsed in July 2016 (Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO) 2020). In light of the seemingly intractable cycle of civil war, there is an increasing concern that the deep distrust and rivalries among the parties negatively impact the peace process and prolong the conflict. Thus, an investigation into the causes of the long-standing estrangement among the SPLM leaders is of paramount significance, as its continuation is likely to perpetuate the humanitarian crisis.

² The Troika consists of the United States of America (USA), The United Kingdom (UK) and Norway.

1.2 Research Context

The background of the South Sudanese civil war dates back to the birth of the nation-state of Sudan on January 1, 1956, which was preceded by an army mutiny by southern soldiers in March 1955, which resulted in the Anyanya rebellion and the first civil war (Johnson 2011:1–6; Stevens 1976:248–49). The civil war began in 1955 and ended 17 years later when the Addis Ababa Agreement was signed between the Government of Sudan (GoS) and the South Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM) on March 27 1972 (Johnson 2016:3–4; Young 2012:19, 20, 25). However, the agreement only provided for a semi-autonomous state instead of the anticipated self-determination of political status by the south, including the option of independence. Consequently, it was abrogated in 1983, leading to the birth of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) and the second civil war which began that year (Scott 1985:69, 71; Young 2012:13). Finally, after eleven years of negotiation, in January 2005, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was concluded between Sudan’s ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and the SPLM/A, paving the way for the independence of South Sudan six years later on July 9, 2011 (Ahmed 2009:136; Johnson 2016:9, 46–48). Independence was thus the culmination of over five decades of violent civil war endured by the South Sudanese and ushered in renewed hope for peace, social, economic and political freedoms and development.

However, in the course of the struggle for social, economic and political freedom, the SPLM/A experienced a number of internecine conflicts, a situation that has left an indelible mark on the history of the liberation movement. Among these is the 1983 ideological differences between a group led by John Garang and another group of former Anyanya fighters led by Akuot Atem and Samuel Gai Tut leading to a division in the SPLM/A (Jok, 2001, p. 116). A similar disagreement occurred in 1991 when Dr. Riek Machar led an attempted coup against John Garang leading to a further balkanisation of the SPLM/A along ethnic lines,

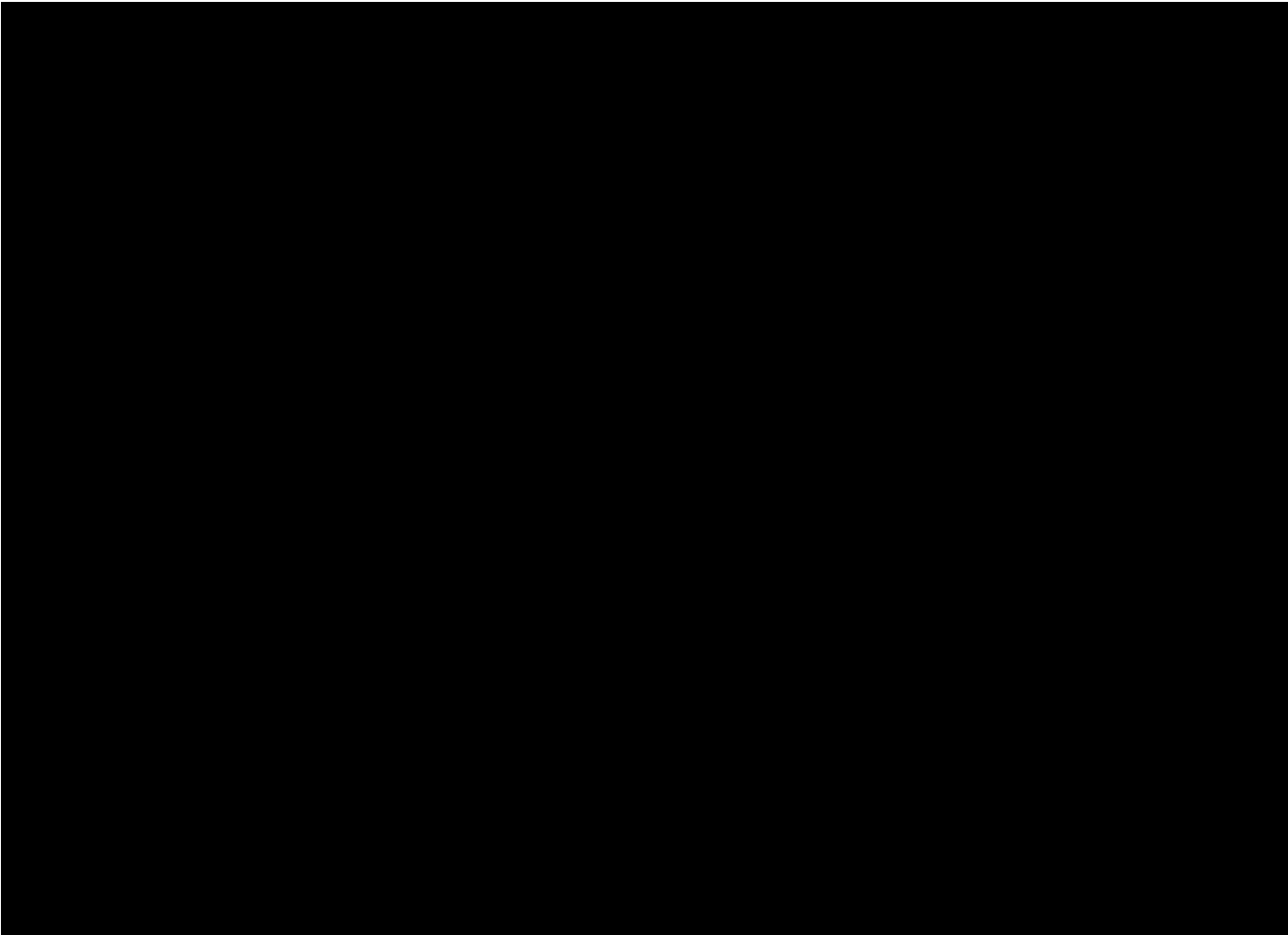


Figure 1. 1: Map of Sudan of South Sudan after independence in July 2011. Source: Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. <https://www.britannica.com/place/South-Sudan>

particularly the Dinka and the Nuer (Jok, 2001, p. 127). These internecine conflicts will be discussed in the subsequent chapters.

What is clear from the above conflict pattern is that the 1983 and 1991 conflicts reflect fractured political relationships between the SPLM leaders. As a consequence, relations among the party leadership are characterised by deep distrust, anger and the urge for revenge, all of which leads to power struggles and makes it impossible for the factions to have sustainable political alliances. Recent studies have alluded to distrust and the lack of trust-building as crucial elements contributing to the ineffectiveness of the peace process. Adeba and Prendergast (2018:3) point out that the agreements in place “lacked concrete incentives for building trust and confidence between warring factions”, a situation that persists to date. Blackings (2018:23) laments the failure to learn lessons from the 2005 CPA, arguing that with

ARCSS, “little was done to build trust between the two key antagonists”. Conversely, Rolandsen (2015:164) argues that the absence of reconciliation, which normally would entail trust-building, among the SPLM protagonists is not a reason for the outbreak of the armed conflict. However, he also refers to the “lack of peaceful mechanisms for political contestation” as a factor in the conflict. Although he does not specify the peaceful mechanism, trust-building is necessary for achieving a peaceful political settlement.

Despite its vital role, a systematic understanding of the origins of the distrust and of concrete strategies for trust-building, which together could lead to sustainable solutions to the conflict, are lacking. It is, therefore, necessary to transcend the political settlements imposed from outside that focus on power-sharing agreements as the only means to end the conflict, to address the estrangements in the political relationships and examine how to restore trust among the parties. The conflict trends show that the current disputes and power struggles among the SPLM political leaders are an outcome of long-standing historical conflicts, earlier cited, that have left the main factions incapable of collaborating with each other in the absence of a common enemy. This thesis examines the estranged political relationships within the SPLM political elite, to establish whether positively transformed relationships could be the key to sustainable political settlements and ending the violence. Only then can the SPLM advance a shared vision for South Sudan.

Although political settlements creating power-sharing agreements have intermittently paused the civil war in South Sudan, distrust among the parties to the conflict remains a prominent barrier to sustainable peace. According to Lewicki (2006:92), trust is a key determinant in positive relationships and successful conflict settlements; therefore, its absence from peace processes poses a significant challenge to successful mediation outcomes. Miall (2004:8), argues that “poor relationships between groups are all too often a trigger for conflict, and remain a critical hindrance to peacebuilding efforts after the violence is over”. As witnessed

in the failed ARCSS, and the delays in the R-ARCSS implementation, failure to incorporate trust-building in the peace process is a recipe for failed agreements. The uncertainties in the implementation phase are a matter of grave concern as the conflict has resulted in unprecedented human catastrophe and hundreds of thousands of deaths since its reoccurrence in 2013.

When disputes developed as to the objectives of the struggle and designation of the top leadership of SPLM, trust was broken, relationships became estranged and negative emotions such as anger, bitterness, and resentment developed. Bodtker and Jameson (2001:261) relate negative emotions to “perceived interference of blockage with one’s goals or expectations”. de Matos (2006:163) explains that unmet needs invoke negative emotions that are expressed by “anger, bitterness, despair, exasperation, hostility, impatience, irritation, pessimism, resentment, shock, and wretchedness”. The actions of the SPLM political leadership were inflamed by the emotional drivers of the violent conflict. According to Kaufman (2006:208), when there are “hostile emotions against the other side, negotiations are a waste of time”.

Though distrust and associated tensions and hostilities symptomatic of estranged relationships within the SPLM leadership are common threads in the violent recurrent conflicts in South Sudan, peace processes have paid little or no attention to this crucial issue. As previously mentioned, recent studies refer to historical conflicts, power struggles and control over resources as some of the causes of the disputes, in addition to distrust being chronic between SPLM faction leaders. Labianca, Brass and Gray (1998:58) highlight the negative emotions earlier described, as having “a greater impact on human attitudes, cognition, physiological response, and behaviour...”. This trend of negative feelings among the SPLM leadership, underpinned by deep distrust, has been at the centre of the conflicts. Subsequent peace processes have been based on political power-sharing while neglecting the estranged status of the parties to the conflict. Bereketeab (2017:157) has argued that a political leadership

manoeuvre by IGAD-Plus, which it hoped would bring peace, “was misplaced because it fails to understand the root causes of the civil war...”. This thesis investigates whether a trust-building process could end the impasse in peace processes and reverse the conflict status quo.

1.3 Purpose

The aim of this thesis at the outset is to understand the causes of the seemingly intractable conflict in South Sudan with a view to identifying strategies to address them more effectively. Firstly, it sets out to understand the root causes of estrangement in relationships among the SPLM political elite in the lead up to the resurgence of violent conflict. Understanding of the root causes is important because it forms the basis for early warning and prevention of armed conflict (Bartoli and Psimopoulos 2011:620). Secondly, the thesis aims to identify strategies that will address the estrangement in the relationships within the SPLM in order to break the cycle of violence and achieve sustainable peace. This is vital because it reduces hostile and combative attitudes among the conflict parties and improves communication between them (Berghof Foundation 2012:63–64; Miall 2004:8). Three research questions were formulated for the research, the overarching one being:

- 1. What are the causes of disputes and estrangement among the SPLM political elite which are leading to violent conflict?**

Answering this question assists in unravelling the short term conflict causes and the overall objective of understanding the long term root causes of the conflict. This understanding is underpinned by conflict analysis concepts integrated with conflict management, resolution and transformation theories (Greer, Jehn, and Mannix 2008:281–286). Additionally, theories of ethnic violence, including primordialism, constructivism and instrumentalism, are useful in clarifying the conflict causes (Wimmer 2008:1011). The subsidiary questions are:

2. Why have mediation processes not been effective in ending the violent conflicts in South Sudan?

Answering this question is a precursor for realising the objective of designing suitable strategies for addressing the conflict. Understanding of this issue is enhanced by institutional trust theories, for example, those developed by Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt and Camerer (1998). In addition, foreign policy theories, including realism/neorealism and liberalism/neoliberalism, provide the necessary analytical frameworks to address the question, for example, Hudson, (2005).

3. Which strategies are best suited for resolving the disputes and estrangement among the SPLM political elite that lead to violent conflicts in South Sudan?

Responses to this question will help to identify potentially suitable strategies in addressing the conflict and also inform the practical and policy implications of the study. The appreciation of diverse strategies is also shaped by institutional trust theories and political institution concepts (Lewicki and Bunker 1994; McKnight, Cummings, and Chervany 1998; Rousseau et al. 1998; Shapiro, Sheppard, and Cheraskin 1992).

1.4 Methodology

This research uses a qualitative case study approach to investigate the role of estranged relationships in the SPLM leadership in the conflict in South Sudan. The research methodology is described in detail in Chapter 3. An in-depth interview is the qualitative design option in collecting data which resonates with the long, complex disputes in the SPLM leadership in as far as their “personal histories, perspectives, and experiences...” are concerned (Mack, Woodsong, Macqueen, Guest and Namey, 2005:2). This approach facilitated the understanding of the current and past experiences of the SPLM leadership in relation to the thematic areas of historical conflicts, power struggles, and control of resources. The research questions and

objectives are thus best served by applying a semi-structured interview method (Edwards and Holland 2013:3, 29).

The research data was drawn from a purposively selected population of 29 participants of diverse backgrounds, including the SPLM leaders, mediators, scholars, eminent politicians and civil society organisation leaders. This selection technique, according to Ritchie, Lewis and Elam (2003, pp. 78–79) has “particular features or characteristics which will enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and puzzles”. Those interviewed from the SPLM in government leadership include the party Chief Whip and the immediate former Deputy Secretary-General of the party. From the SPLM opposition side, a former SPLA General heading an opposition group is among those interviewed. The mediation team members include the UN Secretary General’s Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, and Mr Barney Afako, a member of the UN Standby Team of Senior Mediation Advisers, seconded to the IGAD mediation team. The eminent persons feature the former Special Advisor to the UN Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, the Joint Head of South Sudan’s National Dialogue Steering Committee and former Second Vice-President of the Republic of Sudan, and former Deputy Prime Minister and Deputy Speaker of the Sudan Parliament. The participation of these individuals and the other participants provided a balanced perspective on the background of the SPLM/A, the causes of the conflict, and the probable solutions to the conflict.

1.5 Definitions

Throughout this study, certain terms are used in the specific context of the study and are defined as follows:

Control of resources: According to Coleman (2006:124), the control of resources is the means of “effective power”. In the context of South Sudan, the control of resources is linked to political power, the major resource being oil wealth (Human Rights Watch, 2003:58).

Estranged political relationships: Murphy (2010:28–29) outlines the ideals of political relationships which are structured around institutions with legal dimensions which, if violated, result in fractured relationships or estrangement in them. This is what has been observed in the context of the SPLM/A relationships.

Historical conflicts: These relate to the structural causes embedded in past civil wars in which the SPLM/A factions fought against each other (Temin, 2018:6)

Power struggles: Refers to competition for political power among the SPLM/A leadership (Thiong, 2018:15)

Primary, secondary and tertiary levels: Fishers et al.'s conflict tree analysis identifies three causal levels of conflict: The root represents the structural causes; the trunk the core problem; and the branches the resultant effects (2000:29). This study categorises the three levels where the primary level represents the structural causes, and the core problem is at the secondary level, which links to the tertiary level where the conflict is manifest.

Regional and international partners: Regional partners refer to IGAD frontline states (Ethiopia, Uganda, Sudan, Kenya), leading the South Sudan political mediation process, and international partners in this context include the USA and China who play crucial and influential roles in the mediation process (Vertin 2018:1, 23).

Root causes: Refers to the structural causes of the conflict. As an example, Young (2015:34) refers to the desire of the Riek Machar, the SPLM-IO leader, to address the root causes of the conflict.

1.6 Delimitations of Scope and Key Assumptions

The study takes as its base the uncontested conviction that the role of the SPLM party is absolutely central to the conflict situation in South Sudan. The justification is that the SPLM/A leadership has consistently been at the centre of the violent conflict in South Sudan

since the party's inception in 1983. Secondly, it is known that the participants have an in-depth knowledge of the SPLM/A activities, and it is assumed that within limits they will openly and honestly respond to the questions, with their responses being checked for credibility against those of other respondents, as well as documentary and secondary sources. All the participants were purposively selected based on either their experiences or their research background with the SPLM/A, and they were granted the option of anonymity in a secure interview environment.

The scope of this study was constrained by insufficient funding for fieldwork which limited access to some potential participants. For example, the researcher's field visit to Juba lasted only two weeks due to financial constraints. The protocols and processes for accessing some of the potential participants, especially the SPLM government officials, exceeded the two weeks, in addition to another week of prior interview arrangement initiated through the embassy of South Sudan in Kampala. Moreover, in a preliminary meeting with the SPLM Deputy Secretary-General, she proposed another meeting that would have required extending the researcher's stay in Juba for another week. Protocol also required that the researcher's request for meeting the SPLM party Chairman would follow the meeting with the Deputy Secretary-General within an unspecified timeframe. Interviewing the party Chairman, who is also the President, was thus not possible. Another missed opportunity was with the South Sudan Government's Chief Negotiator Nhial Deng Nhial who was not available due to other engagements.

The scope of this study focused on the role of the SPLM/A leadership in the conflicts in South Sudan rendering the function of other political and military formations beyond its scope (International Crisis Group, 2011:2). The chronological period covered by the thesis spans from January 1983 to April 2020. The bulk of this thesis text was completed in 2019 yet some events in 2020 have been included.

1.7 Thesis Outline

The thesis comprises of eight chapters. Chapter 1 provides this introduction. Chapter 2 presents the theoretical frameworks that underpin this study. Theories of conflict and ethnic violence enhance understanding of the causes of the conflict while theories of foreign policy explore the reasons found for the protraction of the conflict. In addition, theories of trust and concepts of trust-building enable the formulation of suitable approaches to ending the conflict. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology. It describes the range and types of primary sources, data collection process and the analysis framework.

The next four chapters involve discussion of the principal findings drawn from fieldwork blended with literature from previous studies on the respective thematic areas. Chapter 4 relates to the first research question on the causes of disputes and estrangement among the SPLM political elite featuring historical conflicts, estranged political relationships, power struggles and the control of resources. Integral to this chapter are the theories of conflict discussed in Chapter 2. Chapter 5 focuses on the theme of ethnic violence and illuminates the relationship between the political elite and their respective Dinka and Nuer tribes. It explains the primordial, instrumentalist and constructivist theories of ethnic violence to both identify and comprehend the causes of politically motivated ethnic violence between the Dinka and the Nuer. Chapter 6 pays particular attention to estranged political relationships and the potential solutions, notably in the form of trust-building mechanisms. The failure of agreements is evident in the distrust, anger and bitterness exhibited by the opposing factions signifying unresolved conflicts in which trust building becomes an important tool. It examines theories of trust in explaining the role of estrangement in the conflict. Chapter 7 explores the role of regional and international actors in the conflict. By drawing on schools of thought in foreign policy, it demonstrates how interests defined by foreign governments during the mediation process, drive the partners.

Chapter 8 synthesises the analysis and interpretation of the results, then lays out the major research findings. It explicates the original contributions of the research to the body of knowledge and weighs the implications of these. Most importantly the conclusion mounts a case for innovative trust building approaches with a view to finally bringing an end to the interminable wars in South Sudan.

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Chapter 2: Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

This thesis investigates the role of the SPLM leadership in the conflict in South Sudan. As discussed below, numerous events have demonstrated the failure of the two main leaders to carry through on agreements to work together to bring peace to the country. The aim of the research was firstly to understand the causes of the estrangement among the SPLM political leaders and secondly to identify strategies that would result in workable co-operation to govern the country in peace. The 1972 Addis Ababa agreement that ended the first civil war was effectively abrogated in June 1983 after a presidential decree was issued dividing the southern region into three regions and placing them under the administration of Khartoum. Consequently, the SPLM/A was formed in July 1983, a situation that ignited the second civil war. The SPLM was in a unique position to deliver the achievement of the goals of the Southern Sudanese as it fought the second civil war from 1983 which ended with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 and ultimately delivered the independence of South Sudan in July 2011 (de Waal 2015:194; Young 2007:9). As discussed in the introductory chapter, the SPLM party leaders engaged in leadership disputes that plunged the new nation into a civil war after fighting broke out between them in December 2013. During peace efforts aimed at ending this civil war led by IGAD with the support of Troika, the AU, the UN and other international partners, the South Sudanese leaders have exhibited intransigent positions during negotiations, violations of agreements and delays in implementing agreements hence the protracted nature of the conflict.

One of the greatest challenges is that the peace process in South Sudan is endangered by a polarized SPLM leadership who at the same time are the dominant parties in the process. The challenge has attracted intense debates on the causes of the prolonged conflict, and several

recent studies agree that the immediate cause of the outbreak of the civil war was power struggles between the leaders (Craze, Tubiana, and Gramizzi 2016:38; Johnson 2016:154–55; Thiong 2018:15; Vertin 2018:2). Recent studies also suggest that underlying structural causes are the reasons for the power struggles and ultimately the renewed civil war in South Sudan (Rolandsen 2015:165; Blanchard 2014:2; Vertin 2018:12–13). The ontological stance of this thesis is that conflicts among the SPLM party leadership are not merely the result of disputes and power struggles but are a product of structurally embedded unresolved historical conflicts that prolong the violent conflict. Various studies and reports have pointed out the trust deficit among the parties as being a significant factor in prolonging the conflict and yet research is lacking on what is required to rebuild damaged trust (Bereketeab 2017:154; Biel and Ojok 2018:1; Blackings 2018:23; Blanchard 2014:2; Johnson 2016:155; United Nations Security Council 2016:10). An understanding of the reasons for the prolongation of the conflict could potentially play an important role in arriving at a sustainable conflict solution.

As stated in the introductory chapter, this study is framed around six major themes; historical conflicts, estranged political relationships, power struggles, control of resources, ethnic violence and the role of regional and international partners. These themes which arose out of inductive and deductive reviews of the literature and primary documents, and an inductive analysis of raw data (Boyatzis 1998:30), are an attempt to address the three research questions, the first being the overarching question followed by two subsidiary questions:

- (1) What are the causes of disputes and estrangement among the SPLM political elite leading to violent conflicts?
- (2) “Why have mediation efforts not been effective in ending the violent conflicts in South Sudan?”

- (3) “Which strategies are best suited for resolving the disputes and estrangement among the SPLM members?”

Concerning the aims and objectives of this thesis and the research questions that followed, the six themes that arose will be examined, leading to a requirement to explicate some specific theoretical frameworks. This chapter reviews some conventional theories which can help understand the causes of conflicts in the SPLM and South Sudan in general and why the conflict remains intractable. The theoretical foundations upon which this study is anchored consist of different approaches stemming from different but complementary research disciplines. This chapter is divided into four main sections which address theories that relate to the six thematic areas. It first discusses theories of conflict which contextualize the historical aspects of the conflict and moves on to the theories of ethnic violence in the next section which also explains the historical contexts of the role of ethnicity in the conflict. Thirdly, it discusses institutional trust as it explores the role of estranged political relationships in the conflict. The fourth section builds on the trust conceptual framework to discuss trust-building. The fifth section discusses theories of foreign relations as it explores the role of regional and international actors in the conflict before concluding.

2.1 Theoretical Approaches to Violent Conflicts

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the SPLM party has been at the helm of South Sudanese political events since its inception in 1983, and it continues to dominate the political leadership hierarchy to date. However, the political relationships displayed within the

party have been conflict-prone to the extent that violence has bedevilled the local population. This section, therefore, discusses theoretical approaches to violent conflict.

In general terms, the consensus among early scholars was that conflict is a result of incompatible goals, where the nature of the goals provides the context to the conflict (Berelson and Steiner 1964:588; Boulding 1957:4–5; Doucet 1997:178; Galtung 1965:348; Koch, North, and Zinnes 1960:356). Fink (1968:413), one of the early researchers on conflict, raises two arguments concerning theories of conflict. First, from a multidisciplinary standpoint, no single social science discipline is intellectually and resourcefully sufficient to formulate an adequate conflict theory. Secondly, a multidisciplinary endeavour aimed at achieving a generalized approach to a particular conflict is insufficient in building an adequate theory. Nevertheless, there is a consistent pattern of conflict that most researchers agree with, that conflict is a result of competition for scarce resources and the political control of the means of resource allocation (Bercovitch 1983:103–4; Galtung 2009:86; Wall and Callister 1995:536–37). Doob defines conflict as “a situation in which two or more human beings desire goals which they perceive as being attainable by one or the other but not both” (as cited in Fink 1968:442).

The role of political estrangement among the SPLM leadership in the conflict in South Sudan can be explained by several conflict theory approaches. There are three espousal factors based on structural, immediate/proximate and triggering causes (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall 2005:112). Fisher et al. (2000:27) use the onion analogy in which the outer layer represents visible positions, and underlying the visible positions are interests followed by core issues, which they regard as “the most important needs we require to be satisfied”. In this thesis, three such layers are conceptualized where the structural causes are categorized as the primary level causes, the immediate/ proximate as the secondary level and the triggering factors as the tertiary level causes see Figure 2.1 below.

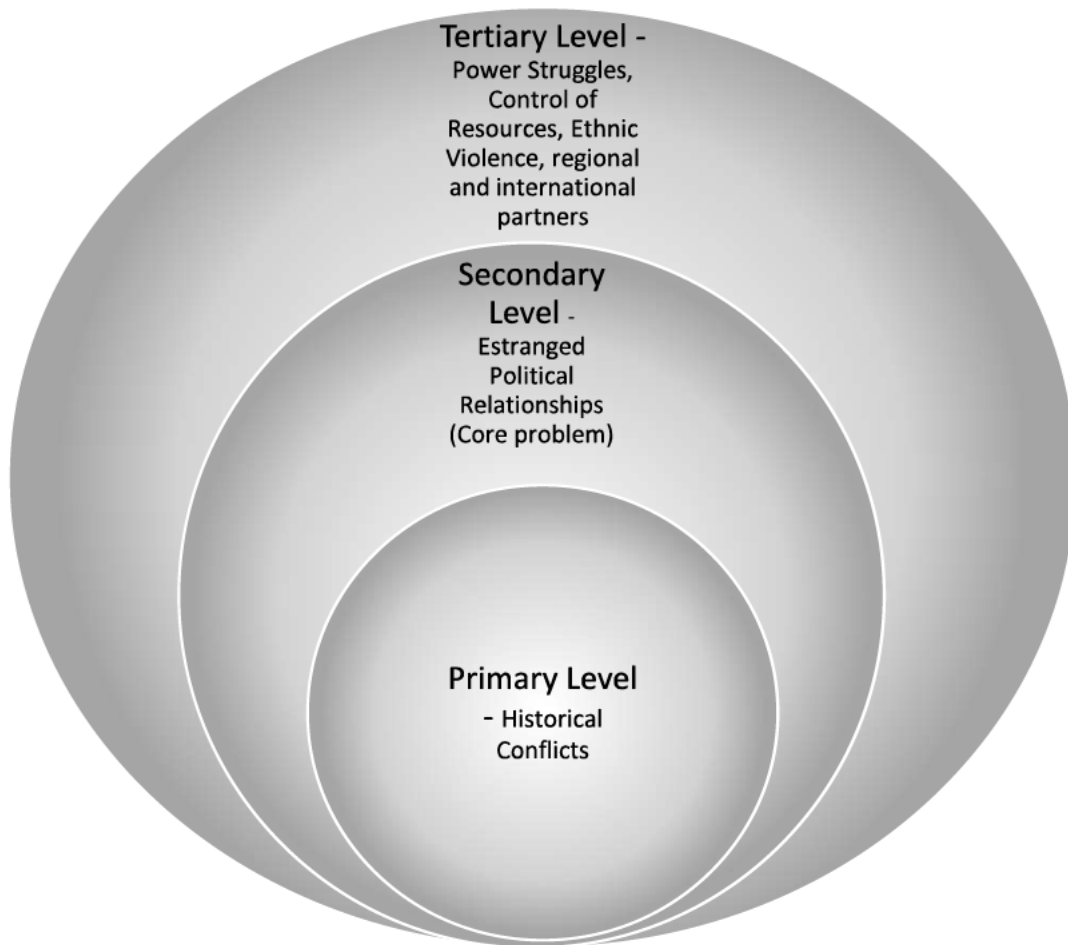


Figure 2. 1: The six thematic areas in the Three Levels of Conflict

The theoretical approaches are aligned to the three levels of the conflict in South Sudan in relation to the SPLM, which include conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict transformation, which are complementary in their function (Wils, Hopp, Ropers, Vimalarajah and Zunzer, 2006:26–27).

Galtung (1969:70–76) conceptualizes conflict in the form of a triangle (Figure 2.2) where, at the apex of the triangle, behaviour (B) represents the visible or manifest conflict, and at the vertices are attitudes (A) and contradictions (C), which are latent or hidden aspects of the

conflict. Thus, conflict is a sum of behaviour, attitudes and contradictions (conflict =B+A+C), and omission of any of the three concepts undermines the success of conflict interventions.

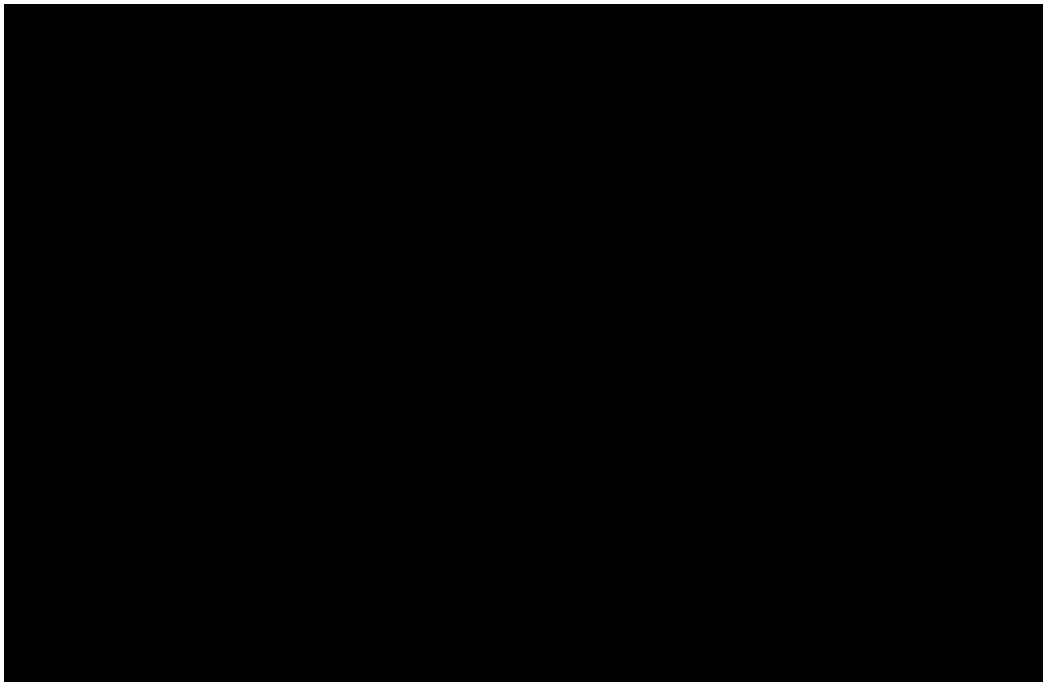


Figure 2. 2: Galtung's conflict triangle, Source: (Murphy and Gleek 2016:73)

Reviewing these three concepts and how they affect each other is critical in understanding the violent conflict in South Sudan in which underlying structural contradictions, the negative attitudes from estranged relationships and the subsequent behaviours lead to power struggles and the violent conflict. The correlation with the three-level model of conflict conceptualisation is that behaviour is depicted at the tertiary level, attitudes at the secondary level and contradictions at the primary level. The following subsections discuss conflict theories and concepts that address the overarching question of the causes of the disputes among the SPLM political elite leading to violent conflicts.

2.1.1 Conflict Management

Conflict management theorists underscore the need for immediate intervention in violent conflicts in order to address destructive consequences of the conflict rather than to end the disputes among the conflict parties (Bercovitch 1983:109; Galtung 1965:350; Labianca, Brass and Gray 1998:63; Wall and Callister 1995:535–36; Wallensteen 2015:5). Conflict management arose out of the necessity to contain negative trends of conflict and the consequent

high costs in terms of injury, loss of human lives and other resources. As visualized in Galtung's conflict triangle, behaviours represent the visible or manifest aspects of conflict which connote the destructive and costly elements of conflict; hence, the need for conflict management interventions. Such behaviours are demonstrated by hostile actions of one group against another including oppression, discrimination killing, and maiming prompting reciprocal actions from the other group until ultimately the matter flares into a full-scale war (Bloomfield, Ghai, & Reilly, 2003, p. 45).

According to Doucet (1997:187), when conflict escalates to a level where violence takes over as the means of expression on a large scale, the deployment of peacekeeping forces becomes a necessary intervention in averting the violence. In such events, the UN deploys peacekeepers as a conflict management strategy which Ramsbotham et al. (2011:147) suggest is appropriate to “contain violence and prevent it from escalating to war; to limit the intensity, geographical spread and duration of war...; and to consolidate a ceasefire and create space for reconstruction after the war ends”. Chapter VIII of the UN Charter provides for regional bodies to play a role in international peace and security, implying that the AU or its regional affiliates are eligible to deploy peacekeepers (United Nations Security Council n.d.).

The conflict in South Sudan is a protracted one with an alarming humanitarian toll and loss of resources. The outbreak of fighting following power struggles among the SPLM leadership in December 2013 quickly spiralled to targeted violence against civilians, hence the unprecedented humanitarian crisis (Anon 2014: Para.1; United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) 2018:9, 125; de Waal 2015:195–96). As the crisis escalated, Johnson (2014b:172–73) citing the possibility of Rwanda genocide style violence, argued that the prospects of an immediate political solution were far-fetched and proposed an internationally enforced ceasefire arrangement pending the political peace process. Targeted attacks against Nuer civilians in Juba, Bor and Malakal led to revenge attacks against Dinka civilians in Bor,

Akobo, Bentiu and Malakal towns (Blackings 2018:9, 11, 13; Johnson 2016:201–3). In January 2014, a Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) brokered by IGAD, the Troika, the UN and the AU was signed as a first step to pave the way for a political process (Vertin 2018:3, 9). The CoHA, although not in a peacekeeping framework, formed the basis of the intervention which, reduced the violence but did not stop it entirely. The deployment of peacekeepers under the Regional Protection Force authorised by the UN Security Council was objected to by the SPLM-IG, as it was construed to be an attempt to effect a regime change (Thiong 2018:18; Young 2017:29). Nevertheless, it could be argued that to a large extent, the IGAD interventions at this level were successful. Despite the ceasefire violations, the interventions were able to minimise the spread of armed violence countrywide, and the parties were able to reach power-sharing agreements in both cases.

Despite its ameliorating effects on violent conflicts, researchers have pointed out some drawbacks of conflict management that pose a risk of escalating the violent status quo. Doucet (1997:189) raises a concern that ceasefires may create an opportunity for the warring parties to regroup and rearm for renewed warfare. However, such complications may not necessarily hinder negotiations from proceeding. Galtung (1965:350) cautions that behaviour control and limiting destructive means do not necessarily end conflicts, but on the contrary, may prolong the fighting. This caution is confirmed by Deutsch (1991:47) who argues that some conflicts mutate to new issues while others “are like a malignant tumour” that grows into intricate hostilities among the parties, hence perpetuating the conflict. Indeed, the CoHA did not stop the violence as anticipated, as there were consistent flagrant violations of the agreement by both sides, although the political process did commence, leading to the ARCSS in August 2015 (Craze et al. 2016:72–77). Following the collapse of ARCSS in July 2016, a renewed commitment to reinvigorate the peace process led to another CoHA in December 2017, but similar violations occurred (Biel and Ojok 2018:11; International Crisis Group 2019:4, 22).

2.1.2 Conflict Resolution

Stemming from the argument that conflict management does not end the conflict but may instead cause its protraction, Galtung (1965:350) argues in favour of a conflict resolution approach which institutes changes in identified issues. According to Miall (2004:3–4), “conflict resolution is about how parties can move from zero-sum, destructive patterns of conflict to positive-sum constructive outcomes”. Accordingly, conflict resolution is a process in which actions taken alter the conflict conditions to the extent that the parties no longer have more than two incompatible goals (Galtung 1965:351). Achieving this position, Galtung continues, comes about through complete agreements, a compromise, or total elimination of one of the parties in an “inter-system” conflict or “suppression of one of the parties” in “intra-system” conflicts. The complete agreement seems unrealistic since it would imply all the incompatibilities have been removed; however, a compromise situation seems more realistic. Bercovitch (1983:110) includes creative problem solving as a strategy for conflict resolution but emphasizes that its success depends on the voluntary intervention of external professional experts. Wallensteen (2015:8) defines conflict resolution as “a situation where the conflicting parties enter into an agreement that solves their central incompatibilities, accept each other’s continued existence as parties and cease all violent action against each other”.

Whereas conflict management focuses on only the behavioural aspects of conflict, conflict resolution encompasses both the behavioural and attitudinal aspects of conflict (Berkovitch 1983:109). Attitude is the second construct at the vertex of Galtung’s conflict triangle where he lists racism, discriminatory attitudes, sexism, victimhood and trauma, which are latent or hidden aspects of the conflict. Doucet (1997:180) argues that latent conflicts become manifest when incompatibilities gain traction in the form of political and public debates leading to cleavages, where political lines are drawn between opposing groups. These are latent attributes that influence the behavior of the conflict parties. For example, failures to achieve an

objective may lead to frustrations and aggressive attitudes which then manifest as aggressive behavior, hence actions of violence (Galtung 1996b:72).

The December 2013 outbreak of violent conflict was preceded by a series of political activities within the SPLM, and the most significant was the preparation for the national elections that were due in 2015 (Johnson 2014b:169–70). During the preparations, senior SPLM members Riek Machar, Pagan Amum and Rebecca Nyandeng expressed interest in competing for the party chair against the Salva Kiir, for a position which would guarantee the winner the SPLM presidential ticket. Thereafter, these key party members, and others, were summarily dismissed from the party and cabinet (Brosché and Höglund 2016:76–77). Following their dismissals, a press conference was held by the group accusing the party Chairman and President of a dictatorship. Subsequently, SPLM's National Liberation Council (NLC) where the issues of party reforms and elections were to be addressed, ended up in a boycott on the second day and a walkout on the final day as the dismissed members expressed their frustrations on failing to achieve the desired party reforms (Interim Report on South Sudan Internal Conflict 2014:3). These frustrations set the members against each other and their negative attitudes manifested in the form of the armed conflict a day after the NLC boycott. As will be further discussed in Chapter 4, the parties signed a negotiated agreement in August 2015 and the second one in September 2018 after the CoHAs, ameliorated the fighting. From a conflict resolution perspective, a positively changed attitude and behaviour should have been the product of the agreement.

Regarding conflict resolution approaches, Azar (1990:6) points out that there is a tendency to focus on the visible violent aspects of the conflict whose termination is “often equated with the state of peace” in disregard of the latent attitudinal aspects in addition to “the multi casual factors and dynamics”. Väyrynen's (1991:2) view of problem-solving techniques is that they are “nonstructural and ahistorical” in their processes in their “effort to eliminate

political violence by controlling or manipulating its causes by the means available to the authorities”. Galtung’s common sense (1996b:89) position is that signing of agreements does not necessarily signify the conflict solution, as the parties may be dishonest, the agreement may not be inclusive or may lack the capacity to produce a non-antagonistic form of the parties. Likewise, Lipschutz (1998a:6) argues that unless mediation processes address social, economic and other underlying grievances that cause violence, agreements reached at negotiating tables may not last. According to Doucet (1997:184), a compromise situation means reaching an agreement on only some aspects of the conflict without addressing the underlying issues of the conflict, hence delivering a recipe for future violence. Doucet (1997:189–90) also identifies unequal power relations as a drawback to problem-solving techniques. Following the same argument, Fetherston (2000:199) points out the role of 'power' which is applied as a coercive means in the success of conflict management interventions, as lacking in conflict resolution approaches which rely on neutral voluntary third parties. Fetherston further argues that problem-solving techniques in such situations may be unsuitable as third parties rely on persuasive skills to convince parties that hold instruments of power to change their positions.

The above issues that can bedevil the conflict resolution process are identifiable with South Sudan’s agreements. For example, ARCSS collapsed because the compromises on the security arrangements left the parties with an attitude of distrust and a preference to return to war (Vertin 2018:14). R-ARCSS, the second agreement, is yet to be fully implemented; however, the attitude of distrust is overwhelming as the parties have so far failed to form the unity government that was due in May 2019, as provided for in the agreement (International Crisis Group 2019:13). The prevailing situation is that although there is some change in the behaviour of the parties, they still display negative attitudes and distrust, hence the delays in forming the power-sharing unity government.

2.1.3 Conflict Transformation

Väyrynen (1991:2–5) postulates that conflict transformation entails the alteration of the political agenda through transformation while changing the focus from issues of divergence to issues of commonality, and the overhaul of the structure of relations among the conflict parties. In that regard, attitudes in intractable conflicts are a part of the latent structural contradictions that perpetuate the conflict, which is what conflict transformation attempts to address. Galtung (1996b:70) argues that peace demands emphasise “violence reduction and non-violent conflict transformation” and that “there is no viable alternative to creative conflict transformation”. Accordingly, Galtung (1996b:85) contends that conflict transformation occurs when the contradictions leading to the dispute are addressed while ensuring that the attitudes (emotions) and the corresponding behaviour lead to constructive outcomes. The need to alter these positions arises from underlying causes which Azar (1990:9) identifies as grievances from the deprivation of human needs ranging from security to development and identity needs. In that regard, Doucet (1997:184), argues that conflict transformation is a post-agreement stage of conflict resolution in which the implementation of the agreement addresses the long term structural nature of the conflict encompassing “reconciliation and reconstruction in the aftermath of violent conflict”.

Considering these arguments for a post-agreement alteration of the status of relationships among the conflict parties, a review of ARCSS and R-ARCSS reveals there are no provisions in that regard (Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) 2015; Intergovernmental Agreement on Development 2018). However, there have been some attempts to address the polarized relationships in the SPLM that yielded the unfulfilled Arusha Reunification Agreement of January 2015 (Chama Cha Mapinduzi 2015). Thus far, ARCSS collapsed, and R-ARCSS is facing uncertainties in its implementation, calling

for strategies that transcend the agreement phase to deal with the structural and preventative causes (Doucet 1997:175).

As discussed in the previous subsections, behaviour in conflict is a conceptual predicate of conflict management, as behaviour, attitudes and contradictions are parts of conflict transformation. Unless the process is a function of right attitudes and assumptions, it will result in bad behaviour, and hence a new round of violence (Galtung 1996b:89). In dealing with conflict, Galtung points out that a probable condition for peace is “equitable relations” and admonishes researchers to “look for causes, conditions, and contexts in various spaces – Nature, Human, Social, World, Time, Culture” (1996a:1). Transformation in this situation occurs when the contradictions are dealt with in concert with the attitudes to address violent behaviour. It should be remembered that the leaders in South Sudan have had very little adult experience of situations other than war, and there is little evidence of their searching for peaceful solutions. The mediation approaches to the conflicts in South Sudan focused on contradictions and overlooked the attitudes of the belligerents with the hope of attaining a lasting solution to the conflict. The concept of equitable relationships was addressed by Curle (1971:14–20, 274) who termed it as changing unpeaceful relationships where one party dominates the other, leading to conflict, to a peaceful relationship where mutuality and non-dominance create an environment of non-conflict. Mac Ginty and Williams (2009:26) echo the same sentiments, saying that “conflicts have causes that interact in highly specific ways according to the context”.

Lederach visualizes the peace process starting with issues that have patterns embedded in history (2003:34). He looks at the third phase of conflict transformation which deals with the change processes and cautions that there are multi-dimensional aspects that require responses ranging from personal, relational and cultural, to structural as shown in Figure 2.3 below (2003:35, 37, 38).

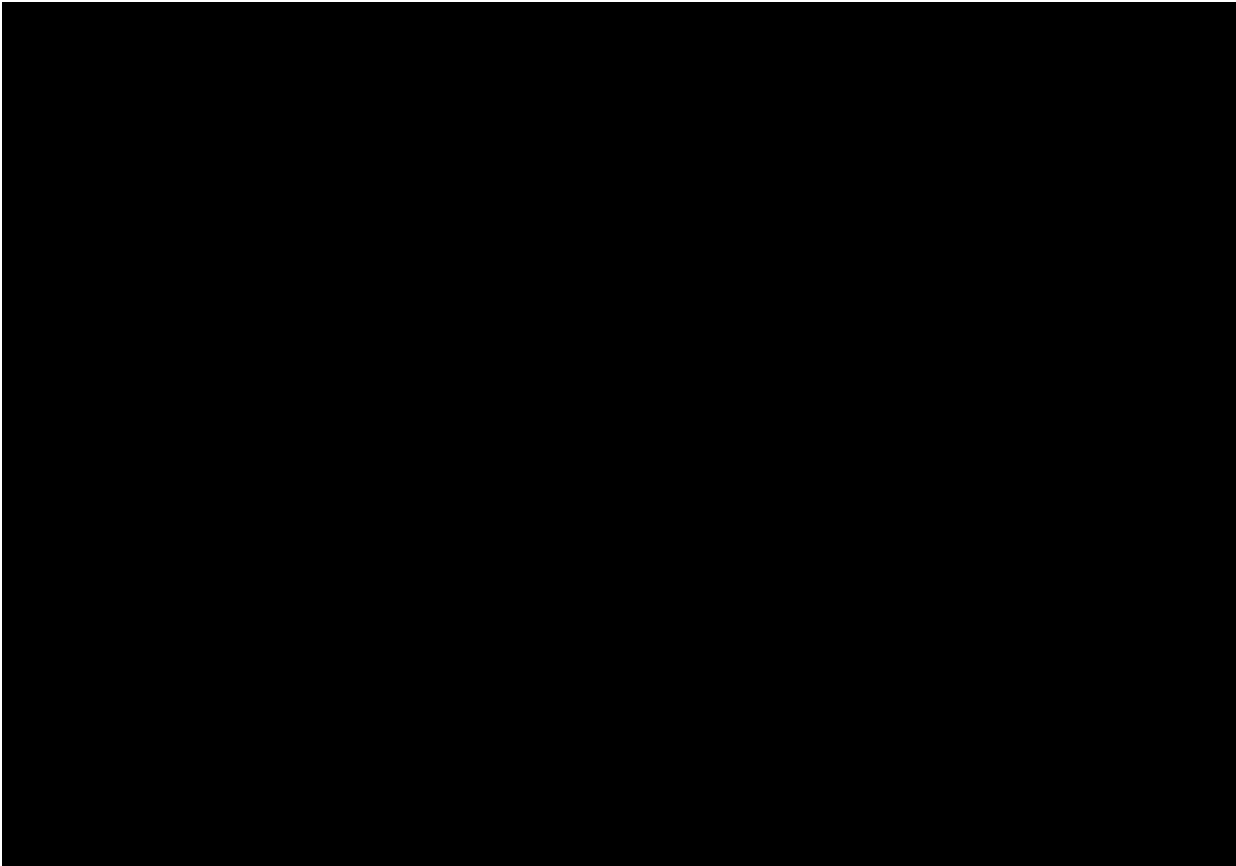


Figure 2. 3: Lederach's big picture of Conflict Transformation, Source: Lederach (2003:35)

Taking a cue from Lederach, there is a consistent historical pattern of violent conflict in South Sudan in which the contradictions that led to the first civil war, beginning in 1955 and ending in 1972, were related to racial, religious, political and economic discrimination (Genovese 2014:15, 23). The second phase, beginning in 1983 to 2005, was a follow up with the same contradictions; however, it was overshadowed by internal disputes on leadership and the objectives of the civil war (Jok and Hutchinson 1999:126). Blanchard (2014:2, 13) argues that achieving sustainable peace in South Sudan is contingent upon addressing the underlying historical conflicts from 1983 – 2005. Conflict transformation creates an understanding of the spiral effects of historical conflicts (Greer et al. 2008:286). The spiral effects of the historical conflicts in South Sudan negatively impact on the relationships in the SPLM which, in turn, affect, their behaviours and manifest in the form of power struggles,

which are also very closely associated with the control of resources (Simone 2018:414; de Waal 2014:365).

Despite the arguments for the all-encompassing approaches of conflict transformation to the extent of positively changing behaviours, attitudes and contradictions, there are some concerns that researchers have identified. With particular reference to Lederach's model, Fetherston (2000:207) argues that the approach is restrictive in the sense of a community context. By implication, conflict transformation requires deeper insights on the “confines of discourses of violence and militarization” and the extent of the influence of state institutions and the power relations. Miall (2004:7) also identifies this point, arguing that its “weakness is the limited attention it gives to the autonomous processes of change that transpire within the political system of the conflict-affected society”. These positions lead to a question whether the SPLM leaders who are at the helm of power would consent to a process that would reveal their roles in the construction of the structurally embedded historical injustices and contradictions. Another downside of conflict transformation relates to the uncertainty in the duration of the process which leads to funding apathy by donors and the likelihood of the failure of implementation (Berghof Foundation 2012:41; Holtzman, Elwan, and Scott 1998:2)

2.2 Theories of Ethnic Violence

Ethnic violence is one of the six dominant themes that arose in response to the overarching research questions on the causes of disputes and estrangement among the SPLM political elite, which have led to violent conflict. Two particular reasons stand out as to why ethnic violence gains much prominence in response to the research question. First, the three major political disputes within the SPLM leadership have tended to follow the ethnic violence path pitting the Dinka against the Nuer (Sefa-Nyarko 2016:189–90). Secondly, the two main protagonists, Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, hail from the two communities and the seemingly

spontaneous ethnic violence following their disputes raise a concern that ethnicity could be a causal factor (Strategic Comments 2014:1). Given that background, the exploration of the complex role of ethnic violence in the conflict in South Sudan, and theories of ethnic violence, are relevant and important

Cohen (1978:386), quoting Kunstadter, postulates that three key elements distinguish ethnicity. First, an ethnic group, which is “a set of individuals with mutual interests based on shared understandings and common values”. Second, ethnic identity, “which is a process by which individuals are assigned to one ethnic group or another” and third, ethnic categories which “are classes of people based on real or presumed cultural features”. According to Fearon and Laitin (1996:717), the literature on ethnic identity and conflict generally follows two theoretical arguments. First, positions from rationalist theories “view ethnic groups as coalitions formed to extract material benefits from others or to defend possessions”. Actions by another group that hinder access to the material benefits, “which may take the form of state patronage, education, or control of specific labour markets”, may then result in violence. Secondly, positions from psychological theories “perceive ethnic groups as satisfying an inherent need to belong to a group and as allowing group members to maintain or enhance self-esteem”. From that perspective, threats to psychological satisfaction by another group may be a source of violence.

Following these two theoretical positions, Fearon and Laitin introduce a third position which is premised on individual instead of group interactions and postulates that various individual human interactions are possible, driven by opportunistic and selfish interests in the form of corruption and exploitation. The outcome of such individual human interests disrupts the social order as participants take action to cover their vices that have caused social disenfranchisement, creating fear and reprisals. Thus, the explanations of the ethnic origins and causes of ethnic conflicts and violence reflect two divergent views, “rational choice

explanations and psychological arguments” (Kaufman 2001:17). Yinger (1985:152) gives a broad spectrum definition that ethnic attachment is a means of preserving cultural heritage; maintaining class balance in society; attaining and protecting economic and political interests for the disadvantaged and connection with institutions and checking excessive state power.

Whether ethnic identity and conflict is a product of unchanging biological realities, cultural values, or economic and political orientations is a debate that gives rise to primordial, instrumental and constructivist ethnic theories (Bentley 1987:24–25; Fearon and Laitin 2000:846–48).

2.2.1 Primordial Theory

Geertz (1973:259–60) predicates the claim to ethnic identity on what he terms ‘primordial attachments’ which are the assumed givens of social existence: “immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the givenness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social practices”. He argues that in a pluralistic state, the management of economic resources is bound to cause conflict based on variations in the primordial attachments among the groups. This situation would not occur in a non-pluralistic state. From a primordial perspective, interactions among groups of different communities with incompatible cultural givens result in conflicts among the communities (Geertz 1973:162–69). Roosens (1994:83–87) argues in a migration context that a culture item or a combination of items do not give a group of people an identity but what makes an identity is the people’s genealogy. He then defines ethnic identity “as a feeling of belonging and continuity-in-being (staying the same person(s) through time) resulting from an act of self-ascription, and/or ascription by others, to a group of people who claim both common ancestry and a common cultural tradition”. Hutchinson and Smith (1996:5) make the same argument that “ethnic

identity and ethnic origin refer to the individual level of identification with a culturally defined collectivity, the sense on the part of the individual that she or he belongs to a particular cultural community.”

Further clarified, the primordial theory postulates that ethnic identity is acquired at birth, and hence is given and defined by natural, unchanging biological factors ('givens') passed on genealogically from one generation to the next in turn influencing their political and social outcomes (Fearon 2006:858; Fearon and Laitin 2000:848). Thus, the primordial stance is that birth is the basis for the ascription of ethnic identity and the cultural attributes associated with the particular ethnic group. Cleavages arising from contradictions in the deeply rooted cultural norms between ethnic groups render violent conflict almost inevitable (Fearon and Laitin 2000:849). Ethnocentrism, meaning cooperative attitudes with in-group members, and xenophobia meaning hostility against out-group members, are two opposite outcomes of interactions in a primordial setting (Hammond and Axelrod 2006:927).

Whether the causes of estrangement in the SPLM and the subsequent violent conflict pitting the Dinka against the Nuer is an outcome of primordial divisions needs to be answered. Seeking answers to this question is critical since tribal animosity following political disputes is a consistent pattern in South Sudan. Research by British anthropologists Evans-Pritchard (1940:463–65) and Lienhardt (1958a:101–14) found that the two tribes share the same ancestry, with their original names *Jieng* for the Dinka and *Naath* for the Nuer, both meaning people. Evans-Pritchard (1940:3–4) argues that “both peoples recognize their common origins” and that their physical appearance, languages and customs leave no doubt about it. According to Lienhardt (1958b:106), ancestral genealogical lineage is a basis of identification and “many Dinka take pride in the number of agnatic ancestors they can remember...” Douglas Johnson (1982:183) cites evidence that suggests it was “estimated that most Nuer living east of the Nile were originally Dinka or descended from Dinka”.

Similarly, Bradbury, Ryle, Medley and Sansculotte-Greenidge (2006:42) postulate that the Dinka and the Nuer are Nilotic tribes with a “common ancestry and share a similar habitat” in addition to common boundaries, intermarriages and bilingualism. Concerning the Nuer, Evans-Pritchard (1940:120) found that tribal sentiments and cultural values are strongly expressed as a sense of identity. This position reflects the primordial definition of ethnic identity where cultural ‘givens’ are the basis for identification.

Despite the shared ancestry and culture, Evans-Pritchard (1940:125) points out that “the Dinka people are the immemorial enemies of the Nuer”. He elaborates that the enmity is rooted in a mythical story in which the Dinka and the Nuer are depicted as sons of ‘God’ and the Dinka obtains his brother's inheritance of a calf by trickery, invoking ‘God’s’ sanction of vengeance against the Dinka in the form of cattle raids by his Nuer brother. Evans-Pritchard (1940:131) further emphasises that “the Nuer show greater hostility towards, and more persistently, attack the Dinka, who are in every respect most akin to themselves, than any other foreign people”. This evidence shows that groups which share the same genealogical ancestry can still over time divide into groups at bitter enmity with each other.

The primordial stance of the 'givens' of ethnic identity and violence is viewed by some scholars as skewed in favour of unchanging genealogical factors. Barth (1969:11–12) argues that the matter of culture being a primary defining concept of ethnic identity is problematic since culture varies in time and location and therefore at best is “an implication or result rather than a primary and definitional characteristic”. Crawford (1998:11) takes issue with the primordial proponents in that they lack explanations for situations where ethnic groups still peacefully interact where there exist differences in political and cultural expressions. He further argues that primordialists “assume that cultural differences, such as language, religion, cultural traditions, and ethnicity” by default result in conflict among groups since their differences render them mutually exclusive. However, Greetz’s (1973:260) position may disagree with

Crawford's on whether primordial positions do overlook the role of the state, since he refers to situations where weak states and ineffective government welfare systems exist, and primordial attachments may take precedence over political establishments. Fearon and Laitin (1996:715) also acknowledge that where either there is a vacuum in state authority, or it is weak, interethnic relations are not bound to be cooperative. However, Laitin (1986:97–98) argues that culture is only one component of an intricate system of ethnicity, which also includes economic, social and political subsystems. Thus, in the context of a modern state, the predominance of culture alone cannot be the basis of defining political outcomes. Besides, it overlooks the role of state institutions in the appropriation of and distribution of resources which could either trigger, perpetuate or mitigate conflict depending on the fairness or unfairness of the sharing. Kaufman's (2001:23) position is that the "history of kinship ties are usually fictitious, while most national identities are new" and by implication "national identity cannot be primordial if it is new and cannot be genetic if its members are not related".

Evans-Pritchard (1940:125) demonstrated that the primordial ethnic conflict presumption may have to accept that primordial does not necessarily mean since time immemorial. He explained that the Dinka-Nuer segmentary relationships in which the two groups shared the same geographical boundaries and their identity became a matter of Dinka-Nuer kinship and yet "their social relationship is one of hostility, and its expression is in warfare". Furthermore, the assimilation of some Dinka into the Nuer lineage is an indication that ethnic boundaries and identity are variable depending on the circumstances (1940:224–25). There are several recent studies which suggest that these two communities belong to different ethnic groups and conflicts between them are classified as ethnic (Human Rights Watch 2017:52; Sefa-Nyarko 2016:189; Young 2016:22). Many Nuer and Dinka themselves see the conflict as essentially being inter-ethnic.

2.2.2 Instrumentalist Theory

According to Brass (1996:86), instrumentalism is a process by which groups marshal to secure their shared social and economic interests in the political arena, which involves “competition and conflict for political power, economic benefits and social status between the competing elite (s).” These demands based on political and economic interests, redefine the previously culturally defined groups to form new groups based on their shared material interests (Bentley 1987:25). Cohen (1996:84) postulates that the background of tribal mobilizations and groupings in political spaces in Africa arose as a result of power realignments aimed at gaining economic and social benefits after the departure of the colonial administrations. Wallerstein (1960:133–35), in a West African rural-urban migration context, referred to this process as resocialisation, where ethnic groups are formed irrespective of cultural backgrounds to fulfil a common social and economic interest that could be derived from the state. Of particular concern is the fact that the process of power realignments, in many instances, confers the means of economic and political control to the advantage of some groups and the disadvantage of others (Lipschutz 1998b:67–68). Ultimately, political entrepreneurs move in to mobilize the disenfranchised ethnic groups in a bid to get access to social, economic and political interests. Esman (1987:416) argues that it could be a situation where ethnic majorities are the ones disadvantaged economically and politically, which then provides the stimulus for the political entrepreneurs to mobilize such groups on an ethnic basis. Bloomfield and Reilly (1998:9) attribute intrastate armed conflicts to issues of identity-based on communal groups of race, religion, culture, language and the distribution of social, economic and political resources.

As already indicated, access and control over economic resources is a major factor that has been advanced as one of the causes of the conflict in South Sudan. Although that position relates to the SPLM political elite, how it becomes a matter of violent conflict between the Dinka and the Nuer is a matter of discussion. The Dinka and the Nuer share similar agro-

pastoralist backgrounds, where social-economic activities revolve around cattle which are the object of wealth creation, food security, bride price and payment of compensation in case of “homicide and related crimes” (Deng 2010:237; Human Rights Watch 2003:85). Historically, conflicts between the two groups of the same ancestry have been about cattle, being the socio-economic mainstay, and probably is the reason for their split (Arnold 2007:503; Breidlid, Said, and Breidlid 2014:77–78). Ethnic violence pitting the two tribes against each other began in Juba after the outbreak of fighting in December 2013 and was certainly not about the historical cattle raids the tribes are known for. The ethnic violence appeared to be spontaneous, and there was no indication that the two tribes had grouped to agitate for social-economic grievances. Had that been the case, the instrumentalist argument would be valid in the sense that the economic grievances of the ethnic groups would then be an opportunity for politicians to exploit to their advantage. Conversely, and as earlier discussed, the initiation and trend of the ethnic violence demonstrate all aspects of political positioning devoid of economic grounds in favour of the ethnic groups.

The emphasis on material gains fronted by instrumentalists has attracted several criticisms from other researchers on ethnic identity and violence. Epstein points out a lacuna in instrumentalist theories arguing that it fails to explain “the powerful emotional charge that appears to surround or underlie so much of ethnic behaviour” where cultural affiliation connotes emotional attachments (as cited in Young 1993:22–23). In disagreement with instrumental theorists, Schermerhorn (1996:9) argues that grounding ethnic identity on social, economic and political constructs is materialistic and undermines the true value of ethnic identity. The same position is echoed by Kaufman (2001:17–22), who argues that the instrumentalist stance that ethnic mobilization and conflicts primarily occur out of economic concerns “have a poor track record empirically” and it fails to explain the general mobilisation of ethnic groups. Furthermore, there is no explanation offered as to why some ethnic groups peacefully coexist

and how elites shape ethnic conflicts. Citing a study on the former Soviet Union and the Russian Republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova, Kaufman concludes that economic concerns do not sufficiently explain the causes of ethnic violence.

Based on the instrumentalist viewpoint, the pertinent question is whether social, economic and political interests are the basis on which the Dinka and the Nuer were organized in the run-up to the conflict. Nyaba (2019:47) disagrees, pointing out the dismal failure of the SPLM/A in making the social economic and political aspirations of the southern masses a critical issue in its liberation and ultimately governance processes. Although the instrumentalist argument that the political elite manipulation of ethnic groups to suit their interests fits in this situation, conferring of economic interests to one group at the expense of the other provoking conflict based on social-economic grievances seems remote. (Collier and Hoeffler 2004:564–65). This argument does not fit in context because there is little evidence that either the Dinka or the Nuer have been favoured over the other by the political elite in the distribution of economic resources.

2.2.3 Constructivist Theory

Berth (1969:10–11) uses an array of arguments that counters the primordial position of ethnic ‘givens’, stating:

We chose to regard ethnic identity as a feature of social organization, rather than a nebulous expression of culture: being patently a question of social groups we declared it to be a matter of the social organization of culture difference discovery procedure aiming to lay bare the processes involved in the reproduction of ethnic groups.

Berth’s position is that ethnic groups interact on the basis of variable social, economic and political interests which define the ethnic boundaries and group membership. The

constructivist argument maintains that ethnic identity is socially constructed where, despite their unique cultures, individuals and groups may change to another ethnic boundary depending on prevailing circumstances irrespective of birth status or the primordial ‘givens’ (Barth 1969:15–16). Instrumentalists base their argument on the premise that the quest for social, economic and political advantage in culturally plural societies, is the reason ethnicity and its cultural ties gain prominence, as ethnic interests find political and economic traction (Young 1993:22). The quest to fulfil unmet social-economic aspirations calls for political leadership, hence the link between ethnic groups and the political elite (Esman 1987:414–15). Esman applies the example of the Afrikaans in South Africa, who mobilized their communities based on social-economic marginalization by the English speakers in the early 90s. Olzak (1994:15) argues that the centrality of ethnic and racial conflict is based on competition for social-economic resources whose variable distribution indirectly causes and increases the rate of conflict.

Fearon and Laitin (2000:846) view the possible role of individuals as agents of social difference constructing ethnic identities, which gives credence to the existence of the political manipulation of ethnic groups and violence following ethnic interactions at the grassroots. The political elite construct or reconstruct ethnic group identities in a manner that antagonises the groups, to provoke violence that would then favour the elite's grip on political power. Thus, ethnic groups are dynamic entities that are susceptible to modern-day changes in the political, social and economic status that redefines their groupings and interests (Fearon and Laitin 2000:849–50). The implication is that new interests may arise, demanding reconstruction of the ethnic groups to meet the new demands. Morrison, Mitchell and Paden argue that ethnic violence is “an event of short duration ... in which two identifiable communal groups are antagonists in violence to secure some short-term goal” (as cited in Fearon and Laitin 1996:716).

The pattern of the Dinka and the Nuer conflicts following political disputes previously occurred in the 1983 post-Anyanya II and SPLM/A disputes and in 1991 after the Riek Machar attempted coup against John Garang's SPLM/A leadership (Craze et al. 2016:23–24; Jok 2001:127). The consistency of the ethnic violence after political disputes in the SPLM/A leads to a logical conclusion that individual political elites in the SPLM/A have a role in manipulating the Dinka and the Nuer tribal groups to achieve their political ends. Fearon and Laitin (2000:846) raise a pertinent question as to why ethnic groups follow the opportunistic interests of the political elite, which do not necessarily match their interests. They suggest that cultural formations that tend towards primordial positions may influence their ethnic group discourse or agendas. The first instance of cultural formations relates to the position earlier discussed of the enduring historical tribal animosity between the two groups.

In disagreement with Barth, Keyes (1976:2–3) maintains that culture is a “primary defining characteristic” of ethnic groups, although he takes into consideration the fact that ethnic groups do experience reconstructions in their cultural content as a result of “structural interactions”. Another attack on Barth’s position is by Cohen (1978:385–88) who argues that terms such as ethnic groups, category and boundaries tend to be immutable in the re-engineering of ethnic identities and that situations that lead to the construction of ethnic identities vary depending on the organisation and cultural contexts. Likewise, Vermeulen and Govers (1994:5–6) object to Barth’s “post-modern view of culture” arguing that it overlooks the ideals of clearly defined cultural boundaries that distinguish one homogeneous ethnic group from another. They argue that this idea disregards the occurrence of peaceful coexistence among culturally diverse ethnic groups and instead focuses on social-economic disputes. According to Verdery (1994:36–37), Barth's approach “that ethnic identities are flexible, changeable and situationally adaptive” is problematic for several reasons. She argues that studies from Europe show that ethnic group boundaries are tenacious although modern state formations in South East Asia,

Africa and the Middle East demonstrate some malleability. However, the malleability of ethnic boundaries is a product of specific historical processes in modern nation-state formation and ascribed identities, and is a basis for the state to track its citizens. It, therefore, cannot be changed at will to respond to changes in social-economic conditions. In Roosen's (1994:83) view, origin is what makes the social-cultural boundary into an ethnic boundary in the first place and therefore the construction of boundary paradigms does not constitute ethnic identity unless origin is included from the start. However, boundaries become a crucial factor in the event of aggression between groups of the same ethnic identity (Roosens 1994:101).

Other than the power struggles as the immediate cause, the control of resources is an issue that scholars have argued as being at the head of the disputes in the SPLM (Arnold 2007:491–501; Johnson 2014a:204; Temin 2018:5–6).

2.2.4 Reconciling Primordial, Instrumental and Constructivist Theories

The debate between primordial, instrumentalist and constructivist theories is one that demonstrates a dichotomy between ethnic identity being the preserve of deeply rooted cultural content, or having variable boundaries manipulated by social, economic and political interests. However, some researchers view these two positions as reconcilable. Keyes (1981:10–11), while linking ethnic identity to social interactions, maintains that:

Ethnicity is a variable in social action only if access to the means of production, means of expropriation of the products of labour, or means of exchange between groups are determined by membership in groups defined in terms of non-genealogical descent.

Keyes argues that the retention of culture is a primary defining characteristic of ethnicity, a term derived from the Greek, *ethnos*, which the Random House Dictionary of English language defines as “a group of people of the same race or nationality who share a common and

distinctive culture” (as cited in Keyes 1976:1). The relevance of ethnic identity becomes profound only to the extent that it is a basis for rallying in-groups to pursue their common interests against groups of a different identity. Keyes emphasises that relationships between groups are not the result of cultural differences based on presumed descent but rather a matter of social and economic interests, thus “ethnicity has a social as well as a cultural dimension”. Keyes's (1981:11–12) position is that whereas ethnic groups may transition to a particular social group in pursuit of particular interests that may be attained only through that group, the change does not necessarily diminish the ethnic group and its origins.

In her comprehensive investigation into the ethnic identity of the major plural Malay communities, Nagata (1974) lays out various positions in which ethnic identity boundaries constitute both psychological and rational choice constructs. Nagata (1974:332), referring to colonial and post-colonial plural societies, postulates that interethnic interactions result in “dyadic or polyadic” formations between ethnic groups without any domineering effect by one group over the other and with outcomes which rarely redefine the social or cultural fabric. Nagata argues that the process of assimilation, where individuals identify with a dominant culture and sever ties with their own culture, does not arise. She further argues that most studies on interethnic relations in Africa dwell on the conservation of ethnic boundaries and competition for resources but ignores social and cultural relations where, for example, inter-marriage may redefine ethnic identities. Furthermore, she argues that the assumption that variations in boundaries during interethnic relationships are a basis for tensions and conflict is unfounded. Nagata demonstrates how primordial and cultural ethnic boundaries of various groups are modified to suit the economic and political interests of the groups who have not been assimilated into the majority national culture.

Horowitz (1985:51–53) cautiously argues that ethnic identity is an outcome of birth and blood, though not absolutely, and “is relatively difficult for an individual to change” though

change may occur. He suggests that despite common ethnic origins, cultures and physical resemblance among some groups, a possible separation between the groups may occur over time, hence the reason they could be “fundamentally different from and or opposed to each another”. He cites “conversion, intermarriage, passing, forgetting origin...as well as the merger of subgroups” as some cases of ethnic identity change. Horowitz (1985:175) further argues that in conflicts of zero-sum bargains, less advantaged groups that may be under threat of domination by another group resort to psychological determinants in preserving their self-esteem as opposed to taking the economic interest as a collective position.

As already observed, the Dinka and the Nuer share a common ancestral background, suggesting these two tribes belong to the same ethnic group from a primordial standpoint. However, ecological factors leading to migration of some of the groups caused a redefinition of their ethnic boundaries which also suggests it is possible for ethnic boundaries and identities to change depending on the circumstances. In agreement with Horowitz, Newcomer (1972:7) postulates that “the Nuer are in fact Dinka” who have undergone a social mutation and segmentary lineage formations and as a result, social differences with their neighbours are a basis of inter-group competition and conflict. Southhall (1976:464–67) suggests this social mutation process was executed by Nuer of Dinka origin and by implication, the largest Nuer clan originated from the Dinka and identified with the Dinka cultural identities. This position signifies that ethnic boundaries may be malleable depending on the circumstances while at the same time, as stated by Nagata, genealogical identities remain significant.

2.3 Theories of Trust

As explained in the introduction, it is clear that the SPLM party has been in a state of division since its formation in 1983 and has disintegrated into several groups after the outbreak of civil war in 2013. These new groups, among them the SPLM-IG, SPLM-IO, and SPLM-FDs

form the core of the peace negotiations, power-sharing agreements and government intended to steer the country back to the path of peace. This trend towards division relates to the collapse of the first power-sharing agreement, ARCSS, and the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU), and the delays in the implementation of the R-ARCSS. Two of the research questions are related to the divisions in the SPLM that have led to unstable agreements and the continuation of the conflict. First, the divisions relate to the second research question as to why mediation efforts have not been effective in ending the violent conflict. Secondly, the divisions are very relevant to the third research question of the best-suited strategies to resolving the disputes and estrangements among the SPLM leadership. As indicated in the introduction to this chapter, the lack of trust is an issue that various studies have identified as an undermining factor in the peace process. For that reason, this thesis applies theories of trust underpinning the investigation. In this section, theories of trust will be explored, beginning with an overview of the definition of trust, followed by institutional trust, and looking at the various categories and the functions of trust in the levels of conflict.

According to Lewicki, McAllister, and Bies (1998:438), psychologists, sociologists and political scientists all agree that trust is a foundation for interpersonal and impersonal relationships, cooperation and institutional stability. Across disciplines, trust is generally defined as the willingness to rely on and be vulnerable to another with confident and positive expectations that the other will deliver (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, and Camerer., 1998, p. 394). Accordingly, Rousseau et al. (1998:395) list risk and interdependence, which mean “reliance upon another” to deliver, as two conditions necessary for the sustenance of trust. Lewicki (2006:92) opines that trust is “the glue that holds relationships together” without which “conflict often becomes destructive, and resolution is more difficult”. Furthermore, Lewicki (2006:96) and McKnight, Cummings and Chervany (1998:474–75) identify three elements as being crucial in guiding an individual’s ability to trust: first, one’s personality which, relates to a belief

system resulting from experiences developed from childhood; second, the institutional capacity to provide safety and security in the process of interactions between individuals and third, the experiences or history in a given relationship. These three elements are crucial in understanding how trust, or the lack thereof, has affected political relationships in the SPLM. For instance, Johnson relates how the SPLM leaders consider Riek Machar a betrayer and therefore, he was treated with suspicion and distrust based on the memory of the 1991 attempted coup (2016:151).

Concerning the three elements, trust in relationships is experienced at an interpersonal level (between individuals) or impersonal level (on an institutional basis). Hartzell and Hoddie (2003:318) define institutions as systems embedded in the structure of organisations that “promote moderate and cooperative behaviour among contending groups by fostering a positive-sum perception of political interactions”. Similarly, North (1990:3–4) argues that “institutions reduce uncertainty by providing a structure to everyday life” and set boundaries within which interactions in relationships function. The SPLM relationships take the form of interpersonal and impersonal relationships, thus trust at the impersonal level can be best be instilled through political institutions (Barkin 2003:333; Murphy 2010:25). Since values, norms and rules of political institutions are the basis of regulating political relationships, Murphy (2010:14) points out that “Political relationships are violated when shared normative expectations are violated, and trust undermined”. However, the relationships may take on an interpersonal nature in the process of interactions through political institutions (Hartzell and Hoddie 2003:320). The SPLM leaders have distrusted each other at least since the 1980s. The case of the 1991 coup attempt was just another violation of trust in a long series of violations.

2.3.1 Institutional Trust

According to McKnight et al. (1998:478), “Institution-based trust means that one believes the necessary impersonal structures are in place to enable one to act in anticipation of

a successful future endeavour.” Shapiro, Sheppard, and Cheraskin (1998:400) point out that institutional factors are the general support basis upon which the minimum trust requirements subsist to enhance “risk-taking and trust behaviour.” Such support, they argue, can occur during teamwork in an organizational setting and inside social support systems offered to individual members of society. The multiplicity of institutional trust functions “including legal forms, social networks, and societal norms regarding conflict management and cooperation” inevitably creates the interpersonal trust (Rousseau et al. 1998:401). Institutional trust, therefore, is a process of impersonal relationships and interpersonal relationships in which researchers have identified four major categories of trust: Deterrence-Based Trust (DBT), Calculus-Based Trust (CBT), Knowledge-Based Trust (KBT) and Identification-Based Trust (IBT) (Lewicki and Bunker 1994:142; Rousseau et al. 1998:366–72).

Shapiro et al. (1992:366–67) define DTB as “...the existence of measures to prevent hostile actions” and where the instituted consequences outweigh the benefits of the breach of trust. The control mechanism in forms of institutional laws or rules is the basis of a deterrent for opportunistic behaviour and hence a motivation for trust (1998:400). Accordingly, trust is maintained to the extent of the predetermined measures taken to penalise its breach, which then is the motivation for the trust sustenance (Lewicki 2006:95). DBT is applicable at the institutional level where punitive measures are instituted in case of default in order to sustain trust. It, therefore, entails adherence to the institutional norms, values and regulations failure to observe which would attract punitive measures. CBT is another form of DTB, which in addition to calculated deterrents for violations of institutional rules and norms, also provides reward measures for observing the same (Lewicki 2006:95; Rousseau et al. 1998:398–99).

As mentioned in the previous section, the first major conflict leading to violence that the SPLM/A experienced was during the formation of the movement in 1983, where there were disagreements on leadership and political objectives. A similar conflict pattern followed in 1991

and again in 2013 involving the same party members. From a DTB and CBT standpoint, the conflicts could have been avoided had the SPLM/A in some way been institutionally capacitated to regulate the behaviour of its members. But, understandably, there was no effective institutional mechanism to deal with errant party members in order to instil and sustain trust. The acrimonious fallout that culminated in a walkout during the NLC meeting on December 14, 2013, and the subsequent outbreak of war, is yet another testimony to the lack of institutional deterrent mechanisms in the SPLM.

Rousseau et al. (1998:398–99) pose a question as to whether punitive measures promote or are a substitute for trust, especially in the preliminary stages of relationships, or whether they hinder or promote cooperation. They argue that penalties can promote or hinder cooperation, but other behaviours and cooperation may not be precisely trusted factors but could instead be an outcome of fear or coercion. For that matter, they conclude that DTB “may not be trusted at all but maybe closer to low levels of distrust”. They also argue that legal, institutional mechanisms can undermine trust due to their rigidity in case of conflict resolution processes when such conflict processes may demand flexibility in the legal mechanisms (1998:400). In this regard and in the event that the deterrent measures are compromised, the likelihood of trust is bound to drop as the consequences of violations may not meet the threshold required to instil institutional trust. In the context of the SPLM/A, Rousseau et al.’s position could be tested if deterrent measures were firmly in place and applied in the event of violations by the party members as occurred in 1983, 1991 and most recently in 2013.

In Jones and George's (1998:537) opinion, “few people have the time or resources to engage in the extensive information processing necessary to monitor the other party's behaviour in order to apply appropriate sanctions”. These resource and time constraints could be real; however, from an institutional standpoint, the application of norms, rules and values, being a function of impersonal relationships, is a matter of instilling cooperative interactions without

which the violation costs may be astronomical (Khan 2010:9). In the case of South Sudan, the failure of the parties to comply with the terms of the ARCSS power-sharing agreement leading to its collapse points to a dilemma on how future institutional mechanisms will be enforced.

KBT occurs when parties can predict cooperative behaviour in their interactions based on the knowledge they have of each other (Shapiro et al. 1992:369). In that regard, predictability is a crucial element of trust since dependability is a foundation of trust; the predictability of one's cooperative or non-cooperative behaviour may enhance or diminish the propensity for dependability. According to McKnight et al. (1998:473, 476), the knowledge in question is derived through experiences gained with each other over a period of time and the historical facts relevant to the relationships. Commenting on the benefits of KBT, Shapiro et al. (1992, p. 375) observe that it quickens cohesion, develops problem-solving capacity, and enhances decision-making processes among parties. The historical incidents of 1983, 1991 no doubt unleash memories that are unfavourable for cooperative relationships among the SPLM/A members and which therefore accounts for the lack of KBT.

On the downside, Shapiro et al. (1992:375) point out that KBT requires time to ascertain the requisite trust knowledge, a likelihood of “unrecognizable change” in behaviour and information or knowledge ascertained that “maybe inaccurate”. Similarly, Jones and George (1998:537) note the insufficiencies in information gathering that would inform predictable “future behaviour or intentions.” Perhaps the biggest challenge that the SPLM faces is the impact of past negative memory on the positive changes that may occur which, as stated above, maybe deemed incorrect. For example, Riek Machar’s apology in April 2012 for the 1991 Bor Massacre appears not to have been accepted, as demonstrated by the December 2013 events (Johnson 2016:151–52).

Identification-Based Trust (IBT) is a function of both interpersonal and impersonal relationships, and it is a form of a trust where either party internalizes and empathizes with the

other's interests. Shapiro et al. (1992:371–74) categorise IBT as the highest form of trust, which normally occurs among members of the same group with shared values, goals and focus. Similarly, according to Lucky (2006:96), IBT stands as the highest form of trust and is achievable when the parties “understand and appreciate one another's wants” in the backdrop of shared values and the objectives and also “stabilizes relationships during periods of conflict and negativity”. In the SPLM/A, leadership and ideological contentions that began in 1983 and continued to the recent 2013 conflict have led to the polarization of the party into several opposing groups. Consequently, the party lacks shared values and a unified position and hence remains far below the required threshold for the occurrence of IBT.

On the risks associated with IBT, Shapiro et al. (1992:374) point out that the aspect of empathy is one that may cause an individual to act contrary to his or her belief in favour of the other party. Jones and George (1998:537) also amplify this point, arguing “people are ‘unknowable,’ and it is, therefore, impossible to have complete empathy with their often hidden or inexpressible desires and needs”.

2.3.2 Trust in conflict levels

As depicted in Figure 2.1, an exposition of the various levels of conflict that occurred in the SPLM relationships is necessary to understand the interplay between trust and distrust. The primary level espouses historical conflicts which were a result of the lack of institutional safety nets necessary to instil DBT. Following the historical conflicts, the SPLM is in a state of alienation in political relationships at the secondary level, and the institutional weaknesses still pertain ruling out the possibility of DBT. Based on the negative memories of historical conflicts, KBT also becomes impossible to attain. Also, the party lacks shared values, and therefore there is a deficit of IBT. The trust deficit spiral extends to the tertiary level of the conflict where the power struggles, control of resources and ethnic violence ensue. The ripple effect and

magnitude of distrust reinforced through the three levels of conflict renders peace agreements and power-sharing government an impossible task.

2.4 Foreign Policy Theories

Regional and international partners have consistently supported the peace process in South Sudan since the outbreak of the civil war in December 2013 (H. F. Johnson, 2016, pp. 300–303; UN Security Council, 2012, pp. 15–17; Vertin, 2018, p. 8). However, these benevolent positions have, in some cases, been marred by circumstances that appear to undermine the peace process. In investigating the problem raised by the second research question relating to the ineffectiveness of the mediation processes, this section explores theories of foreign policy in underpinning the role of mediation partners, a sub-theme of the power struggles in the conflict. According to Herz (1950:157–58), the world faces a hierarchical security dilemma where at the lower level, family or tribal groups may address their competing power relations to face another group; groups in a nation do the same to face other nations as the power games move onto the national and international levels. Waltz (1979:72) narrates how at the national level, the security dilemma calls for foreign policy theories that gauge the responses of external power relations, which then becomes a link to international politics that interpret the bearing of international situations on domestic policies. From that perspective, Herz (1950:158) postulates that the security dilemma among the political power units leads to conflict which attracts a variety of responses, the major ones being guided by political realism which focuses on “the urge for security and the competition for power”. These positions lead to foreign policies necessary in guiding relations among nations which, according to Hudson (2005:1), presuppose that such international relations are based on individual or group political decisions. Nye (1988:238) argues that realism, liberalism, neorealism and neoliberalism are the major theories that have dominated the analysis of foreign policy decisions since the nineteenth

century.

2.4.1 Realism and Neorealism

Herz (1950:158) views political realism as being rational, and explores the prospects of harmony in the security dilemma, seeing that “power is something easily to be channelled, diffused, utilized for the common good, and that it can ultimately be eliminated altogether from political relationships”. Accordingly, realism focuses on states as the main actors, and the nature of domestic politics in which politicians act rationally to determine how states behave while maximising power in terms of security and economic interests relative to other countries (Keohane 1986:163–64). The power-centric attitude of realists arises from the belief that the geopolitical arena is characterised by anarchy where there is no overarching authority beyond the individual states, hence the need to maximise power for a state's survival. Neorealism, though principally driven by theories of anarchy and power, shifts the focus from states and regimes to the structure of international systems to explain how nations behave. Here there are underlying power structures that determine the behaviour of states, and when those structures change, inevitably, the behaviour of states change (Walt 1998:31).

China, which is among the IGAD-Plus¹ members and an important player in the conflict in South Sudan, despite its policy of non-interference in the affairs of sovereign states, has found itself on a collision course with the peace process (Sun 2014:11). In the first place, China has been a proponent of neorealism, however, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, that policy has drifted more towards cooperation including playing an active role in UN peace missions (Chen 1993:237–38, 243). Probably the most incriminating role of China in undermining the peace process in South Sudan is the supply of arms to the government

¹ Expanded mediation team: IGAD members, five African Union member states not in IGAD region (Algeria, Chad, Nigeria, Rwanda, and South Africa), the AU, UN, the Troika (US, UK, Norway), the European Union, and China (Young 2015:50).

side, a situation that has been interpreted as one of the reasons for the exacerbation of the conflict (United Nations Security Council 2016:25–26). As a part of its policy changes, China adopted a ‘Going out Strategy’ in 1999 with the sole purpose of promoting its overseas investments and Africa, and South Sudan, in particular, is among the destinations where mineral resources are a target (Sun 2014:6–7). Ultimately, it is China’s economic interests that inform its foreign policy on South Sudan; some of these negatively influence the peace process it supposedly supports, and this undermines the peace process.

2.4.2 Liberalism and Neoliberalism

Liberalism sees the transcendent capacity of states in international power struggles to use international cooperation and economic and social interdependence in pursuit of peace and to ensure that democratic values promote fundamental human rights (Walt 1998:32). Additionally, states are not the only primary actors in the pursuit of peaceful coexistence but also involved are intergovernmental organisations, for example, the UN, AU and World Bank, as well as non-governmental organisations. Neoliberalism emphasises free markets and free trade as a means to liberty and a transnational collaboration that promotes peace and global prosperity (Nye 1988:245–46). Neoliberalism, although having economic similarities to liberalism, advocates for government deregulation, removal of trade barriers, and generally freeing up of markets.

The US-led Troika has been instrumental in providing the much-needed leverage in bringing the parties to the negotiating table rather than keeping them on the warpath. However, some interventions of the USA have tended to undermine the peace process. For example, Salva Kiir reluctantly signed the ARCSS agreement, saying it was imposed at the behest of the USA, while Riek Machar was forced to return to Juba in implementation of the agreement despite security concerns that ultimately saw him ejected from Juba (International Crisis Group

2019:1–3; Young 2017:16–17). From that perspective, the matter of concluding and signing a peace deal seems to be of utmost importance to the USA, irrespective of the reservations voiced by the conflict parties. Thus, an understanding of the USA agenda in taking a stance that undermines the peace process becomes critical. Lipschutz (1998a:9) argues that such peace agreements are characteristic of “neoliberal peace” which aims to create a democratic environment conducive for economic growth and hence wealth creation that would change war attitudes. Although liberalism and neoliberalism theories are generally discussed in the context of interstate conflicts Lipschutz (1998b, p. 45) clarifies that the “consequence of the end of the cold war and the processes of globalization and liberalization [mean] that the United States” has extended the boundaries of these theories to intrastate conflicts.

The neoliberal approach to peace explains the USA’s assertive position, where an agreement is necessary for fulfilling the political and economic agenda of neoliberal peace. Sensing the intransigence exhibited by Salva Kiir and Riek Machar during the negotiation and mediation process, the USA unsuccessfully attempted to exclude these two principal players from the peace process, and the failure to achieve that exclusion could have occasioned the imposition of the peace agreement (International Crisis Group 2019:1). From a neoliberal peace goal stance, the USA approach to the peace process in South Sudan may be meaningful; however, it has so far proven to be counterproductive as the peace process drags on.

2.4.3 African Foreign Policies

Although the above theories dominate the field of international relations, how they fit into the African domestic and foreign relations needs interrogation. In Jackson and Rosbergs’s (1982:7) assessment, effective governance in Africa is determined by three factors: “domestic authority, the apparatus of power, and economic circumstances”. They point out that there is a tendency for African leaders to personalise political power, where leaders usurp the power and

independence of constitutional and institutional offices. Similarly, Van de Walle argues that majority of African countries are governed by presidential quasi-democratic systems in which power is personalised around the president in patron-client relationships that usurp the powers and independence of the executive, legislature and judiciary (van de Walle 2003:309–13). Realism overlooks the individual's role in political outcomes and regards power as an independent analytical variable, whereas liberalism focuses on institutional norms rendering the individual role in political outcomes peripheral (Kertzer and Tingley 2018:7). Kertzer and Tingley (2018:8) propose constructivism as a stopgap measure for the individual void left by realism and liberalism based on “the cultural underpinnings of the norms, ideas, and interests that help formulate political action and behaviour”; however, they find it “constrained by these larger sociological and cultural forces.” Reiter and Stam (2008:869–71) argue that scholars have not agreed on a single theory on how domestic political institutions affect foreign policy, but they go on to lay a general framework to that effect. Their argument, which is based on democratic principles, assumes that domestic politics and national interest are the basis on which national leaders make foreign policy decisions in the event of promoting war.

2.4.4 Neopatrimonialism

There is a historical explanation of the personalization of power by African leaders which relates to post-colonial administrations where leaders grappled with democratic norms and political competition, leading to the coercion of opponents, often by military means, or winning over enemies through inducements, or exclusion and marginalisation of some groups based on ethnic and religious grounds (Bratton and Walle 1994:468–69). A study by Bolden and Kirk on African leadership involving participants from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana and Ethiopia, among others, concluded that the subject raises emotive concerns “of leadership that is autocratic, self-serving and disconnected from the communities it serves...” (Bolden and

Kirk 2009:77). The pattern in which state institutions become the means of furthering self-centred political ambition forms the basis of neopatrimonialism where the president controls power and the distribution of resources. Thus, Bratton and Van de Walle (1994:461) argue that “neo-patrimonial rulers are driven by calculations of personal political survival”. In the course of foreign relations, the neo-patrimonial power proclivity defines the interests of such leaders. As Quinn (2010:4) points out, foreign policy in a presidential power-centric state becomes a means of acquiring resources domestically and internationally for regime survival. It may even include cross-national dynastic marriages as occurred with two of Africa’s longest-serving leaders, the Republic of Congo’s President Denis Sassou Nguesso, whose daughter was married to Gabonese President Omar Bongo (Reuters 2009).

As mentioned, across Africa, the personality of the leader is often a predictor of political values and decisions, hence the necessity of understanding human elements that lead to such decisions from a psychological viewpoint. Political psychology “concerns the behaviour of individuals within a specific political system” and addresses their “personality, motives, beliefs, and leadership styles, and their judgements, decisions, and actions in domestic policy, foreign policy, international conflict...” (Huddy, Sears, and Levy 2013:1–5). In this regard, psychologists point to five character traits: neuroticism, extroversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, hence the big five-factor model of personality characteristics which inform political elite behaviour as political events unfold (McDermott 2004:218). Apart from neuroticism, there is a likelihood that decisions by leaders who score high in these character traits may result in positive political outcomes, which is the opposite of what defines authoritarian leaders. For example, McDermott (2004:226) quoting a study by Hermann found that individuals with open personalities have the propensity for risk-taking from an intuitive disposition and those with agreeable personalities avoid risks. In contrast, individuals who score low in conscientiousness take risks impulsively and therefore are susceptible to threats. Again,

McDermott (2004:225) quoting a study by Barber, found that leaders with extrovert personalities who also display energetic and passive positive qualities tend to be compliant to needs of others and “seek love more than power”.

According to Sandy, Boardman and Deutsch (2006:346–47), there are six subscales of neuroticism: anxiety, hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness and vulnerability. While referring to the inability to cope with stressful situations, a study on US elections outcomes shows that political losers were likely to ‘worry about potential losses and to be sensitive to threat-related stimuli’ (Rentfrow, Jost, Gosling and Potter 2009:323). If related to the African context where positive economic factors support the leader's grip on political power, irrespective of neuroticism, the impact of the failure to acquire the economic resources necessary to sustain power is immense. The perceived threats, resulting from the potential loss of political power and the economic attributes that sustain it, explains Bratton and Van de Walle’s assertion that ‘they constitute the foundation and superstructure of the political institution’ (Bratton and Walle 1994:459).

As stated in the previous sections, the role of the regional and international partners in the peace process in South Sudan cannot be overstated. However, some policies put into practice by these partners in the course of their mediation roles have had adverse effects on the peace process. Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya which are regarded as the IGAD frontline member states and are the leading regional mediation partners have projected their competing economic interests into the precincts of the mediation (Johnson 2016:275–77). This is a situation that threatens the viability of the peace process and therefore calls for a questioning of the domestic policies that influence these IGAD members’ foreign policies on South Sudan which may lead to actions which could forestall such counterproductive manoeuvres. As stated, leadership in the majority of African countries is exercised at a personal level rather than through state institutional frameworks. The IGAD frontline states are examples of neo-

patrimonial states, where personal rule is demonstrated by extended stays in power legitimised through elections autocracy as evident in Uganda, and until recently in Sudan and Ethiopia (Makara 2009:14–15; Toensing and Ufheil-Somers 2010:13; van Veen 2016:2–4). Although there is no case of an extended stay in power in Kenya, electoral autocracy has been seen in the violent elections processes (Onyango 2018:6–8). Ultimately, the neo-patrimonial leaders of the IGAD member states extend their economic interests to South Sudan to the detriment and stagnation of the peace process.

2.4.5 Conclusion

The overall objective of this thesis is to understand the causes the behaviour of and divisions among the SPLM political elite leading to violent conflicts and identify strategies to end the conflict. The overarching research question addressed the causes of disputes and estrangement in the SPLM in power struggles, and the control of wealth arose as a major theme. The theories of conflict underpin the investigation with three major conflict theories; conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict transformation analyzed as crucial elements in explaining the causes of the conflict. Secondly, ethnic violence arose as another major theme in response to the overarching research question and theories of ethnic violence formed the underpinning basis of the inquiry. Primordial, instrumentalist and constructivist theories of ethnic violence, together with reconciled views of the three theories, will be examined to explain the role of the SPLM political elite in the ethnic violence.

The second research question is why mediation processes remain ineffective in ending violent conflict. In response to this question, estranged political relationships arose as a major theme and theories of trust appear best suited in underpinning the investigation. The exploration of institutional trust with the concepts of DBT, CBT, KBT and IBT demonstrates the level of trust deficit both at the interpersonal and institutional levels within the SPLM explain the

difficulties in the peace processes. An understanding of the trust deficit leads to further understanding of the third research question on the resolution strategies best-suited to the conflict.

Finally, and in response to the question of the reasons for the ineffectiveness of the mediation process, the role of regional and international partners, though a secondary theme, emerged as highly significant. In an attempt to explore the role of the partners, theories of foreign policy undergirded the inquiry, and at the international level neorealist and neoliberal theories stood out to account for the roles of China and the USA. However, for China, economic interests appear to have surpassed its traditional neorealist policies at the expense of the peace process whereas the USA maintained its neoliberal policies, although despite good intentions it had a negative impact on the peace process. For IGAD partners, the role of individual decisions driven by personal interests and economic motivations is best explained by neopatrimonialism. Ultimately, the economic interests of Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia and Kenya have taken the centre at the expense of the peace process.

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Chapter 3: Methodology

Political disputes, power struggles, violent conflict and unsuccessful agreements are the problems that have dogged the young nation of South Sudan. A significant feature of this problem is the state of political estrangement among the ruling SPLM leadership, characterised by negative emotions manifesting in the form of anger, bitterness, revenge attitudes and deep distrust that renders peace processes unsustainable. As reported in the first chapter, previous studies have identified distrust among the SPLM political leadership as a major contributor to the protracted violent conflict, yet mitigating measures to deal with the distrust are lacking. It was the researcher's conviction that a better understanding of this phenomenon, and how to mitigate it, could be a basis for a conceptual model for future studies as well as strategies and protocols for policymakers and practitioners.

The main objective of this research was to explore the causes of estrangement in relationships among the SPLM political elite that may have contributed to the resurgence of violent conflicts. The study also sought to find strategies that would address the estrangement and break the cycle and resurgence of violent conflict. This exploration was preceded by the review of the literature and enhanced by insights from several theoretical and conceptual frameworks as elaborated in Chapter 2. In this regard, theories of conflict (Berelson and Steiner 1964; Boulding 1957; Fink 1968; Galtung 1965), ethnic violence (Barth 1969; Cohen 1978; Geertz 1973; Keyes 1976), institutional trust (Lewicki and Bunker 1994; McKnight, Cummings, and Chervany 1998; Rousseau et al. 1998; Shapiro, Sheppard, and Cheraskin 1992) and foreign policy (Herz 1950; Reiter and Stam 2008; van de Walle 2003; Waltz 1979) underpinned the six identified major thematic areas of historical conflicts, estranged political

relationships, power struggles, control of resources, ethnic violence and the role of regional and international partners.

To better understand the phenomenon, three research questions were addressed, the first one being the overarching question followed by two subsidiary questions:

- (1) What are the causes of disputes and estrangement among the SPLM political elite leading to violent conflicts?
- (2) Why have mediation processes not been effective in ending the violent conflicts in South Sudan?
- (3) Which strategies are best suited for resolving the disputes and estrangement among the SPLM political elite and the conflicts in South Sudan?

A qualitative case study design was adopted to enhance the understanding of the complex, violent conflict phenomenon whereby the causes of the political estrangements are explained and interpreted (Berg 1988:225; Bryman 2004:46; Mack et al. 2005:2). In the case study design, two approaches to sources of data collection were applied. First, the investigation commenced with a review of documentary evidence (Bowen 2009:28) related to the SPLM, including SPLM convention documents, AU and UN inquiry reports and peace agreements from which vital data was derived. Secondly, various stakeholders with knowledge of the conflict were interviewed in-depth (Mack et al. 2005:29). These included the conflict parties, the mediation team, eminent South Sudanese leaders, scholars and civil society organisation leaders. The interview protocol was designed to explain the causes of the conflict and suitable mitigating strategies (as advised by Yin 2003:6, 15). It was through these approaches that the six thematic areas mentioned earlier were derived.

This chapter describes the methodology used in this research and includes discussions that are divided into the following sections: 3.2 Philosophical assumptions and paradigms, 3.3 Research design, 3.4 Participant selection, 3.5 Sources of data, 3.6 Data collection process, 3.7

Data analysis techniques, 3.8 Justifying claims/quality assurance, 3.9 Ethical considerations, 3.10 Limitations, and 3.11 Conclusion.

3.1 Philosophical Assumptions and Paradigms

Creswell (2014:5–6) points out that philosophical assumptions “remain largely hidden in research” and yet they inevitably shape the research process and therefore need to be identified to help explain the choice of either quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods approaches. Decisions to adopt an inquiry approach are guided by certain philosophical assumptions, thus: “stance toward the nature of reality (ontology), how the researcher knows what he or she knows (epistemology), the role of values in the research (axiology), the language of research (rhetoric), and methods used in the process (methodology)” (Creswell 2007:16–18). Based on ontological assumptions, researchers encounter multiple and subjective realities in the process of inquiry. Participants in a study may experience similar circumstances, but their realities may differ due to their varying backgrounds and biases. Epistemologically, the researcher's background may influence the participants in the course of the inquiry and ultimately, the outcome of the research. From the axiological assumptions, a better understanding of the participant's experiences entails knowledge of their background, context, values and beliefs. On rhetoric assumptions, Creswell advocates the use of terms or language embraced by qualitative methods such as “credibility,” “transferability,” “dependability,” and “confirmability” as opposed to quantitative terms such as “internal validity,” “external validity,” “generalizability,” and “objectivity”.

Guba and Lincoln (1994:107–8) define paradigms as belief systems based on three basic philosophical assumptions and raise fundamental questions that interconnect the three assumptions: First, ontology is about the nature of the world and asks; “what is the form of nature of reality and what can be known about it?” Second, epistemology relates to knowing

and understanding of the phenomenon of interest and asks “what is the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known?”. Third, the methodology involves processes and strategies which ask “how can the inquirer (would-be knower) go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known?”. Holloway (1997:113) points out that ontological questions subsequently shape epistemological and methodological questions, hence the construction of the research methodology

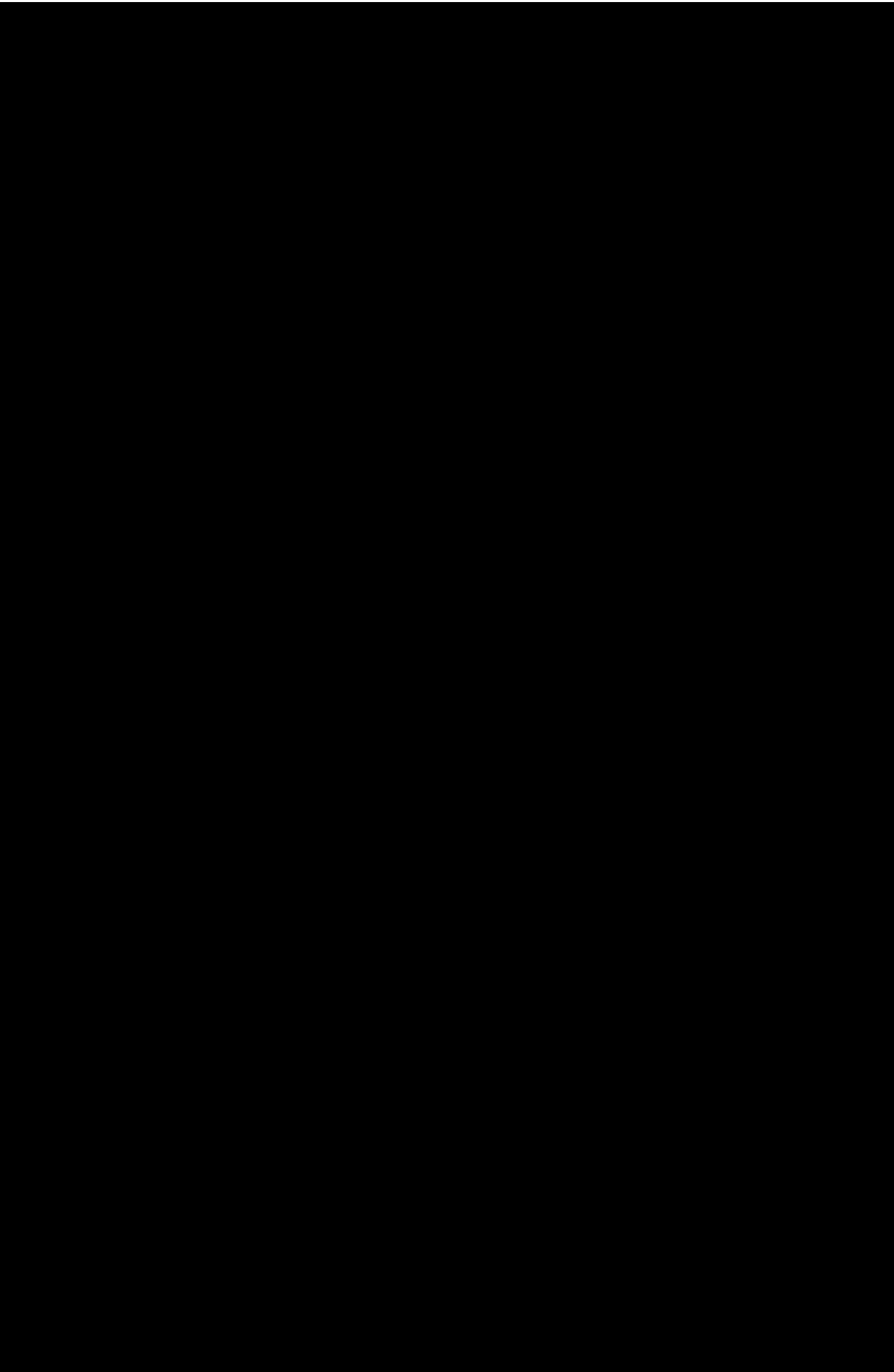
The choices made based on the philosophical assumptions guide the construction of the inquiry as it adopts specific paradigms, namely; postpositivism, constructivism, advocacy/participatory, and pragmatism (Creswell 2007:19). The usage of the term paradigm in scientific research was applied by Kuhn (1970:23), which he defined as "an accepted model or pattern". Kuhn, however, went on to argue from a scientific standpoint that contrary to replication norms associated with models or patterns, “a paradigm is rarely an object for replication. Instead, it is an object for further articulation and specification under new or more stringent conditions.” Guba (1990:17) defines paradigm, in its generic term, as “a basic set of beliefs that guide action”, irrespective of whether the actions is a common practice or a scientific inquiry process. Maxwell (2009:14) observes that “one of the critical decisions that you will need to make in designing your study is the paradigm (or paradigms) within which you will situate your work”. Likewise, Guba and Lincoln (1994:116) maintain that a researcher should demonstrate “what paradigm informs and guides his or her approach” to research inquiry. The next subsection explores the shaping of the research methodology based on philosophical assumptions and paradigms.

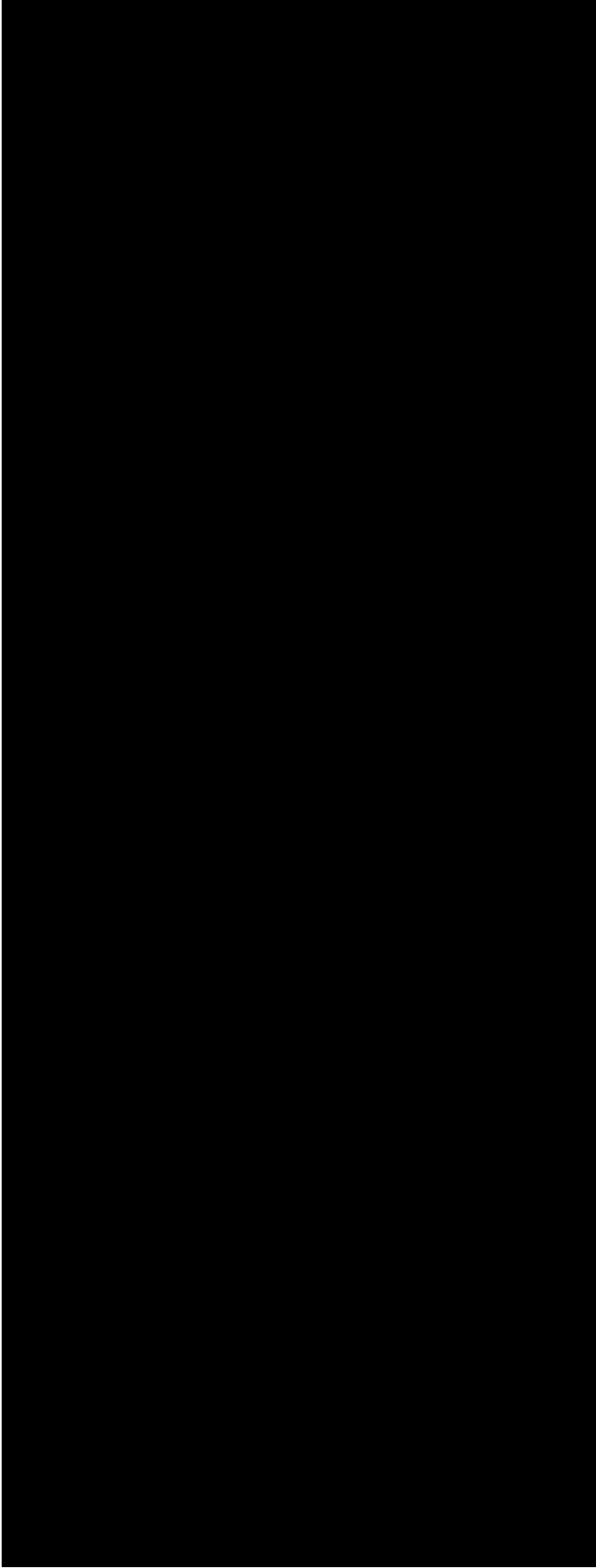
These analyses are only a few examples that demonstrate the impact of the various themes and sub-themes that answer the three research questions. A detailed analysis is discussed in Chapters 4-7, wherein Chapter 4; power struggles, control of resources and historical conflicts will be discussed concerning the causes of disputes and estrangement. In Chapter 5,

ethnic violence will also be discussed in response to the question of causes of disputes and estrangement. In Chapter 6, historical conflicts and estranged political relationships will be covered amongst the reasons for ineffective mediation and strategies for resolving disputes and estrangement. In Chapter 7, the theme of regional and international partners will also be examined in response to the reasons for ineffective international mediation processes. Although the relevant subthemes may not be identified in these chapters, the overarching themes reflect the positions of the interview responses.

3.2 Research Design

According to Berg (1988:28), “the design for a research project is literally the plan for how the study will be conducted”. Yin (2003:20–21) defines research design as “the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study’s initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions”. Following a study of Creswell’s (2007) typology of five qualitative approaches (See Table 3.1), it was decided that a case study approach best suited this research into problems and motivations in South Sudan





3.2.1 The Case Study Design

Yin (2003:13–14), categorises the definition of a case study by: (1) the scope of the study, and (2) the processes “including data collection and data analysis strategies” undertaken in the case study. In regard to the scope of a case study, Yin makes three points that a case study:

- a) copes with the technically distinctive situation
- b) relies on multiple sources of evidence, and
- c) benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis.

Based on the above definition, this research adopted the case study design as the best-suited approach to address the objective of this thesis. As mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2, the internecine violent conflicts in South Sudan since the advent of the second civil war in 1983 to the present time are associated with the SPLM party which has dominated the political space in South Sudan from that time. The conflict, therefore, is a contemporary phenomenon investigated in this research, and the case investigated is the estrangement within the SPLM leadership, which is the real-life context. In a bid to establish the link between the phenomenon and the context, six major themes were identified in line with Yin’s technical requirements of a case study. In line with Yin’s second point, a multi-pronged approach was used to acquire this information in which various documents were analysed including AU and UN commission inquiry reports, peace agreements and face to face interviews. Furthermore, the thesis is guided by consideration of issues relating to the links between conflict and ethnicity, institutional trust and foreign policy, discussed in detail in Chapter 2, in line with Yin’s third point for a case study strategy. An understanding of the South Sudan conflict was facilitated by the study of the central political organization: the SPLM as a case study largely based on information gathered through interviews of participants which is a major strength of the case study method.

As was shown in Chapter 1, various studies have identified multiple casual phenomena in the conflict in South Sudan, which include power struggles, the control of resources, ethnic violence and legacies of conflict. Also, as earlier stated, there are theories that are suitable in guiding the understanding of the conflict. The explanatory case study design (Berg 1988:229–30; Yin 2003:15) allowed the search for responses to the research questions that contextualised the occurrences of these interconnected conflict phenomena, and therefore was the most suitable approach. For example, the outbreak of violence in December 2013 started as a leadership dispute in the SPLM followed by broader power struggles that degenerated into large scale ethnic violence. It was established to have occurred in the backdrop of pre-existing political acrimony.

In the section that follows, the researcher explores the techniques used in the identification and recruitment of participants.

3.3 Participants

3.3.1 General participant population and research site

The overarching research question, as stated in the introduction of this chapter, was: “What are the causes of disputes and estrangement among the SPLM political elite leading to violent conflicts?” Due to the complex and historical nature of the conflict, the general population selected to participate in the study were a combination of stakeholders with rich, in-depth knowledge on the conflict in South Sudan (Bryman 2004:46). The SPLM is the ruling party in South Sudan and therefore Juba, where its headquarters is located, makes a perfect location for the study. However, the conflict that resulted in the split of the party caused some of its members to seek refuge in other countries. The SPLM-IO and SPLM-IG have some of their members in Ethiopia, Sudan, Uganda and Kenya amongst other countries. Addis Ababa, besides being host to some of the erstwhile SPLM members, also hosts the mediation processes of the conflict. The

mediation team from the AU, UN and IGAD are easily accessible in Addis Ababa. Uganda has played host to the largest number of South Sudanese who fled the conflict and is a key ally of the SPLM-IG. The researcher being a Ugandan, found it convenient to commence his efforts to recruit participants from the SPLM-IG through the South Sudanese embassy in Kampala. The researcher identified Addis Ababa and Kampala, in addition to Juba, as the interview sites.

3.3.2 Participant selection techniques

The purposive sampling technique was the preferred approach in the recruitment of participants in this research (Berg 1988:32). The researcher's employment background with the AU Peace and Security Department provided knowledge and expertise about the SPLM and the conflict in South Sudan, hence the choice for purposive sampling. In that regard, the participants were deliberately chosen because they possess particular knowledge required for the exploration and understanding from a broad and diverse perspective (Ritchie et al. 2003:79). The researcher, therefore, collaborated with the AU Head of Sudan and South Sudan desk in choosing participants with the relevant attributes for the research objectives. In addition, the researcher worked in conjunction with the Head of AU Mission in South Sudan, who helped the researcher identify some of the participants in Juba. The participants identified were contacted through telephone calls and email messages. The collaboration with the AU Peace and Security Department was a result of the request for research attachment made through the University of New England, School of Humanities as per attached Appendix A and B. For that reason, a number of AU staff were conveniently sampled due to the ease in accessing them for recruitment (Berg 1988:32).

3.3.3 Sample size and category of participants

Patricia Adler and Peter Adler estimate that a population size of thirty participants is sufficient for a quality study (in Baker and Edwards 2012:9). The researcher initially planned to recruit twenty-five participants, targeting 15 from the different factions of the SPLM party, five from the AU, UN and IGAD, and five from civil society. Ultimately, twenty-nine individuals confirmed their participation in the research, and the SPLM being central to the case study, access to some of its members was crucial in the research. Thus, the participants included conflict parties, members of the mediation, eminent South Sudanese leaders, scholars and civil society organisation leaders.

The conflict parties were primarily selected because they were the subjects of the case study. Their experiential positions were considered as unique in exploring the reasons for the disputes and estrangements in the SPLM and the violent aftermath. Due to the sensitive nature of their role in the conflict, two channels of a diplomatic nature were used to contact them. First, as already mentioned, the AU was the main point of entry to the conflict parties on the opposition side, many of whom are in Addis Ababa. Secondly, the entry point for the conflict parties in government started with a formal request by the researcher to the Embassy of the Republic of South Sudan in Kampala from where a diplomatic *note verbal* (Appendix C) was relayed to their Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in Juba requesting facilitation of interviews with relevant government officials. This request was further supported by another diplomatic *note verbal* (Appendix D) by AU Mission in South Sudan to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Following these channel communications, the researcher was invited by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Appendix E), to meet with their Director of Regional Organisations through whom arrangements were made to interview SPLM-IG SPLM secretariat officials.

The mediation members were chosen because of their role in the peace process and given the neutral role of the mediation team members, and they had the capacity to provide rational

assessments and insights into the situation. They were contacted through the AU office in Addis Ababa, and some of them were staff members of the AU. Eminent personalities were those South Sudanese leaders, mainly retired senior civil servants, who actively participated in the governance processes in Sudan and South Sudan and therefore had in-depth historical and current insights on the SPLM and the conflict situation in South Sudan. They were contacted through the AU Mission in South Sudan. The South Sudanese scholars were chosen because of the research insights on the conflict, and they were contacted through the AU Mission in South Sudan. Civil society organisation leaders were selected because they were continually monitoring the events in the SPLM and South Sudan as they unfolded and some of them participated in the mediation processes and were also reached through the AU Mission in South Sudan.

The inclusion criteria considered was AUC staff engaged on the political mediation on South Sudan, SPLM members in government and opposition, and civil society and private sector members (religious, local and business leaders). The exclusion criteria considered individuals under 18 years, individuals who do not speak English, those without in-depth knowledgeable on the SPLM and the conflict in South Sudan. Table 3.2 below reflects the composition by category and affiliations of the participants in the study

Table 3. 2: List of Participants by profile/category

Category	Participant	Location and Date	Participant Profile/Category	
Conflict Parties - 8 Participants	Hon. Atem Garang de Kuek	Juba- 18/03/2018	SPLM IG - SPLM Chief Whip	
	Bol Makueng Yuol	Juba - 21/03/2018	SPLM IG - SPLM Secretary for Information, Culture, and Communication	
	Dr Anne Itto Leonardo	Juba- 26/3/2018	SPLM IG - Member of the East African Legislative Assembly and former Deputy Secretary-General of the SPLM	
	Anonymous	Juba - 29/3/2018	SPLM IG - Political role	
	Anonymous	Addis Ababa - 28/11/2017	SPLM IO	
	Gai Chatiem Puoch Gai	Addis Ababa - 2/12/2017	SPLM IO - Brigadier General, formerly of the SPLA	
	Emmanuel Ajang Solomon	Kampala - 20/12/2017	SPLM IO – Member	
	Anonymous	Addis Ababa - 17/11/2017	Formerly of the SPLA	
	Members of IGAD mediation team - 4 Participants	Barney Afako	Addis Ababa - 20/11/2017	Member of the UN Standby Team of Senior Mediation Advisers
		Nicholas Haysom	Addis Ababa - 29/11/2017	Member of the IGAD mediation support and UN Special Envoy to Sudan and South Sudan
Anonymous		Addis Ababa - 24/11/2017	African Union	
Amb. Joram Biswato		Juba- 29/03/2018	Member of the IGAD mediation support and Head of AU Mission in South Sudan	

African Union - 1 Participant	Boitshoko Mokghatle	Addis Ababa - 24/11/2017	AU Coordinator of Sudan and South Sudan Desk
Eminent Persons - 4 Participants	Amb. Francis Mading Deng	Juba - 23/3/2018	Former South Sudan's Permanent Representative to the UN and former Sudan's Ambassador Canada and the United States of America, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, and former Special Advisor to the UN Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide
	Prof. Moses Machar Kacuol	Juba - 26/3/2018	Joint Head of South Sudan's National Dialogue Steering Committee, Former Second Vice-President of the Republic of Sudan
	Aldo Ajou Deng Akuey	Juba - 30/3/2018	Former Deputy Prime Minister and Deputy Speaker of the Sudan Parliament
	Bishop Enock Tombe Stephen Loro	Juba - 15/03/2018	Bishop emeritus, Representative of Faith-Based Organisations in the IGAD lead revitalised peace process
Scholars - 8 Participants	Prof. Sunday Angoma Okello	Addis Ababa - 21/11/2017	Lecturer, Institute of Peace and Security (IPSS), Addis Ababa; lead researcher on AU Peace and Security Programme, African-led Solutions for African Peace and Security Problems, South Sudan case
	Prof. Samson Wasara	Juba - 14/03/2018	Vice-Chancellor University of Bahr El Ghazal, Wau
	Lual Acuek Lual Deng	Juba - 17/03/2018	Managing Director of Ebony Centre for Strategic Studies
	Anonymous	Juba - 17/03/2018	Juba University
	Dr. Angelina Mattijo-Bazugba	Juba - 17/03/2018	Director of the Institute for Transformational Leadership at the University of Juba and Coordinator of South Sudan's Women's Coalition
	Prof. Isaac Cuir Riak	Juba - 20/03/2018	Vice-Chancellor of Upper Nile University
	Prof. Luka KuoI Biiong	Sydney - 22/11/2018	Professor of Practice for Security Studies at Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS) at US National Defense University; former Director, Centre for Peace and Development Studies at the University of Juba, South Sudan.

Atem Atem	Sydney - 22/11/2018	PhD Candidate, Australian National University
Leaders of Civil Society Organisations - 4 Participants		
Anonymous	Kampala - 09/03/2018	Leader of a women's organisation
Edmund Yakani	Juba - 14/03/2018	Executive Director, Community Empowerment for Progress Organization - Strengthens and Promotes the capacity of civil society in peace-building
Abraham Awolich	Juba - 14/03/2018	Acting Executive Director, The Sudd Institute which conducts and facilitates research and training to inform public policy and practice
William Ongoro	Juba - 21/03/2018	Conflict Resolution and Peace-building Specialist, Whitaker Peace and Development Initiative - promotes the values of peace, reconciliation, and social development in communities impacted by conflict and violence.
Total - 29 Participants		

Missing in the category of the conflict parties is the SPLM-FDs, whose members were mainly resident in Nairobi, Kenya and the researcher was financially constrained to travel to that location. However, attempts to interview one of the SPLM-FDs members who joined the unity government after the signing of the ARCSS proved futile as the arrangements made through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were deferred several times.

The next section discusses the various sources of data used in this research process, noting that apart from the interview process, secondary sources were used.

3.4 Sources of Data

3.4.1 Secondary sources of data

Although Cohen et al. (2007:194) describe secondary data as having an indirect relationship with a given study, they also argue that its role in research should not be underestimated (See also Snape & Spencer (2003:23) and Bloomberg and Volpe (2008:75)). The review of a wide range of literature on South Sudan and the SPLM provided much background information. This helped to identify the gaps that guided the research design. It was through the literature review that recurring patterns of estranged relationships, power struggles, fights over wealth control, ethnic violence and continuation of historical conflicts were first identified, as narrated in Chapter 2.

3.4.2 Primary sources of data

Primary sources of data fall into two categories: “official documentary records” and “in-depth interviews” (Berg 1988:194). The first source of data used in this study was documentary records which included the AU and UN commission reports, minutes of meetings, and peace agreements, all related to the conflict in South Sudan. According to Cohen, Louis, Manion and

Morrison (2007:194), such documentary records are considered “intentionally or unintentionally, capable of transmitting a firsthand account of an event and are therefore considered as sources of primary data”. These documentary records are very helpful in understanding the official versions of events, but they tend to downplay significant differences of opinion (Bowen 2009:32). The second source of primary data was in-depth interviews. Mack et al. (2005:29) describe the in-depth interview as “a technique designed to elicit a vivid picture of the participant’s perspective on the research topic and in which “the person being interviewed is considered the expert and the interviewer is considered the student”. The objectives of this research were to establish the causes of disputes and estrangement among the SPLM members and also identify strategies that may address the estrangement. In line with Mack et al.’s perspective, cited above, the in-depth interview technique was chosen because the participants in this study were considered to be experts in the case of South Sudan conflicts and the SPLM.

In the section that follows, the data collection process will be explored, reflecting on the primary sources of data.

3.5 Data Collection Process

3.5.1 Documentary analysis

In the previous section, it was mentioned that a variety of documents were reviewed as part of this research process which accounts for its triangulation (Cohen et al. 2007:142). Prior to the interview process, various primary documents were analysed, starting by skimming through the documents to gain an understanding and identify thematic areas relevant to the research questions (Djamba and Neuman 2002:138). Some of these documents were available online, and therefore the researcher uploaded them to Nvivo 12 plus software which has text search features, making it faster to identify common patterns. The use of Nvivo in this research

will be further discussed in the interview section. Using content analysis and thematic analysis, both of which are also discussed in detail in the interview section, various categories of themes were identified, as shown in Tables 3.3 below.

Table 3. 3: List of primary documents analysed

S/N	Selected Document	Document Date	Central Issue Analysed	Emerging Themes	Global Themes
1	Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS)	September 12, 2018	Composition of Agreement	Power sharing, Cessation of hostilities, Security arrangements, Institutional reforms, Transitional justice, Criminal justice, Healing and reconciliation	Power Struggles, Estranged political relationships, Control of resources, Historical conflicts
2	Final report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan	April 11, 2018	Factors escalating the conflict	Power struggles, consolidation of power, control of resources, ethnic militias, ethnic hegemony, economic interests, severed relationships, obstacle to reconciliation	Power Struggles, Estranged political relationships, Control of resources, Historical conflicts
3	The IGAD Special Envoy for South Sudan Progress Report on the High-Level Revitalization of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan	March 26, 2018	Challenges in the R-ARCSS process	Punitive measures, Spoilers of the peace process, Power sharing, root causes of conflict, maintain status quo, restructuring of government, transitional security arrangements, political will, capacity to build trust	Power Struggles, Estranged political relationships, Control of resources, Regional and International Partners
4	Communiqué of the 61st Extra-Ordinary Session of IGAD Council of Ministers on the Situation in South Sudan	March 26, 2018	Cessation of hostilities agreement (CoHA)	Non-compliance, violations of CoHA	Power Struggles, Estranged political relationships
5	Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan	February 23, 2018	Causes of human rights violations and basis for transitional justice and reconciliation	Sexual and gender-based violence, ethnic violence, ethnic minorities, capture and control of resources, truth, reconciliation and healing, undermining reconciliation, lack of funds	Power Struggles, Estranged political relationships, Ethnic Violence

6	Minutes of the meeting between African Union and the International Crisis Group- Progress Update on the South Sudan Peace Initiative	February 16, 2018	Status of the progress on the South Sudan revitalised peace process and areas of likely support	Government reluctance, lack of cooperation, release of Machar, regional interference	Estranged Political Relationships
7	Final report of the African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan	October 15, 2015	Causes of violence in South Sudan	Historical conflicts, Strained political relationships, power struggles, competition for resources, institutional failure, lack of leadership, military factions, dictatorship, ethnicity, healing and reconciliation, criminal justice	Historical conflicts, Power Struggles, Estranged political relationships, Control of resources
8	Final report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2206 (2015)	January 14, 2016.	Factors escalating the conflict	Tribal militia, competition for power and resources, exclusion of tribes, arms supply from China, arms supply through Uganda	Power Struggles, Ethnic Violence, Control of resources, Regional and International Partners
9	Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS)	August 17, 2015	Composition of Agreement	Power sharing, Cessation of hostilities, Security arrangements, Institutional reforms, Transitional justice, Criminal justice, Healing and reconciliation	Power Struggles, Estranged political relationships, Control of resources, Historical conflicts
10	Agreement on the Reunification of the SPLM	January 21 , 2015	Composition of Agreement	Cessation of hostilities, Public apology, reunification and reconciliation of SPLM, healing and reconciliation, national unity, tribalism, political pluralism, democratic reforms	Power Struggles, Estranged political relationships, Ethnic Violence, Control of resources, Historical conflicts

11	SPLM'S Arusha Framework for Intra-SPLM Dialogue	October 20, 2014	Objectives of Agreement	Intra-SPLM Dialogue, reunification of the SPLM, Rooted differences in the SPLM, reconciliation and a healing, peaceful transfer of power, institutionalization of authority, combat corruption, History and evolution of the SPLM	Historical Conflicts, Power Struggles, Estranged political relationships, Ethnic Violence, Control of resources, Historical conflicts
12	South Sudan Human Rights Commission (SSHRC) Interim Report on South Sudan Internal Conflict	December 15, 2013 - March 15, 2014	Human rights violations	Ethnic militia, Ethnic killings, political rivalries and tensions, reconciliation and healing	Power Struggles, Estranged political relationships, Ethnic Violence
13	SPLM Manifesto	May, 2008	Origin, values and vision of the SPLM	Historical conflicts, disputes, differences in vision	Historical conflicts, Power Struggles, Estranged political relationships, Control of resources
14	Minutes of Historical SPLM Meeting in Rumbek 2004 - Sudan Tribune: Plural news and views on Sudan	November 29 to December 1, 2004	Disputes in the SPLM	Dictatorship, bad working relationship, reconciliation, distribution of powers, Chairman does not delegate powers, corruption	Estranged political relationships, Power Struggles, Control of resources
15	Resolution of the SPLM/A First National Convention (Chukudum)	March/April 1994	Values of the SPLM/A	SPLM objectives, political constraints, economic constraints, social constraints, ethnic equality, democracy and human rights	Power Struggles, Estranged political relationships, Ethnic Violence
16	Wunlit - Dinka-Nuer West Bank Peace and Reconciliation Conference	27 Feb. - 8 March 1999	Causes of Dinka and Nuer ethnic violence	Dinka Nuer reconciliation, Reconciliation among political leaders needed,	Ethnic Violence, Estranged political relationships

3.6 In-depth Interviews

In line with the three research questions, a semi-structured interview protocol was designed to capture the context and content of the case study in regard to the disputes and estrangement in the SPLM and the conflict in South Sudan. Additionally, suitable strategies to address the estrangement and the conflict formed part of the protocol design. The researcher requested Peace Studies colleagues to test the questions and settled for the questions listed in Table 3.4 below:

Table 3. 4: Research and interview questions

Research Questions	Interview Questions
1-What are the causes of disputes and estrangement among the SPLM political elite, leading to violent conflicts?	1. What would you say about the current status of the SPLM leadership? 2. Has the SPLM leadership experienced any disputes and divisions in the past? 3. What are the specific issues that arise, if any, whenever the divisions occur? 4. How do the SPLM disputes affect South Sudan?
2-Why have mediation processes not been effective in ending the violent conflicts in South Sudan?	5. Do you think that the current mediation process would address the disputes and divisions within the SPLM leadership and end the violent conflict in South Sudan? 6. In your opinion, why has the ARCSS of August 2015 failed to end the violent conflict in South Sudan? 7. Do you think the agreement could still be restored and implemented through the revitalization process? If not, why and if yes how?
3-Which strategies are best suited for resolving the disputes and estrangement among the SPLM political elite and the conflicts in South Sudan?	8. Have there been efforts to address the disputes within the SPLM and if any, were they effective? 9. How best can the disputes in the SPLM be addressed to bring peace in South Sudan? 10. Do you think the President and former Vice President can still work together to end the war?

An application for ethics approval for research involving humans was made on August 17, 2017, and Approval No. HE17-206 was granted on September 11, 2017 (please see Appendix F and G) and was extended upon its expiry on October 15, 2018, till April 30, 2019 (Appendix H), for further interviews in Sydney. The interview protocol included the participant information sheet which provides objectives and ethical issues of the study, and a consent form (Appendix I and J). As previously mentioned, in preparation for the fieldwork, the researcher sought for research attachment at the African Union Commission, Peace and Security Department for which he requested an introduction letter from the Head, School of Humanities on July 14, 2017 (Appendix A). The AU Peace and Security department granted the acceptance of the attachment in their letter of August 3, 2017 (Appendix B).

The researcher arrived at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa on November 03, 2017, and had the first meeting with the Acting Director of the AU Peace and Security on November 06, 2017, in which the background of the research was presented. The researcher also briefed the Head of Post Conflict, Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) and finally the Head of Sudan and South Sudan Desk, where he was attached for the research. The first meeting was dedicated to administrative and logistical issues, including the formalisation of research placement (Appendix K) and the securing of an AU work visa through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The researcher conducted face to face semi-structured interviews over a twenty-two-week period from November 17, 2017, to March 30, 2018, in Addis Ababa, Kampala and Juba. As shown in Table 3.2, two further face-to-face interviews were carried out in Sydney on November 22, 2018.

The interviews lasted forty minutes to one hour, except for two interviews in Addis Ababa, where the participants declined to be recorded on audio, and the researcher had to write the interview proceedings manually; these lasted over two hours. There were also some

unstructured interviews with two eminent persons that lasted up to two hours, where the participants were given ample time to give a detailed account of the historical and current phenomenon. Some of the interviews were conducted in the participants' offices behind closed doors while some participants chose secluded areas in public restaurants. Some participants were residents in hotels and chose their hotel rooms for the interview.

Although the information sheet was sent to some of the participants in advance by email, the first five minutes or more were spent reviewing the participant information sheet, the objectives of the research, as well as the researcher and the participant's background. This short introductory time was important in gaining the participant's trust as issues of confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, the nature of questions, use, storage and disposal of information, and accountability of the researcher, were all brought to the fore. After this information was clarified, the participant was requested to fill the consent form opting to either be quoted or remain anonymous and to be recorded or not. As stated earlier, two of the participants opted not to be recorded and remain anonymous, three wanted to remain anonymous but accepted to being recorded, two accepted being recorded and quoted after reviewing the transcript, and twenty-two consented to the recording and quotation. For the two who declined to be recorded, notes were taken during the interview.

During the week that commenced on November 12, 2017, the Head of Sudan and South Sudan Desk and the researcher purposively identified prospective participants from the SPLM-IO and the UN (Berg 1988; Ritchie et al. 2003). Preliminary telephone calls were made to the individuals introducing the researcher, who later sent them the information sheet by email and subsequently made follow up calls for the interview arrangements appointments. Besides, the researcher also conveniently identified two staff members from the AU including the Head of Sudan and South Sudan Desk, because they were easily accessible and had the credentials that would inform the study (Berg 1988). The researcher also contacted a South Sudanese AU staff

member who provided him telephone contacts of some opposition parties, after he had alerted them the researcher's interests. In the follow-up telephone calls, the researcher was able to secure two interviews, one with an opposition leader and another with a military officer of the SPLM-IO. The first prospects shared his email address, and the information sheet was sent to him while the other was presented the information sheet on the day of the meeting. The researcher also directly contacted a member of the IGAD mediation support team with whom he had prior contact and secured an interview meeting with him.

Interviews with the participants from the AU and the UN were conducted in their offices behind closed doors. The UN participant had his assistant in the meeting who took notes of the interview. He, however, requested for the complete transcript before the publication of the information. The other participants from the opposition requested for the interview in restaurants where secluded parts of the restaurants were secured. Two of the participants declined to be recorded due to their sensitive positions in the conflict, making their interviews the longest, lasting over two hours. One of them came with a team of three 'experts' and informed the participant that the 'experts' would be augmenting his contribution since they were very familiar with the SPLM and South Sudan conflict events. Indeed, they had valuable information and ably supported his answers to the questions. Ultimately, the interview took on an unstructured form to enable the participants to articulate the issues to the best of their knowledge.

During December 2017, the research process moved to Kampala, in the researcher's home country. The researcher attempted to establish contacts with the SPLM government side of the conflict through the Uganda Ministry of Foreign Affairs but despite securing an appointment with the Deputy Minister, the researcher was advised to return after the new year of 2018 since the holiday season was close. However, engagements of the AU summit in February 2018 rendered the attempt futile. Nevertheless, through the researcher's local

contacts, an interview was secured with a member of the SPLM-IO living in Kampala. Meanwhile, the second phase of R-ARCSS talks under the High-Level Revitalisation Forum (HLRF) was set to resume in Addis Ababa in February 2018 (Adeba and Prendergast 2018:3). Since the major stakeholders, including the SPLM-IG, IO, FDs and other opposition parties and civil society representatives would be at the talks, the researcher saw this as an opportunity to secure interviews.

The participants in the talks were booked at a hotel near the UN Conference centre, where the meetings were being held. It was possible to interact with a number of the participants in the evenings after the day's meeting, and for three days running, the researcher was able to speak to a number of prospective interview participants. However, most of them found it inconvenient to be interviewed during the period of the talks as consultations among themselves after the day's talks was a normal part of their schedule. A number of participants in the talks preferred to participate in the research on return to their stations in Juba, Nairobi and Kampala. This Addis Ababa arrangement yielded four prospective interviews, one with a leader of a women's organization in Kampala, two others with a Coordinator of South Sudan's Women's Coalition and another woman leader, and the Executive Director of Community Empowerment for Progress Organization, all in Juba. Due to financial constraints, the researcher could not schedule meetings with potential participants from Nairobi, most of whom were from the SPLM FDs. All these potential participants were provided with the participant information sheet, and they exchanged their telephone contacts and email addresses with the researcher.

The next round of meetings was in March 2018 starting in Kampala, where the leader of the women's organisation was contacted on the telephone, and an interview was the date was agreed upon. The participant chose a restaurant in the city which though crowded the participant felt it was an ideal and secure location for her. The interview protocol was followed as in the previous cases, and it lasted just over forty minutes.

As previously stated, the process of the Juba leg started in Kampala at the Sudanese Embassy. Out of the three participants contacted in Addis Ababa, one of the women sent an apology that she would be out of the country during the entire period of March 2018, and therefore two participants contacted in the Addis Ababa meeting were interviewed. The Coordinator of South Sudan's Women's Coalition was interviewed at the sidelines of another conference she was attending at a hotel in Juba where a secure room was provided for the interview lasting just over forty minutes. The Executive Director of CEPO was interviewed in his office behind a closed door in a meeting that lasted slightly over one hour. His participation included a PowerPoint presentation covering the areas under conflict in South Sudan and the parties controlling those areas that demonstrated the deep entrenchment of the parties in the conflict.

The other participants in Juba included two other civil society leaders; one of them was interviewed in his office behind closed doors while the other opted to come to the AU office where the researcher was attached. Four other participants, including the Head of AU Mission in South Sudan, two members of the SPLM-IG, one scholar and one eminent person, who also chose to be interviewed at the AU office. All the meetings took place in the AU conference room in a relaxed atmosphere lasting averagely one hour each. Another meeting with a participant from the SPLM-IG took place at the SPLM Secretariat in the participant's office while one with the Vice-Chancellor of Upper Nile University took place at the University offices in Juba. One of the eminent persons chose to be interviewed from his home, and the interview took place under a tent in his compound lasting about one hour. Another eminent person was staying in one of the leading hotels in Juba and chose to be interviewed in his hotel room in a meeting that lasted just under one hour. All these meetings followed the interview protocol earlier described.

Two participants targeted for interview were the SPLM party Chairman who is also the President of South Sudan, Salva Kiir and his former deputy Dr Riek Machar. It was deemed important because the conflict has evolved around these two individuals who were at the centre of the failed ARCSS agreement and HLRF process leading to the R-ARCSS. In as much as the R-ARCSS mediation process depended on the two leaders, most participants were of the view that it was unlikely that the two could work together again and some reported that the President had said that himself. This point was mentioned by the South Sudan government delegation in their opening remarks found in document Number 5 of the document analysis list in Table 3.3. It was, therefore, important to put this question directly to these two individuals. However, Riek Machar was unavailable, being under house arrest in South Africa. In the researcher's preliminary discussions with the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), he was asked what category of officials he intended to interview and top of his list was the SPLM party Chairman. The MoFA official said that protocol provided that the request for meeting the party Chairman and other officials be made through the SPLM secretariat, which was done.

A meeting was scheduled with the Acting Secretary-General of that party who was also designated for an interview. This meeting happened on March 29, 2018, after two weeks of waiting and the Acting Secretary-General agreed to an interview after the Easter holidays after which she would advise on the schedule for the meeting with the party Chairman. Although the Juba leg was scheduled from March 11 – 24, 2018, it was further extended to March 31, 2018, to accommodate the meeting with SPLM Acting Secretary-General and possibly the party Chairman. Due to limited financial resources that were required for hotel bills and reissue of air tickets, the researcher inevitably cancelled all other meetings proposed after March 31, 2018. Strauss and Corbin (1998:30) highlighted similar obstacles naming “bureaucratic regulations, costs, shortages of time” that researchers may face during fieldwork. A rescheduled interview

meeting with the head of SPLM-IG negotiating team was also cancelled under the same circumstances.

The first section of the interview schedule was intended to elicit responses on the causes of estrangement in the SPLM and its impact on the conflict in South Sudan. The interview began with a general question that asked: “How would you describe the current conflict and political situation in South Sudan?” The question was framed in a manner that allowed the participant the latitude to come up with their experience and description of the conflict phenomenon and the ability for in-depth exploration. Being open-ended questions, they were effective in making the participants express their views a given conflict phenomenon freely. If the researcher felt that a further explanation was required, probing questions were asked.

The second section of the interview was intended to establish the reasons for protraction of the conflict in light of the failed ARCSS and whether the new efforts would succeed. The probing question “If not, why and if yes, how?” was intended to enable the researcher to get to the bottom of the difficulties in securing a successful mediation peace process. The third section addressed the issues of prospective strategies in dealing with estrangements and disputes in the SPLM, achieving a sustainable agreement and peace in South Sudan.

3.7 Data Analysis Techniques

3.7.1 Written notes and audio transcription

As earlier explained, the interview proceedings of two of the participants were handwritten notes. These notes were reviewed and typed in the computer the same day when the interview issues were still fresh in the researcher's mind. The typed notes were sent to the two participants to verify the accuracy of the contents as provided for in the consent forms. The audio-recorded interviews were downloaded to a password-protected laptop and reviewed the

same night to ascertain their clarity and for acquaintance with the data in preparation for transcription, analysis and interpretation. Transcription was done verbatim in the order the interviews were conducted using OTranscribe software upon completion of the fieldwork. The transcribed interviews were sent by email to those participants who had expressed interest in having a copy, to check for any inconsistencies, within a two-week timeframe after which it was assumed they were agreeable to the texts.

3.7.2 Data coding and thematic categorisation

Content analysis was the method used in the data analysis of this research (Cohen et al. 2007:475). According to Berg (1988:238), content analysis is a coding process by which data is condensed and made suitable for a systematic analysis. The next step was the coding of the transcribed interview data (Saldana 2013:3). A thematic coding, using a continuum of prior data or prior and the raw data, was the coding strategy applied (Boyatzis 1998:29–30). Thus, recurring patterns emerged from the interview transcripts with similarities to the themes earlier identified in the review of primary documents and also those identified through secondary data.

3.7.3 Computer-aided data analysis

The Computer Assisted Qualitative Data analysis software (CAQDAS) is a tool commonly used in qualitative research to facilitate the data analysis process (Spencer, Ritchie, and O'Connor 2003:206). Weitzman (2000:804–6) cautions that CAQDAS does not perform the analysis, *per se*, but primarily aids the researcher in identifying relationships found in codes and links in texts as a precursor to the data analysis. Specifically, it “provides tools for searching, marking up, linking, and reorganizing the data, and representing and storing your own reflections, ideas, and theorizing”.

Qualitative data analysis is a complex process, and CAQDAS has a number of advantages that are useful in mitigating the challenges of analysing complex data. Saldana (2013:30–31) notes that “CAQDAS, unlike the human mind, can maintain and permit you to organize evolving and potentially complex coding systems into such formats as hierarchies and networks”. Besides, it has the ability to perform searches of keywords and phrases simultaneously across coded data from various interview transcripts, making it easier to identify patterns and link relationships between data. As a result of these multifunctional abilities, CAQDAS boasts of speed, consistency and consolidation in the analysis process, which may not be equalled by the manual process (Weitzman 2000:807).

On the flip side, the very essence of speed offered by CAQDAS is a major concern to the extent that it may also potentially compromise the quality of the data analysis process (Weitzman 2000:808). Features like *auto coding* of paragraphs or texts in a transcript may potentially lead to complacency in exercising rigour in identifying coding patterns on the part of the researcher.

The process of data analysis in this research used the Nvivo software advised and provided by the University of New England. In Nvivo, it was possible to upload the interview transcripts, categorise, manage, streamline and analyse data efficiently in response to the research question (Creswell 2007:167). It was therefore convenient to explore and query emergent patterns in a particular research question based on the responses of the various participants on a single screen, rendering the prospect of data going undetected unlikely (Saldana 2013:63). Saldana (2013:83) found that the use of CAQDAS programs like Nvivo enabled the performance of “simultaneous” and “multi-dimensional” coding processes such as “multiple codes to the same passage of text”, enhancing the establishment of links between variables. The simultaneous querying capability of Nvivo provided the basis for dependability and conformability; hence, a rigorous analysis of the research (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, and

Murphy 2013:15). In Nvivo, like other CAQDAS programs, it is easy to keep an audit trail of the analysis process, and according to Strauss and Corbin (1998:128), its “formal properties may be checked, and they may be formally described, in a logical language”. In a manual data analysis process, the exploration would have required a back and forth review of the transcripts, highlighting common patterns, tabulating and repeating the process to achieve a filtered outcome.

3.7.4 Data analysis

The data analysis process began by cleaning of the data, which is a critical initial process of the CAQDAS process as erroneous data are a potential threat to its validity. (Bernard 2006:555; Djamba and Neuman 2002:396). After completion of data transcription, the transcripts were ‘cleaned’ to ensure conformity across the twenty-nine interview transcripts. In preparation for the Nvivo analysis process, all the structure of the interview questions in the twenty-nine transcripts were examined to ensure they had the same syntax and numbering to avoid a mismatch during the analysis process. Twenty-eight transcripts were uploaded in Nvivo as the researcher did not transcribe one interview conducted in Sydney, as the information gathered showed data saturation had been reached.

The second stage of the analysis process was coding. Strauss and Corbin (1998:101), in a grounded theory approach, refer to open coding as the first step in the coding process in which “the analytic process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in data”. Saldana (2013:58–59) uses the term ‘coding cycles’ to signify the coding stages and the “first coding cycle” is where the process begins.

The coding applied in the first coding stage was structural. In structural coding, participant statements that are “content-based or conceptual phrase” arising from the research question that framed the interview set the coding criteria and therefore a research “question

based coded” (Saldana 2013:84). Three codes were attributed to the three research questions, respectively hence: a) Causes of disputes and estrangement; b) Reasons for ineffective mediation and c) Strategies for resolving disputes and estrangement. Saladan (2013:60) observes that more than one coding method may be used to enhance “accountability and the in-depth and breadth of findings” and for that reason, In vivo method, which is coding the actual word or phrase used by the participant, was also applied (2013:91). The following is an example of the combined structural and In vivo coding process at the initial coding stage.

Research question: What are the causes of disputes and estrangement among the SPLM political elite leading to violent conflicts?

Structural code: Causes of disputes and estrangement

Interview question: What would you say about the current status of the SPLM leadership?

Participant (In vivo code): SPLM is viewed as the root cause of the current crises

In the initial coding process, a total of 545 in vivo participant references were coded representing: 267 on causes of disputes and estrangement; 207 on reasons for ineffective mediation, and 71 on strategies for resolving disputes. Notably, the strategies for resolving disputes was the least coded signifying that there may not be too many options to the multiplicity of causes of the conflict. Table 3.5 is an extract from Nvivo showing the coding matrix with the file column representing the number of participants coded while the references column represents the frequency of coded.

Table 3. 5: First cycle coded participant statements extract from Nvivo 12 plus

Nodes

Name	Files	Referenc	Created	Created	Modifie
Causes of disputes and estrangement	28	267	SOA	20/03/	SOA
Competition for economic resources	17	32	SOA	22/03/	SOA
Competition for power	28	171	SOA	22/03/	SOA
Differences in objectives	5	7	SOA	22/03/	SOA
Ethnic influences	23	45	SOA	22/03/	SOA
Failure or lack of institutions	16	40	SOA	22/03/	SOA
Lack of education	6	7	SOA	22/03/	SOA
Lack of vision or ideology	6	7	SOA	22/03/	SOA
Military and militia use	16	22	SOA	22/03/	SOA
Positions of power	21	43	SOA	23/03/	SOA
Failure to address past conflicts	24	64	SOA	22/03/	SOA
Reasons for ineffective mediation	28	207	SOA	20/03/	SOA
Fractured relationships	22	76	SOA	22/03/	SOA
Lack of Political will	25	70	SOA	22/03/	SOA
Agreement was imposed	15	20	SOA	22/03/	SOA
Elitist agreement	10	15	SOA	22/03/	SOA
Fear of justice	10	11	SOA	22/03/	SOA
Fear to lose power	8	9	SOA	22/03/	SOA
No change in mediation and agreement	11	15	SOA	22/03/	SOA
Regional and international influences	23	54	SOA	22/03/	SOA
Financial constraints	4	4	SOA	22/03/	SOA
Interests of mediation partners	18	43	SOA	23/03/	SOA
Violations with no consequences	7	7	SOA	22/03/	SOA
Security concerns	7	7	SOA	22/03/	SOA
Strategies for resolving disputes and estrangement	24	71	SOA	20/03/	SOA
Informal mediation processes	1	2	SOA	22/03/	SOA
Institutionalisation	13	18	SOA	22/03/	SOA
Transitional justice mechanisms	22	51	SOA	22/03/	SOA
Adressing root causes	5	6	SOA	22/03/	SOA
Hybrid Court (Conventional and Traditional)	3	3	SOA	22/03/	SOA
National Dialogue	8	10	SOA	22/03/	SOA
Reconciliation	15	32	SOA	22/03/	SOA

The third stage and second coding step involved the categorisation and synthesis of the coded data in the child nodes and emerging themes identified (Saldana 2013:175). This process was achieved through pattern coding in which sentences and phrases of common patterns were identified through the entire 545 in vivo codes and synthesised into the broader theme categories. Three factors were considered in the data categorisation leading to their ‘themeing’: First was the relationship between the codes; second, the code frequencies and third underlying meanings across the codes. Statements coded in the child nodes were sorted by categorising the codes and generating higher category codes based relationships between the codes, the frequencies of occurrence of the code, and identifying underlying meanings across the codes. On that basis, causes of disputes and estrangement were reduced to six higher category child nodes (themes), reasons for ineffective mediation to thirteen and strategies for resolving disputes to six higher category child nodes (themes) as depicted in Table 3.5. During these processes, some cross-cutting codes were identified and shared between the new theme patterns. For example, one statement read: “The whole thing is the struggle over power and resources...”. This phrase was categorised as a code under completion for power and competition for economic resources.

As mentioned earlier, document analysis and the deductive secondary review process resulted to the emergence of six major themes: historical conflicts, estranged political relationships, power struggles, control of resources, ethnic violence and the role of regional and international partners which also led to the theoretical and conceptual framework of this research, became “the repositories” of the data termed here as the global theme (Bloomberg and Volpe 2008:74). The meanings in the emergent themes were linked to the six global themes, as shown in Table 3.6 below.

Table 3. 6: Interview analysis and the global theme

Themes and sub themes from interview data	Files	References	Percentage	Global themes also identified in document analysis and secondary documents
Causes of disputes and estrangement	28	267	100%	
Competition for economic resources	17	32	12%	Power Struggles
Competition for power	28	171	64%	Control of resources
Differences in objectives	5	7	3%	Historical conflicts
Ethnic influences	23	45	17%	Ethnic violence
Military and militia use	16	22	8%	
Positions of power	21	43	16%	
Lack of vision or ideology	6	7	3%	
Failure or lack of institutions	16	40	15%	
Lack of education	6	7	3%	
Failure to address past conflicts	24	64	24%	
Reasons for ineffective mediation	28	207	100%	
Security concerns	7	7	3%	Historical conflicts
Fractured relationships	28	146	71%	Estranged political relationships
Failure to address root causes of conflicts	10	14	7%	Role of Regional and International Partners
Failure of reconciliation	7	10	5%	
Internal party disputes	21	52	25%	
Lack of Political will	25	70	34%	
Fear of justice	10	11	5%	
Fear to lose power	8	9	4%	
Agreement was imposed	15	20	10%	

No change in mediation and agreement	11	15		7%
Elitist agreement	10	15		7%
Regional and international influences	23	54	26%	
Strategies for resolving disputes and estrangement	24	71		
Informal mediation processes	1	2	3%	Estranged political relationships
Institutionalisation	13	18	25%	Historical conflicts
Transitional justice mechanisms	22	51	72%	
Addressing root causes	5	6		8%
Hybrid Court (Conventional and Traditional)	3	3		4%
National Dialogue	8	10		14%
Reconciliation	15	32		45%

An overview of the analysis shows variations in the overall structural coding covering the three research questions. Under the structural code: Causes of disputes and estrangement, which addresses the first research question, the analysis show that Competition for Power, where the global theme is Power Struggles, posts an overall 64%. However, seven factors shown in the sub-themes under Competition for Power contribute to the 64%, with Ethnic influences posted highest at 17% followed by Position of Power at 16% and Failure or the Lack of Institutions at 15%. Some examples of verbatim In vivo coding arising from the first research question and the subsequent interview questions shown in Table 3.4 are:

Ethnic Influences

Ambassador Francis Deng: *Connected with that ethnic dimension is a personal ambition which is part of the culture.*

SPLM –IG, Anonymous: *members of the SPLM are siding with their respective ethnic groups than with the party itself.*

Opposition leader, Anonymous: *tribal hegemony is a foundation for political power in South Sudan which entails control of the economy with its resources to achieve.*

Professor Isaac Cuir Riak: *SPLM is not a nationalistic party but a party based on tribes, so, for example, my tribesman is challenged then I am challenged, and the interest of the tribe is also challenged.*

Nicholas Haysom: *The issue of tribal patronage are inflexed, the Southern Sudanese politicians and the elite make use of them.*

Position of Power

Barney Afako: *Competition for power among the elite is clearly what has plunged and kept the country in conflict.*

Prof. Lual Acuek Lual Deng: *The whole thing is the struggle over power and resources, there are no ideological differences.*

Failure or the Lack of Institutions

Dr Luka Biong: *Instead of using the institutions of the SPLM they started fighting for the leadership outside the structure of the SPLM.*

Dr Ann Itto: *Despite these past experiences, we never thought of building mechanisms or institutions of dealing with conflicts and holding people accountable.*

Competition for resources, where the global is control of resources stands at 12%. Failure to address past conflicts where the global theme is historical conflicts stands at 24%. On the reasons for ineffective mediation, fractured relations with several subthemes, and which has interrelationships with three global themes of estranged political relationships, historical conflicts and the role of regional and international partners, posts 71%. Notably, the lack of political will, which was influenced by several factors related to the nature of the agreement and justice, stands as a major reason for ineffective mediation at 34%. Regional and international influences attributable to IGAD member states and the Troika ranks second in this category at 26% followed by internal disputes at 25%. Finally, strategies for resolving the disputes and estrangement reveals transitional justice mechanisms and its sub-themes at 72%, and the global themes are estranged political relationships and historical conflicts. Under this theme, the subtheme of reconciliation stands out at 45%, which a number of participants argued have been neglected in the past, followed by institutionalization at 25%.

Although some themes returned a higher coding than others, there were interrelationships among the various themes. For example, the process of reconciliation needed to be backed up by institutional reforms, the lack of political will was associated with regional and international influences, and competition for power went hand in hand with competition for economic resources as shown in some of the interview excerpts above. These analysis are only a few examples that demonstrate the impact of the various themes and sub themes that

answer the three research questions. A detailed analysis is discussed in Chapters 4-7, where in Chapter 4; power struggles, control of resources and historical conflicts will be discussed concerning the causes of disputes and estrangement. In Chapter 5, ethnic violence will be discussed also in response to the question of causes of disputes and estrangement. Moving on to Chapter 6, historical conflicts and estranged political relationships will be discussed concerning the reasons for ineffective mediation and strategies for resolving disputes and estrangement. In Chapter 7, the roles of regional and international partners will be discussed also in response to the the reasons for ineffective mediation processes. Although the relevant subthemes may not be identified in these chapters, the overarching themes reflect the positions of the interview responses.

3.8 Justifying Claims/Quality Assurance

Strauss and Corbin (1998:268) propose three indicators: validity, reliability, and credibility of the data, as a basis of determining the trustworthiness of data. At the outset, this research was motivated by the researcher's knowledge of the peace process in Sudan and South Sudan, while working with the African Union, where the SPLM leadership featured prominently. Creswell (2007, p. 140) explains the value of relationships between the interviewer and the interviewee in guiding a positive interview process. He describes the asymmetrical positions of the interview parties where the interviewer takes a domineering position leading to counter defensive posture by the interviewee. In a situation where the interviewer and interviewee have a common factor they can relate to, it becomes a basis for trust, hence a ground for mutual interactions during the interview process. In the researcher's case, his background and experience with the AU on the conflict in South Sudan, of which the interviewees were made aware, provided the basis for the cordial interview process. Besides, the researcher's nationality, being Ugandan, was crucial in accessing vital political leaders. As

the Deputy Ambassador of South Sudan in Kampala put it when approached by the researcher, “Uganda has no problem with South Sudan, so we will support your research”, before sending a note verbal to his Foreign Ministry in Juba introducing the researcher. Therefore, the researcher was well aware of the deep distrust between the parties to the conflict as well as the absence of trust-building mechanisms and was careful during the interviews and coding not to let this potential source of bias influence the outcome.

3.8.1 Credibility

As discussed in Section 3.4 and demonstrated in Table 3.2, the participants in this research from various backgrounds offered in-depth knowledge of the conflict. The interview protocol provided for candid engagements between the researcher and the participants and enabled a more in-depth understanding of the conflict as narrated by the participants. Furthermore, the researcher’s prior knowledge of the research sites by virtue of his previous employment enabled rapid comprehension of the participant's contributions. In this regard, the data collected were transcribed verbatim, and the participants who expressed interest in having the copies of the transcriptions were allowed to confirm its accuracy. Further to inductively identifying the themes, a deductive approach in which similar themes were identified through various secondary data and primary document analysis was also applied to provide the necessary triangulation to the analysis process (Bowen 2009:28).

3.8.2 Dependability

The dependability criterion requires that the description of the research process should provide an “audit trail” that documents the data collection and analysis process (Strauss and Corbin 1998:273) so that researchers who follow on can understand exactly what was done. This data has been provided. However, in the case of interviewing experts concerning conflicts

in South Sudan, while the broad context may stay very much the same, the current events change so rapidly and so regularly that any attempt to repeat the study would inevitably encounter very different circumstances.

The review of secondary documents, documentary analysis and interview data provided the inter-rater reliability in the analysis process (Ritchie and Lewis 2003:271). The three-step coding process and the use of appropriate coding methods at each stage brought about consistency and reliability in the data analysis.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Berg (1988:39) observes that researchers owe “an ethical obligation to their colleagues, their study population, and the larger society” concerning “harm, consent, privacy, and the confidentiality of data”. The data collected in this research was a result of a rigorous ethical process and approval of the University of New England Human Research Ethics Committee, as shown in Appendix G. The application process interrogated issues of participant safety in regard to the anonymity of sensitive information, the nature of the interactions and handling emotional stress, and the storage and security of data.

The participant information sheet that spelt out the ethical standards was a central document in the initial interaction with the participants. The consent form is shown in Appendix I provided a signed commitment that the researcher would adhere to the ethical standards per the participant's choices. All the data was securely stored in the University centrally managed cloud server and accessed by password.

3.10 Limitations

In this research, certain limitations were encountered, some of which have been mentioned in the interview section, a situation that generally occurs in every research process

(Ritchie and Lewis 2003:278). Although some of these limitations are logistical in nature, others are inherent to qualitative research methodology design (Bloomberg and Volpe 2008:87). In the latter case, the axiological assumption of qualitative research influenced by interpretivist/constructivist paradigm projects the researcher in an authoritative and biased position based on his previous participation in peace projects in Sudan and South Sudan (Creswell 2007:17; Guba and Lincoln 1994:114).

The second limitation was due to security concerns that imposed restrictions in movements in Juba to a seven-kilometre radius from the city centre and limit of working hours from 0900 am to 0400 pm. Whereas in Addis Ababa, some of the participants were interviewed after 0500 pm, work after office hours was not possible in Juba. Since most of the prospective participants were working-class, getting a suitable interview time was difficult, a situation that may have narrowed the variety of the sample size, especially in the category of the conflict parties.

The third main limitation was imposed by funding constraints. The security situation in Juba mention above that restricted interview hours coupled with bureaucratic difficulties in making appointments caused an extended stay in Juba, and yet the funding could only provide for a few weeks stay. Furthermore, some of the targeted participants from the opposition side were spread across the East African capitals, particularly Addis Ababa, Nairobi, Kampala and Khartoum. This financial limitation may not have necessarily limited the sample size, but the selection of the conflict party categories of the SPLM-IG, SPLM-IO and SPLM-FDs.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a detailed description of the research methodology in which a qualitative case study was used to address three research questions on the political relationships in the SPLM, the violent conflicts and the potential mitigating strategies. Twenty-

nine purposively selected participants were interviewed covering Addis Ababa, Kampala and Juba. In addition to the interview data, primary documents were analysed, and secondary data was reviewed where emergent themes were identified, hence the triangulation of the data.

The following chapters, 4-7, which are in journal article format, continue with the discussions of the findings and the interconnectedness of the six themes. Chapter 4 explores power struggles, control of resources and estranged political relationships themes. Chapter 5 examines ethnic violence, power struggles and control of resources, whereas Chapter 6 dwells on estranged political relationships blending in trust-building as a strategy to the problem. Chapter 7 explores the role of regional and international partners in the conflict, as they spearhead the political mediation process, but at the same time, their policies work at variance to the peace process.

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Chapter 4: Estranged Political Relationships: Demystifying the Root Causes of Violent Conflicts in South Sudan¹

Abstract

The breaking of peace agreements and the subsequent perpetuation of civil war in South Sudan are sustained by the failure to adopt broad interventions addressing the many layers of the conflict. An understanding of the multiple causes of the conflict can form the basis for a successful and durable peace agreement. To investigate why violent conflict persists, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with 29 major stakeholders, including conflict parties, mediators, eminent South Sudanese personalities, scholars and civil society leaders. The responses were grouped into five major themes: historical conflicts, estranged political relationships, power struggles, resource control and ethnic violence (not included in this article). The results suggest that estranged political relationships, characterized by fear, anger, bitterness, distrust and the urge for revenge, are born out of historical conflicts that remain unresolved. The ensuing power struggles and ethnic violence are motivated by the estranged political relationships between the top leaders. Dealing with their estrangements, therefore, forms the base from which historical conflicts can be addressed towards lasting agreements and sustainable peace in South Sudan.

Keywords: South Sudan; historical conflicts; political relationships; power struggles; civil war

¹ This Chapter was accepted and due for publication in the Peace and Conflict Studies Journal, Volume 1 of 2020. Although the article refers to five major themes, further analysis after it was submitted for publication identified six major themes.

4.1 Introduction

Political manoeuvres, disputes, and estrangement within the ruling Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) party have led to violent conflicts in South Sudan, now and in the past. These splits are the major obstacles to ending the conflicts in the nascent nation independent only since July 9, 2011. The civil war that broke out on December 15, 2013, originated in the party's planned elections of office bearers between May and December 2013, which inspired a power struggle (de Waal, 2015, p. 195; D. H. Johnson, 2014b, p. 170). In anticipation of the elections, prominent party members, including Dr. Riek Machar, Pagan Amum, and Rebecca Garang, expressed interest in competing for the party chairperson against the incumbent, President Salva Kiir, and advocated for reforms in the party rules to ensure transparent democratic processes (Brosché & Höglund, 2016, p. 76).

The prolonged political mediation processes to end the war, marked by gross intransigence, persistent violations, and finally the collapse of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS), one year into its implementation (Vertin, 2018, pp. 10–14), have aroused much debate as to the actual causes of the war (Africa Research Bulletin, 2016, p. 2210). The most significant findings in this article suggest that the unresolved historical conflicts fractured the relationships in the SPLM and have since left the members in a state of estranged political relationships. Estranged political relationships then shaped the power struggles, party elections disputes, and coup allegations, characterized by negative emotions of fear, anger, bitterness, distrust, and the urge for revenge—leading to the violent conflict (Fisher et al., 2000, p. 29).

Therefore, the negative emotional state of the SPLM members that emanated from the unresolved historical conflicts is a factor that renders mediation efforts unachievable and exacerbates the conflict. For example, the SPLM conflict parties dishonoured the Arusha

Reunification Agreement signed in Arusha, Tanzania, in January 2015, under the auspices of the ruling Tanzanian Chama Cha Mapinduzi party and the African National Congress of South Africa with the support of the Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni (Chama Cha Mapinduzi, 2015). Similarly, the renewed High-Level Revitalization Forum led by the East African regional body, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), to steer ARCSS back on course through an inclusive multi-stakeholder process beyond the SPLM parties, commenced in Addis Ababa in December 2017 with the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA). However, several violations by the parties have since occurred (Intergovernmental Authority on Development, 2018). Furthermore, the Revitalized ARCSS (R-ARCSS) concluded on September 12, 2018, in Addis Ababa, has seen some parties—including the National Salvation Front (NAS) and the People’s Democratic Movement (PDM)—reject the agreement, whereas others—including the SPLM-Former Detainees (FDs)—signed with reservations (International Crisis Group, 2019, p. 10).

This study furthers the theoretical understanding of the embeddedness of historical conflict constructs in the SPLM party, the build-up in estranged political relationships, and the subsequent power struggles leading to violent conflicts in South Sudan. It therefore enhances our understanding of the application of conflict management, resolution and transformation theories, and the extent to which the conflict remains unaddressed—hence the perpetuation of violence. Secondly, it provides a more robust understanding of the causes of the conflict by establishing the linkages between the structural, proximate, and immediate causes of the conflict (Ackermann, 2003, pp. 341-342). In so doing, it categorizes the levels of conflict into primary, secondary, and tertiary segments where the historical conflicts, estranged political relationships, and power struggles, respectively, are identified. From the power struggle perspective, the power-sharing arrangement provided for in ARCSS would appear to be enough.

However, unpredictable developments in ending the conflict, in invariably fragile political relationships, suggests that there is more required from the stakeholders in addressing the causes of the conflict. Although Rolandsen (2015) opens with the power struggle events, his conclusion discusses important dimensions of the causes of the conflict: “Underlying factors such as civil war legacies, neo-patrimonialism, and a weak state made a new civil war in South Sudan possible, if not unavoidable” (p. 171). Particular examples of civil war legacies and neo-patrimonialism occurred during the formation of the SPLM in 1983 and the 1991 coup attempt—both plagued by leadership and ideological disputes (Arnold, 2007, pp. 490-491).

An understanding of the root or underlying causes of the conflict is important because, if unaddressed, they can perpetuate conflict (Hauss, 2003, para. 16, 31). If addressed, however, they could form a basis for sustainable solutions because “they are often considered also to mark the level at which an intervention would be effective” (Marks, 2011, p. 60). Additionally, a thorough understanding of the interconnectedness and sequence of the various single factors is crucial in defining the causes of the civil war (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, & Miall, 2005, pp. 109-110). Concerning the levels of intervention, Ramsbotham et al. (2005) suggested “there are immediate triggering factors, underlying sources of tension, and deeper structural conditions which shape events” and “the longer term and the immediate causes work together to bring about war” (p. 112). Similarly, Fisher et al. (2000, p. 29), using a conflict tree analogy, listed causes as being at the root, core problem at the trunk and effects at the branches. Other than the power struggles being an immediate cause, the civil war legacy of violent conflict has imposed structural contradictions as a primary cause, arising from political and economic exclusions that are exacerbated by undemocratic practices and exclusive control of resources, especially oil (D. H. Johnson, 2014a, p. 204).

As discussed above, causes of the conflict at the primary and tertiary levels are well articulated in the scholarly discourse. However, at the secondary level, there is a paucity of research on the aspect of emotions, which relates to personalities and relationships among the parties, and yet “emotions often cause disputes to escalate and sometimes even cause negotiations to break down” (Maiese, 2005, para.7).

This article explores the role of estranged political relationships within the SPLM in sustaining the violent conflict status quo and explores the intrinsic nature of the primary, secondary, and tertiary causes of the conflict in South Sudan. The first section articulates the theoretical orientation grounding the study, focusing on the transformation of relationships to sustainable peace. It then describes the research approach and the empirical setting of the study and outlines the research methods applied to collect and analyze the data. The proceeding section sets the conflict context by examining the history of the second civil war in South Sudan, leading to the formation of the SPLM, hence the basis of the primary causes of the conflict. Following this history, the article discusses the secondary causes of the conflict arising from schisms and estrangement among the SPLM members after the second civil war ended. Further discussions follow on the power struggles that flared up in December 2013, escalating to the current civil war forming the tertiary or immediate causes of the conflict. The article then discusses the key findings of the study narrowed down to the role of estranged political relationships, the psychological and emotional impact, and the ramifications on the conflict. The conclusion restates the study findings, recommendations for future research, and avenues to address the conflict.

4.2 Theoretical Background

Achieving sustainable solutions to the conflict in South Sudan is a primary concern faced by the stakeholders to the peace process. As observed, a polarized SPLM leadership engenders the conflict, a situation that has led to prolonged mediation processes and the violations of agreements reached so far. The conundrum raises questions about the causes of disputes, estrangement among the SPLM leadership, and the intractability of the conflict. Addressing this question is significant in the sense that it entails a multidimensional approach to the problem towards sustainable solutions. In this regard, three significant theories namely Conflict Management, Conflict Resolution, and Conflict Transformation theories (Lederach, 2003, p. 3) bear close correlation to the solutions to the South Sudan conflict at different levels. This section discusses these theories and the extent of their practicability at the various levels of the conflict.

According to Miall (2004), conflict management theory sees the consequences of violent conflicts as irreversible and therefore, can only be managed and contained (pp. 3-5). Miall further contrasts conflict resolution theory, which envisions the possibility of dealing with the consequences of violent conflict by helping the parties “reframe their positions and interest,” while exploring the root causes of conflict through skilled unofficial third-party interventions. The CoHA (2017, pp. 1-15) and the conclusion of power-sharing and security arrangements in Chapters I and II of R-ARCSS (2018) were measures aimed at the management and resolution of the power struggles that ignited the violence on December 15, 2013 (pp. 1-48). Broadly, these measures were limited to the immediate causes of the conflict. Transcending conflict management to conflict resolution, the implementation R-ARCSS leads to Chapter V (pp. 62–68), which addresses the legacy of conflicts and transitional justice mechanisms. However, R-ARCSS is silent on the internal strife that has plagued SPLM since its formation in 1983,

culminating in the power struggles and ultimately the civil war. In this regard, Miall (2004) elaborates that conflict transformation goes beyond “reframing positions and the identification of win-win outcomes” and is “a process of engaging with and transforming the relationships, interests, discourses and, if necessary, the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of violent conflict” (p. 6).

According to Lederach (2003),

Conflict transformation is to envision and respond to the *ebb* and *flow* of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships. (p. 14)

Thus far, responses to the conflict in South Sudan have not proportionately led to a reduction in violence, increase injustice, nor addressed the negative aspect of human relations (Blanchard, 2014, pp. 2, 13; Human Rights Watch, 2019). Lederach (2003) affirms that the patterns of the past “provide the context from which the immediate issues of dispute rise to the surface” though they do not “have the power to positively change what has already transpired” (p. 35). By restricting conflict legacies to 2005, Chapter V of R-ARCSS (2018) downplays the significance and impact of prior conflicts in South Sudan (p. 64). To underscore this point, a day before the outbreak of the conflict on December 15, 2013, President Salva Kiir accused Riek Machar in the meeting National Liberation Council (NLC), for splitting SPLM in the 1990s (D. H. Johnson, 2014a, p. 171). Stemming from the past, Lederach (2003) visualizes a hopeful future, asking questions as to what needs to be built, and how to “address all level-immediate solutions as well as underlying patterns of relationships and structures,” towards multi-dimensional change processes (pp. 36-37). Despite providing for a transitional justice

mechanism, R-ARCSS is devoid of positively transformed relationships among the conflict parties—a component that is necessary for the desired peace and stability.

Galtung (1996) identifies “equitable relations” as a probable condition for peace (p. 1). He argues that conflicts form when contradictions occur following pursuit of similar interests by opposing parties leading to disputes and subsequently, behavioral tendencies that are either destructive or constructive, arising from attitudes and emotions triggered by the contradictions (pp. 70-73, 89). Accordingly, conflict transformation occurs when the contradiction leading to the dispute is addressed while ensuring that the attitudes and emotions, and corresponding behavior, lead to constructive outcomes (p. 85). In this regard, Galtung classifies three conflict factors, which could be multi-dimensional, as being crucial in conflict transformation: Behavior at the manifest level, and Attitudes and Contradictions at the latent level. The main contradictions within the SPLM that began in 1983 were related to leadership disputes and the objectives of the civil war (Jok & Hutchinson, 1999, p. 126). Subsequently, estrangement in relationships and negative attitudes occurred, which ultimately manifested in the form of power struggles followed by violent conflict.

A conflict transformation approach, therefore, provides a transcendence from the current focus of management of the consequential aspects of the conflict. In particular, a deeper understanding of how conflict legacies in their entirety negatively influence relationships among the belligerents calling for a multi-dimensional approach to the conflict. For example, in addressing the power struggles, the aspect of equitable relations among the SPLM leaders becomes crucial.

4.3 Materials and Methods

Qualitative research, a description and analysis of “the culture and behaviour of humans and their groups from the point of view of those being studied,” was the overall design approach (Bryman, 2003, p. 46). The sample selected for this study included 29 participants purposely recruited with specific reference to particular political and social constituencies (Baker & Edwards, 2012, pp. 8-9). The participants were categorized into five subgroups of stakeholders in the conflict setting, shown in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4. 1: Participants by Category

Serial	Category	In Category	No. of Participants
1	Conflict Parties	SPLM-In Government(IG), SPLM-In Opposition (IO) and Others	8
2	Mediators	IGAD, AU, UN, Faith Organizations	6
3	Eminent Persons	Former Deputy Premier, Vice President, Ambassador	4
4	Scholars	Vice-Chancellors, Professors, Directors	7
5	Civil Society Organization's (CSOs)	Heads of CSOs	4
Total			29

A semi-structured in-depth interview protocol was developed through which participants shared their knowledge and experiences of the current and historical conflicts in South Sudan (Mack, Woodson, Macqueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005, p. 2). The interview protocol was designed to address the research question: “What are the causes of the disputes and estrangement among the SPLM political elite leading to the violent conflicts?”

Before gathering the primary data, secondary and historical data were reviewed, including reports, minutes of meetings, peace agreements, books, articles, and video recordings. This preliminary research helped to understand the background of the current conflict, as well as the recurrent themes in previous studies. Participants with a rich, in-depth knowledge of the complex historical nature of the conflict, including those who have been a part of the conflict, were purposefully selected (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, pp. 78-79). The participants were recruited through telephone contacts established through the African Union (AU) and by word of mouth. Participants from the SPLM-In Government (IG) were recruited through a formal request made to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of South Sudan. Each participant was provided with an information sheet that indicated the study protocol, and a consent form in which they were asked to agree to participation, audio recording and identification or anonymity in the study reports, in conformity to the University of New England Human Research Ethics processes.

The review of the literature and essential documents identified specific recurring patterns and themes related to the conflict situation. Similar patterns and themes also emerged from the raw data gathered through the interviews. Using an NVivo software analysis process, relevant information was identified from the transcribed data. The information was coded by assigning concepts relevant to the research question and categorized into five dominant themes. The analysis combined two approaches: 1) a deductive analysis arising from prior assumptions

on the themes from literature and historical documents (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 30) and; 2) an inductive analysis where findings “emerge from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in raw data.”

With regard to biases, the researcher believes sustainable peace is possible through processes that are anchored in conflict transformation practices—that is, addressing root causes of conflicts and applying multifaceted approaches (Thomas, 2006, p. 238). The biases are informed by career experiences in inter-religious and civil society peaceful coexistence and reconciliation processes in the conflicts in Sudan.

4.4 Historical Background

4.4.1 The multiplicity of causes

Several scholars have hinted at unresolved historical factors being responsible for the current conflict (Rolandsen, 2015, p. 171; Young, 2015, p. 57). According to a Human Rights Watch report, the ethnic cleavages following the outbreak of the fighting in December 2013 can be traced to “historical grievances and divisions” that happened during a similar conflict in 1991 (Human Rights Watch, 2017, p. 18). Similarly, Vertin (2018, pp. 2, 8) refers to “ethnic divisions of an unreconciled past” and says the massacre in Juba was ethnically motivated. These positions are confirmed by the findings of this study linking historical grievances, divisions in the SPLM after power struggles, and ethnic violence. Temin (2018), argues that the war cannot be attributed to a single cause and singles out “political competition between Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, corruption, competition for resources, unresolved grievances from past conflicts, lack of accountability for crimes and a fragmented security sector” (pp. 5–6).

4.4.2 The SPLM, born and riddled with violent conflict

Conflicts characterized by political disputes leading to confrontations are not a new occurrence among the SPLM leadership. The formation of the SPLM/Army (SPLM/A) in July 1983 not only marked the beginning of the second civil war in Sudan but also caused disagreements between the southern political leaders (Young, 2007, p. 13). Colonel John Garang, an officer in Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), while on a mission to facilitate the transfer of mutinying southern soldiers in Bor, to the north of Sudan, seized the opportunity to defect and in alliance with the mutineers and Anyanya II rebels, formed the SPLM/A (Scott, 1985, p. 71; Young, 2007, p. 13). However, this alliance was punctuated by the internecine conflict that divided the nascent movement, especially over the leadership formation and the objectives of the struggle (Hutchinson, 2001, pp. 310-311). According to Johnson, (2011), the older Anyanya veterans, led by Samuel Gai Tut, lost to the younger group led by John Garang and were acrimoniously bundled out of the SPLM/A (p. 215).

Human Rights Watch (2003) captures the extent of the conflict in an interview with Biel Torkech Rambang, a Nuer representative, in Washington, D.C: “political, leadership, and personality problems cropped up within the rebel movement between the two factions in the SPLM/A... The SPLA fought its first battles against Anyanya II” (p. 100).

Some participants in the study conferred that this primary cause was indeed devastating to the movement. According to Bol Makueng Yuol (personal communication, March 21, 2018), the SPLM Secretary for Information, Culture, and Communication:

Anyanya II had a structured leadership led by one Akuot Atem and when they met with John Garang's group who started another rebellion in 1983, there was a disagreement on the strategy of the war... In the end, they disagreed and fought for three years.

While relating to the war legacies within the SPLM, Dr Itto Anne (personal communication, March 26, 2018), former Deputy Secretary-General of the SPLM and a member of the East African Legislative Assembly, stated:

The problems in SPLM did not start at independence, there were issues that existed right from the inception of the SPLM where Dr John and the other founders had some problems and, in the end, Dr John and his vision propelled what seemed to be a rebellion into a liberation movement.

According to Edmund Yakani (personal communication, March 14, 2018), the Executive Director of Community Empowerment for Progress Organization, “Disagreement was at the foundation of the SPLM in 1983, which remained silent until the early 1990s when the same questions on what was the aim of the struggle arose...”.

Why did the Anyanya II leaders defy Garang’s leadership in the first place, and was his leadership legitimate? According to Guarak, after failing to convince their Ethiopian benefactor, President Mengistu, to accept the secession option for South Sudan, the leaders unanimously opted for the New Sudan option, but later failed to agree on who should lead the SPLM/A, prompting Akuot Atem to impose himself as the Chairman (2011, pp. 292–294). There was, however, a reprieve from the power struggle when it was agreed that the leader would be democratically elected but Akuot Atem and Samuel Gai Tut would later reject the outcome of the election, which Garang won, becoming the SPLM/A leader (Guarak, 2011, pp. 295-296).

From the election perspective, it could be argued that Garang’s leadership was legitimate. The Anyanya II, a group that rejected the 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement and pioneered the second liberation struggle as early as 1975, was upstaged by Garang who joined them in 1983 and remained discontented (Rolandsen, 2005, p. 26). Arguably, the Anyanya II members had positioned themselves as the de-facto leaders of the second liberation struggle by

virtue of being the pioneers and therefore felt betrayed when a relatively new and younger entrant took over the reign of the movement and violently ejected them from their bases in Ethiopia (Craze, Tubiana, & Gramizzi, 2016, p. 23). Furthermore, the matter was exacerbated when an attempt by Garang, almost eight months later, to reunite the SPLM/A factions ended tragically when Samuel Gai Tut was killed in an ambush set by Garang's Deputy, Kerubino Kwanyin Bol (Guarak, 2011, pp. 307–310; Nyaba, 1997, p. 38). Thus, the matter remained unresolved.

4.4.3 Control of resources, a basis for the Conflict

The reason these parties took up arms against the government of Sudan was to fight against economic, social, and political marginalization, a cause dating back to the first liberation struggle under the Anyanya that ended in 1972 (H. F. Johnson, 2016, pp. 3-4; Young, 2012, pp. 20, 25). The question that arises is whether the Anyanya II leaders relinquished their cause for the liberation and self-determination for South Sudan after the 1983 debacle, by allying with the Sudan government against Garang's SPLM struggle for the total liberation of a New Sudan (Young, 2005, p. 538). By joining forces with the Sudan government against the SPLM/A, the Anyanya II undermined their objective, as well as that of the SPLM/A (Nyaba, 1997, p. 49).

A follow-up question would be whether the Anyanya II and their followers would achieve their crusade for economic, social, and political freedom if the SPLM, also pursuing a similar cause, succeeded. As seen from the situation under the SPLM today, where conflicts motivated by the same factors are evident, the answer would be in the negative. Riek Machar's SPLM/A Nasir faction allied with former Anyanya II under Paulino Matip forming the South Sudan Defence Force (SSDF) in 1997 and drawing their support from their oil-rich home bases of Unity, Upper Nile and Jonglei states. Apart from being a proxy militia for the Khartoum

government in drilling oil from the three states, they also signed contracts directly with oil companies, a situation they have tried to maintain after the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that ended the second civil war, through to the independence of South Sudan, by the proliferation of conflict (Arnold, 2007, pp. 491-501).

The oil factor introduces the aspect of control of resources as a basis for the conflict. Ambassador Joram Biswaro (personal communication, March 29, 2018), Head of the AU Mission in South Sudan who participated in the IGAD mediation process suggest the causes are “multifaceted but looking at the current conflict, it should be struggle for power within the leadership of the SPLM and particularly political power which gives you access to everything in terms of resources and their distribution.” Another participant in the mediation process, Nicholas Haysom (personal communication, November 29, 2017), the United Nations Secretary General's Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, stated that in the backdrop of a deprived economy “conflict over state resources takes collateral damage, combined with patronage.” Ambassador Francis Mading Deng (personal communication, March 23, 2018), a former South Sudan Permanent Representative to the UN, pointed to the inadequate governance structures left by the British colonial power whereby “the autonomous structures were replaced by a centralized authority, and the centralized authority was the means of accessing services, development and everything.”

From that historical perspective, the unfulfilled quest for economic, social, and political freedom stands out as a primary, structural, underlying factor in the conflict and violence in South Sudan.

4.4.4 Unfinished business: A coup against Garang

Having vanquished his opponents who only wanted autonomy, Garang's supremacy as the SPLM/A leader seemed undisputed (Young, 2007, p. 13), and he enlisted Anyanya II forces in the SPLA ranks (Craze et al., 2016, p. 23). Despite that milestone, another conflict would emerge with devastating consequences in 1991, at a time when the SPLM/A was making remarkable headway against the Sudanese army and had gained control over vast areas of the Southern territory (Nyaba, 1997, p. 38). Dr Riek Machar, commander of the SPLA Nassir front, together with Lam Akol and Gordon Koang, unsuccessfully staged a coup against Garang (Jok & Hutchinson, 1999, p. 126). Their reasons for the coup were listed as dictatorial leadership, failure to pursue a struggle for an independent South Sudan, and human rights abuses in the SPLM/A—including the killing of senior leaders on Garang's orders (Young, 2005, p. 540, 2012, p. 54). Bishop Emeritus Paride Taban narrated how Riek Machar confided in him about his coup plan, giving his reason as worries “concerning the movement itself, the power within and the upkeep of democracy” (Eisman, 2011, p. 115). According to Emmanuel Solomon Ajang (personal communication, December 20, 2017), a member of the SPLM-IO:

Riek Machar joined the SPLM/A in 1984, and about 1989 started questioning the dictatorship in the movement and the promotion of members to the high command, including arbitrary arrests. This continued until 1991 when Riek Machar, Lam Akol and Gordon Koang split the movement in a coup.

The coup attempt was a serious violation of political and military leadership norms. However, the allegations of dictatorship hence, limitations in channels of addressing grievances, also requires scrutiny. Fisher et al. (2000) argue that conflict is a result of incompatible goals between two or more parties and “becomes violent when there are inadequate channels for dialogue and disagreement” and “dissenting voices and deeply held grievances cannot be heard and addressed” (pp. 4, 6). Since its inception, dictatorship and

undemocratic practices are primary, structural issues that have remained latent within the SPLM party.

4.4.5 The return of Riek Machar, feathers ruffled

Despite the 1991 Nasir coup set back, Riek Machar returned to the SPLM fold following the Nairobi Declaration of January 2002, at a time when the negotiations to end the civil war with the Sudan government were in advanced stages (Young, 2003, p. 429). Although John Garang supported Riek Machar's return, he was not entirely accepted in the SPLM. Dr Luka Biong (personal communication, November 22, 2018), Professor of Practice for Security Studies at the National Defence University's Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, Washington D.C., and former Minister of the Presidency of the Government of Southern Sudan, narrated:

Riek Machar was number six in hierarchy and Salva was third and moved up to become the Deputy Chairman to John Garang and Riek argued that both Dr John and Salva are Dinka and could not be number one and two in that order and therefore he should be number two...

Dr. Biong quoted Kiir's response:

“When Riek Machar left, he knew our hierarchy and even before he left, he was junior to me, so what would make him be senior to me? Second, I have never betrayed this movement so is this the reward that I have never rebelled [that] I am now being asked to be relegated. Third, if leadership is about people with PhD, then I am leaving it to you because you are people of PhD and fourth, if the people of Bar el Ghazal are not eligible to lead, then now we leave it to Upper Nile... I am done with the SPLM...”

It further transpired Salva Kiir demanded that Riek Machar be relegated to the tail end of the SPLM leadership arguing that rebellion should not be rewarded. The tension eased when

James Wani Iga offered to relinquish his number three position to Riek Machar. Subsequently, the political and power relations issues between Salva Kir and Riek Machar point to these structural issues which according to Dr Luka Biong “are those grudges that were not resolved over time and they started resurfacing”.

4.4.6 John Garang and Salva Kiir, SPLM on the brink

As the CPA negotiations were nearing conclusion, in November 2004, there was a threat to the stability and cohesion of the SPLM. In what Young (2005) described as being almost a coup against Garang, Salva Kiir alleged that Garang was planning to arrest and replace him with Nhial Deng, allegedly because he was against the peace process (p. 540). A four-day meeting from November 29 to December 1, 2004, convened to address the crisis, but ended with a flurry of dictatorial allegations levelled against Garang by various members of the SPLM (*Sudan Tribune*, March 12, 2008). Referring to the dispute between John Garang and Salva Kiir, Ambassador Francis Mading Deng (personal communication, March 23, 2018), said “before Garang died, Salva Kiir and Garang almost came to loggerheads in 2004. There were rumours that Garang was going to replace Salva Kiir with somebody better qualified academically and otherwise.” Likewise, a senior member of the SPLM Secretariat (personal communication, March 29, 2018), described the near crisis: “...in 2004, there was a problem between...Salva Kiir and John Garang in New site, which almost resulted in an armed conflict. ...That conflict was resolved in Rumbek...though they agreed to work together, the problem seemed to be embedded.”

Although the Rumbek meeting averted the tension with the assurance that Salva would retain his number two position, the accommodation and protection of all members, and “slow” reforms in the party, the disgruntlement was unresolved. Young (2015, p. 13) ascertains that

Salva Kiir was sidelined in decision-making processes, despite being number two in the party hierarchy, and though subsequently promoted in the army, he was relieved of his position of Chief of Staff and retired on suspicion of hatching a coup plot. It is therefore unlikely that Salva Kiir's retirement from the army and retention as the Vice Chairman of SPLM without a clear role could have logically ended the simmering conflict in the SPLM. However, his replacement as Chief of Staff, following the coup plot allegation, is an affirmation that the SPLM derives its power from the military rather than from the political sphere. As was the case in 1983, the looming power struggle and the coup plot allegation were issues that point to primary underlying structural contradictions in the form of dictatorship and lack of democracy in the SPLM.

4.5 Ghosts of the Past: Post Civil War and Post-Independence

4.5.1 The end of the Second Civil War, new leader resisted

The death of John Garang in July 2005 handed Salva Kiir the top-most position in the SPLM/A virtue of the provisions of 1994 Chukudum National Convention resolutions, appointments, and protocol (Sudan People's Liberation Movement, 1994). In the backdrop of his removal from the position of Army Chief of Staff and eventual retirement from the SPLA, Salva Kiir seemed an unlikely successor to John Garang. However, fate and the hierarchical protocol provided by the 1994 Chukudum Convention, ensured his ascension to the SPLM/A chairperson position. Thiong (2018) argued that after the death of John Garang, "a group of loyalists began to position itself to make decisions regarding the distribution of influence and wealth" (p. 13), resulting in unfavourable power realignments and the conflict. The point of significance is that the "group of loyalists," *aka* the "Garang Boys," probably being aware of the direction their leader had taken against Salva Kiir, were in the first place opposed to his

ascension to the top party position. The Honourable Atem Garang de Kuek (personal communication, March 18, 2018), the SPLM Chief Whip confirmed the “Garang Boys” position:

John Garang died, but he had moulded some young students in the movement who eventually became generals in the army and politicians, and they thought they would succeed John Garang. They felt Salva might not be following in the footsteps of John Garang. Even though they continued to work together, the division was there. These included Pagan Amum, Oyai Deng Ajak, Ger Chuang, Ayi Tang and, Deng Alor (who was not a student but a young official of the foreign service joining in 1983) and they were dubbed Garang boys. ...So, they felt they had the keys while others may not be privy to the inner workings of the movement and, therefore, should be the leaders. In their view, Salva was a man without ideology.

Although the outcome of the 2004 SPLM Rumbek meeting portrayed a perception of a sidelined Salva Kiir and the subsequent resistance to his leadership, the situation seemed to have evolved in his favor post CPA in 2005. According to Dr Luka Biong (personal communication, November 22, 2018) “... it was in a rally in Rumbek, before the helicopter crash, when he said if anything happens to me, this is the person who is going to lead, referring to Salva, so he was very clear about succession.” This pronouncement, Dr. Biong added, was instrumental in settling the looming succession dispute when “Elijah Malok, who is Dr John's uncle, together with Rebecca Garang said Dr John had already laid down the process of succession, so it was difficult for those in opposition to Salva to make a change”.

The manoeuvres and power realignments again played out in the second SPLM national convention in July 2008, where Salva Kiir attempted to remove Riek Machar from the Vice Chairman Position, and Pagan Amum from the Secretary-General Position (Young, 2012, p. 142). Young’s (2012, p. 142) exposé of the national convention indicates that Riek Machar

expressed interest in competing for the top party position against Kiir, and this could be the reason for the attempt to replace him.

On the other hand, Kiir's intention to replace Pagan Amum because “he was not happy” with him may be attributed to Pagan's tag of “Garang Boys.” Thiong (2018, p. 14) recounts how the looming crisis was averted following the concern and wise counsel of elders Abel Alier and Joseph Lagu. Atem Garang de Kuek (personal communication, March 18, 2018) attests to that situation:

In 2008, a group, which was being led by Salva and which also included the Garang boys, wanted to relegate Riek to number three and elevate James Wannu Igga to number two a position, which Riek was not going to take lying down. The war which broke out in 2013 should have happened then but was assuaged when the status quo was maintained. In my view that was the postponement of the 2013 fighting.

The political tensions during the 2008 National Convention exhibited between Salva Kiir, Riek Machar, and the “Garang Boys” pointed to deep-seated distrust which is a characteristic of estrangement in relationships. This estrangement explains the existence of the three SPLM factions; the SPLM-IG, SPLM-IO, and SPLM-FD and was a major contributing factor to the 2013 conflict.

4.5.2 SPLM and the perils of democracy

The incident of December 2013 provided the basis for understanding the immediate cause of violent conflict. In anticipation of the South Sudan national elections in 2015, a key demand by the group in opposition to Salva Kiir was the need for reforms in the party, which in their view would institute a level playing field for free and fair competition in the party. Recalling that the “Garang Boys” were apprehensive of Salva Kiir’s ascension to the top party position, the reforms would probably provide an opportunity to eject Salva Kiir from the top

seat, but instead, the “Garang Boys” were dismissed from their cabinet and party positions (H. F. Johnson, 2016, pp. 165-169). A plausible explanation is that, as their “Garang Boys” tag suggests, they intended to carry on John Garang’s CPA legacy that they felt was under threat by Salva Kiir’s administration and the orchestration of the Khartoum government (H. F. Johnson, 2016, p. 155). If the outcome of the Rumbek meeting of 2004 that resulted in the removal of Salva Kiir from the powerful position of Chief of Staff was significant, then Kiir would not take the “Garang Boys” position lightly. Aldo Ajor (personal communication, March 30, 2018), a senior SPLM member, and a former Deputy Prime Minister and Deputy Speaker of Parliament in Sudan, was unequivocal that there was a power struggle in the SPLM emanating from the dictatorial design of the party under John Garang. Accordingly, “the reason for the fight in 2013 was the call to transform it from a dictatorial party into a democratic one, which was not appreciated by the one on top, Salva Kiir.”

This explanation clearly states that the immediate cause was a power struggle following a call for transformation in the party. A Professor of Peace and Development in Juba (personal conversation, March 17, 2018) viewed it as being about power dynamics saying: “This is not a new phenomenon as the SPLM has always been a party prone to division.”

The matter of division and confrontation in the party is a prominent one. Underlying the confrontations leading to power struggles is the estrangement in political relationships have their origins in historical conflicts as earlier pointed out. Figure 4.1 illustrates the centric prominence of the historical conflicts in the SPLM around which subsequent conflicts evolve.

4.6 The Role of Estranged Political Relationships

The state of relationships among the party members is critical in responding to the

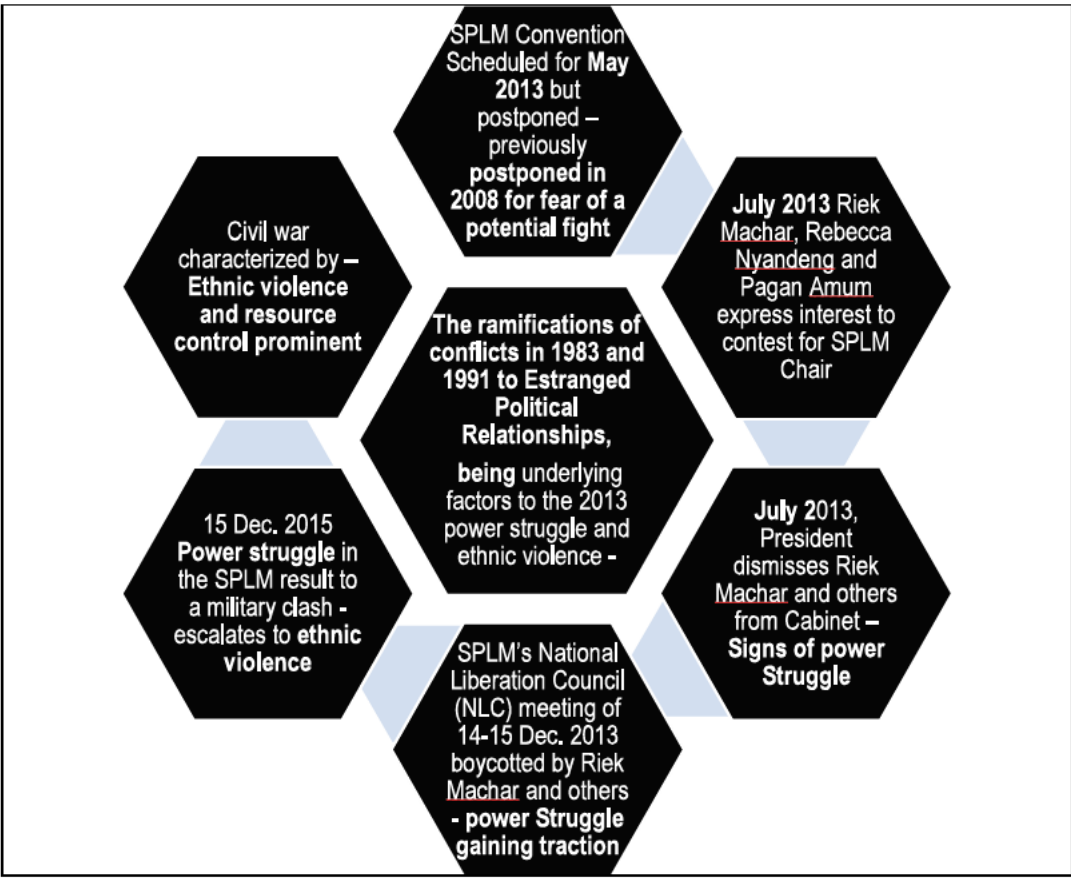


Figure 4. 1: The centrality of the 1983 and 1991 SPLM historical conflicts to the subsequent conflicts in South Sudan.

dictates of the underlying primary historical factors of the conflict. This section discusses the role of estranged political relationships in fomenting violent conflict in South Sudan.

Political relationships are impersonal relationships that function through political institutions (Barkin, 2003, p. 333). Institutions are systems embedded in the structure of organizations that shape or regulate behaviours of groups or individuals to “promote moderate and cooperative behaviour among contending groups by fostering a positive-sum perception of political interactions” (Hartzell & Hoddie, 2003, p. 318). According to North (1990)

“institutions reduce uncertainty by providing a structure to everyday life” and “include any form of constraint that human beings devise to shape human interaction” (pp. 3-4), the constraints being what one is prohibited from doing or the conditions under which specific tasks can be performed. However, in the process of interactions through the political institutions, the relationships may take on a personal nature (Hartzell & Hoddie, 2003, p. 320; Murphy, 2010, p. 25).

Since political relationships primarily function through political institutions, whose viability depend on sound values, rules, and norms that govern the institutions, the violations are tantamount to a breach in the political relationships. Murphy (2010) underscores this point: “Political relationships are violated when shared normative expectations are violated and trust undermined” (p. 14). In this context, political relationships are examined through the institutions in South Sudan, through which the SPLM functions. Currently, the primary instrument to provide for this is the Revitalized ARCSS (R-ARCSS), which provides the roadmap for the power-sharing and political engagements, as well as a permanent constitution-making process (Intergovernmental Authority on Development, 2018b). Concerning historical conflicts in the SPLM going back to 1983 and in the absence of a state, there was no formal institution in place. That void is, however, covered by informal institutions which Khan says function “when there are no formal rules written down and enforced by formal (state) enforcement, but there are nevertheless ‘rules’ that are systematic enough to be identified” (Khan, 2010, p. 63).

Following this argument, the SPLM leaders experienced estrangement in relationships when the norms and values of the party were violated, especially in 1983 and 1991, leading to violent conflicts. These incidents leading to estrangement are confirmed by the findings of this study that show the SPLM has perpetually been a fragmented party and incapable of leading a

nation that has just emerged from civil war. Notwithstanding, the SPLM leadership assumed power despite their political relationships dominated by negative emotions from unresolved grievances. While describing the relationships among the SPLM leaders, Barney Afako (personal conversation, November 20, 2017), a member of the IGAD and the UN Mediation Support Unit Standby Team, said:

It is correct to say that the leadership is quite fractured because there were tensions throughout the years of the struggle in the leadership. This came to a head in 2013 because there were different visions of where the SPLM should be going and this created tension within the political leadership and within the military and this led to the initial fighting which then spread across the country.

According to Dr Angelina Mattijo-Bazugba (personal conversation, March 17, 2018), Director of the Institute for Transformational Leadership at the University of Juba, the struggle was a rallying point in the SPLM, but the divisions would ultimately emerge:

In the past, there was one common enemy, which was the regime in Khartoum that enabled the SPLM to bring the people together. However, after the liberation, cracks started developing in the SPLM, and the war in 2013 is the culmination of the fracture of the party where we now have SPLM-IG, IO, and FDs. Since then, the party has remained divided to the extent that the agreement of August 2015 failed to hold.

In an account that portrays a dramatic event, a representative of the SPLM-IO (personal conversation, November 28, 2017) narrated: “In December 2013, the meeting happened and on the second day of the convention, Salva Kiir recalled the 1991 Nasir coup incident saying he never betrayed the SPLM or South Sudanese.” Similarly, Professor Lual Acuek Deng (personal conversation, March 17, 2018), Managing Director of Ebony Centre for Strategic Studies, described what appears to be the straw that broke the camel’s back:

[But] concerning 1991 the president is still angry and he said he does not want a repeat of the same. After the president spoke on the 14th December 2013, I was interviewed

by Reuters and I said the war has already started. I was asked why and I said because of the way the president has spoken. The word was there and he said he does not want a repeat of 1991. He came down from the podium and left without greeting Dr Riek.

According to Abraham Awolich (personal conversation, March 14, 2018), Acting Executive Director, The Sudd Institute, the current conflict that broke out in 2013 was a spillover from the past and “while Riek Machar and Lam Akol were welcomed back to the SPLM in 2002 following the 1991 coup, they were seen as betrayers who weakened the cause of the South Sudanese people.” A Director of a Women’s Organization (personal conversation, March 9, 2018) said: “All in all, the events of December 2013 were a result of cumulative issues that were not addressed, just like putting a plaster on a septic wound hoping that it would heal.” Dr. Anne Itto (personal conversation, March 26, 2018), also clarified: “Although John Garang accepted Riek Machar back to the SPLM after the 1991 coup, his relationships with the other members of the SPLM were not cordial.” The demise of Dr. John Garang, therefore, exacerbated the fragility in the relationships.

According to the International Crisis Group report (2011, p. 13), Machar and Akol, and sections of their supporters returned to the SPLM in 2002 and 2003. Akol then left again in 2009. Many within the “mainstream” SPLM/A have never forgiven those who “split.” The role of estranged political relationships in exacerbating the conflict, therefore, cannot be overstated

4.6.1 Psychological impact of estranged political relationships

Several scholars in psychology and other disciplines have investigated the dynamics and role of emotion in influencing attitudes and behaviours in conflict (Bodtker & Jameson, 2001; Halperin, Porat, Tamir, & Gross, 2013; Lindner, 2006). Bar-Tal and Halperin (2013), while discussing the role of emotion in the eruption of intractable conflicts, wrote that “they are

based on severe grievances and contentions that are accompanied by strong emotional feelings” and belief in “brutal acts committed by the other group, which are viewed as unjustified and immoral” (pp. 7-8). These evoke group outrage and the desire for revenge. Halperin, Cohen-Chen and Goldenberg (2014) stated that intergroup emotions have political implications:

...political attitudes go above and beyond the effects of other prominent factors, such as ideology and socio-economic conditions... The process begins with the occurrence of a new event and/or appearance of new information related to the conflict and/or recollection of a past conflict-related event. The event or information can be negative (e.g., war, terror attack, rejection of a peace offer) or positive (e.g., a peace gesture, willingness to compromise), but it must be appraised as meaningful. In most cases, these events are experienced directly only by a handful of ingroup members and transmitted to other group members through leaders, the mass media, or other individuals. (p. 3)

As earlier discussed concerning the 1983 debacle, the same logic of betrayal could be applied to the 1991 coup attempt by Riek Machar against John Garang, which also led to the massacre of over 2,000 civilians in the latter’s hometown of Bor (Wild, Jok, & Patel, 2018, p. 3). Although Garang died in July 2005, the emotions of the events of 1991 still linger among the surviving members of the SPLM. That explains why Salva Kiir consistently and angrily refers to the 1991 coup as accentuated by the events of the NLC meeting of December 14, 2013. The Honourable Garang Atem (personal conversation, March 18, 2018) attributed this conundrum to lack of reconciliation since the second civil war ended in 2005 and stated: “As a result, the grievances of past conflicts like that of 1983 and 1991 still manifest in today’s conflicts.”

Halperin et al. (2014) stated that the emotion of anger “arises when the actions of the outgroup are perceived as unjust and as deviating from acceptable norms” (p. 4). Brader and Marcus (2013) also stated that “anger is a particularly powerful mobilizing force that motivates people to take risky, confrontational, and punitive actions” and that it “...emerges in situations

when people are threatened or find obstacles blocking their path to reward” (p. 16). The threat faced by the president in 2013 was that of removal from power, compounded by the memory of the 1991 coup. Given that background, President Kiir's announcement, after the incident of December 15, 2013—that Riek Machar had attempted a coup—should not have been a surprise. On the other hand, Riek Machar and other SPLM members opposed to President Kiir felt their dismissal from the party and the cabinet was unjust and not per the expected norms. The fighting that started among the presidential guards was a sign that the parties were politically estranged and had lost control of their emotions. As such, the war was inevitable.

4.7 Conclusion

Efforts to end the conflict in South Sudan have so far proven unsuccessful, despite concerted efforts by IGAD, AU, UN, and TROIKA. This article investigated the multiplicity of causes of the conflict at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. Notably, the estranged political relationships within the SPLM leadership were situated at the secondary level, where they played a pivotal role in the sustenance of the conflict, given its psychological and emotional impact. Despite the SPLM polarity that first manifested in 1983, the party has all along maintained leadership in South Sudan and some cases showing hope. For example, after the 1991 Nassir coup attempt, the SPLM successfully held its first-ever convention in 1998 in Chukudum, formalizing and re-energizing its existence as a political entity with a civil administration and more substantial appeal in Southern Sudan (Rolandsen, 2007, p. 5). However, the latest round of conflict that flared in December 2013 could be a defining moment for the future of the SPLM and the political dispensation in South Sudan at large.

Scholars have overwhelmingly identified power struggle, which began to manifest during preparations for elections that were due in 2015, as the major cause of the outbreak of

the civil war, while others referred to civil war legacies as being the underlying cause. However, efforts to curb the conflict so far remain elusive. Although the findings in this article generally agree with the findings in previous literature on the immediate and historical causes of the conflict, what does seem clear is that previous literature is limited about the nexus between its multi-causal effects. In this article, the power struggles, attempted coups, and elections disputes are factors that stem from primary unresolved underlying historical causes, precipitated by the fragile relationships as a secondary cause. The historical conflicts in the SPLM are the primary causes of the civil war, representing a continuum of disputes and conflicts that occurred between 1983 and 2013. The conflicts have left the parties estranged and have incrementally inflicted profound psychological and emotional impact on the leaders tending towards fear, anger, bitterness, distrust, and the urge for revenge. The negative emotions from the estranged relationships incite power struggles and ethnic violence. The multiple causes, together, form the core of the conflict, but at the centre, negative emotions sustain the conflict and whip power struggles leading to violence.

As reflected in the ARCSS and R-ARCSS, the failure to address the linkages in the various levels of the conflict has proven to be a major obstacle to sustainable peace dividends. For example, addressing the power struggles through a power-sharing agreement without making provisions for addressing the underlying tensions and animosity among the conflict parties resulted in the collapse of ARCSS. A question that stands out is whether R-ARCSS will succeed where its predecessor failed. Despite renewed hope, cracks of failure are beginning to show in R-ARCSS as the parties are yet to form the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU), several months into the agreement (The East African, 2019). The refusal of Riek Machar to return to Juba, citing security concerns, is a testament of the deep distrust that exists among the parties (AfricaNews, 2019).

“Lack of trust” is a term used severally by the mediators and the conflict parties alike. The distrust, embedded in the estranged political relationships, has periodically manifested, with devastating consequences, from the beginning of the second civil war in 1983 to the current conflict. Ironically, R-ARCSS, has no mechanism for trust-building among the conflict parties, a process that goes hand in hand with the relationship building. Chapter V of R-ARCSS, apart from limiting conflict legacies to 2005, overlooks the intra-SPLM disputes that ignited the conflict in the first place. Having identified the primary, secondary, and tertiary causes of the conflict—going beyond the formation of the TGoNU to equitable relationships and trust among the conflict parties—is the recommended approach that would form the basis for sustainable agreements and peace. The article, therefore, recommends that further research on the conflict focus on mechanisms that address the estrangement in political relationships and trust-building within the conflict parties. However, it should be noted that issues of estrangement, distrust, and emotions are delicate, intricate and require acknowledgement, consent, vulnerability and cooperation of the concerned parties to resolve (Fisher et al., 2000, p. 6).

Email showing editors final copy editing for publication

-----Original Message-----

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Sent: Saturday, 18 April 2020 6:10 AM

To: Sam Angulo Onapa <sonapa@myune.edu.au>

Cc: The Authors <authors-pcs-1583@dcnsu.bepress.com>; Assigned Editor <editor-pcs-1583@dcnsu.bepress.com>

Subject: MS #1583: Update submitted for "Estranged Political Relationships: Demystifying the Root Causes of Violent Conflicts in South Sudan"

This is an automatically-generated note to inform you that "Kathleen Watkins-Richardson" <kw1173@mynsu.nova.edu> has submitted an update to MS #1583, "Estranged Political Relationships: Demystifying the Root Causes of Violent Conflicts in South Sudan," in Peace and Conflict Studies.

The reason for update is:

Production Editor conducted process of copy editing for final publication of article. Please review email that will follow.

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Thank you,

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Statement of Originality

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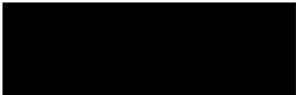
STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

We, the Research ~~Master~~/PhD candidate and the candidate’s Principal Supervisor, certify that the following text, figures and diagrams are the candidate’s original work.

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Candidate

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Statement of Authors' Contribution

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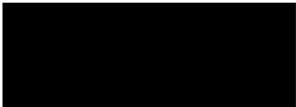
STATEMENT OF AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

We, the Research ~~Master~~/PhD candidate and the candidate's Principal Supervisor, certify that all co-authors have consented to their work being included in the thesis and they have accepted the candidate's contribution as indicated in the *Statement of Originality*.

	Author's Name (please print clearly)	% of contribution	Name of
Candidate	Sam Angulo Onapa	100%	
Other Authors			

Candidate: Sam Angulo Onapa

Name/title of Principal Supervisor: Professor Helen Ware



Sam Angulo Onapa

Candidate

11 April 2020

Date



Principal Supervisor

11 April 2019

Date

Chapter 5: Ethnic Violence in South Sudan: Political and Historical Constructions¹

Abstract

Violent conflicts between the Dinka and Nuer tribes is a reason ethnicity is listed as one of the causes of the conflict in South Sudan. This article examines the role of ethnicity, *vis-à-vis* the role of the political elite in the conflict. To investigate, twenty stakeholders, including the conflict parties, mediators, eminent South Sudanese personalities, scholars, and civil society leaders, were interviewed. Four significant themes, including ethnic violence, which this article analyses, emerged from the study. The results suggest conflicts between the Dinka and Nuer are a historical fact that has taken on a new dimension in a *quid pro quo* relationship with the political elite resulting in revenge attacks using modern vicious weaponry. Nation-building processes are identified as the basis for redefining cultural values that breed violence, and institutional reforms for holding the political elite accountable nationally and to their respective ethnic constituents.

Keywords: South Sudan; splm; ethnic-violence; dinka; nuer

¹ This Chapter, yet to be accepted, was submitted for publication in the journal of Nationalism and Ethnic Politics.

5.1 Introduction

Tribal violence between the Dinka and Nuer tribes following political disputes is not a new phenomenon in South Sudan. At the beginning of the second civil war in 1983, political rivalry between the dominant Nuer Anyanya II and the Dinka led Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) spilled over to the two communities.¹ Prominent in this pattern was the 1991 Bor Massacre where over 2,000 Dinka civilians, after a coup attempt led by Riek Machar.² The outbreak of fighting in Juba on 15 December 2013, after power struggles in the ruling SPLM, saw spontaneous violent attacks targeting Nuer civilians followed by reprisals against the Dinka in Bor, Malakal and other towns.³ The initial shootout that sparked the fighting, setting the pace for the tribal violence, was started by Dinka and Nuer soldiers of the presidential guards aligned to Salva Kiir and Riek Machar.⁴ This consistent pattern of violent conflicts between the two tribes following political disputes has been grossly interpreted as ethnic conflicts resulting from ethnic hatred.⁵

Johnson recounts that the fighting was portrayed by Western media “exclusively in tribal terms, of Salva Kiir’s Dinka against Riek Machar’s Nuer.”⁶ Additionally, some studies indicate that the political elite singularly manipulates ethnic groups to achieve their political agendas.⁷ Despite these positions, there is a paucity of research in understanding the symbiotic relationship between these two ethnic groups and the political elite during the conflict. This article offers two contributions towards understanding the role of ethnicity in the conflict in South Sudan. First, it furthers a theoretical understanding of ethnic violence in South Sudan by examining three major theories of ethnicity and conflict. 1) Primordialism analyses the conflict from the standpoint of variations in ethnic origins characterised by genealogical underpinnings; 2) Constructivism argues ethnic violence arises from social evolutions and 3) Instrumentalism where competition for scarce resources and political-elite manipulations cause ethnic violence.⁸

These rich frameworks enhance our understanding of the role of ethnicity and violence while analysing the Dinka and Nuer ethnic background, their social evolutions and constructions, and the competition for resources coupled with political-elite manipulations. For example, the two tribes share the same origin and ancestry, although ecological circumstances caused a separation between sections of some of them.⁹

Second, empirically it advances our understanding of the intricacies in the relationships between the political elite and the two communities in the course of political disputes that are followed by violent tribal group conflicts. It demonstrates that ethnic conflict between the Dinka and Nuer tribes is a cultural, historical practice carried on by cattle guard groups composed of the youth.¹⁰ It explains how political-elite contestations have transformed the community vigilante groups to proxy militias and enlisted them to their fighting forces, exacerbating the traditional cattle rustling and revenge attitudes by the proliferation of arms.¹¹ It is on this basis that the political elite and the ethnic groups engage in a *quid pro quo* relationship, meeting both the political elite's power agenda and the ethnic community revenge interests. Understanding how ethnic violence involving the two dominant tribes is constructed is vital since these two communities have been the epicenter of politically motivated violence in South Sudan. In particular, a deeper understanding of how political disputes transform into ethnic violence would help explain the role of ethnicity in the conflict.

The first section of the six sections defines ethnic identity and discusses the theories of ethnic violence. Next, it provides the methods adopted in investigating the causes of ethnic violence *vis-à-vis* political disputes. Thirdly, it establishes the ancestry of the Dinka and Nuer tribes and discusses the legacy of their violent conflicts. Following, it examines the legacy of political manipulations of ethnic conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan from the colonial and post-colonial era to the independence period. The fifth section interrogates the militarisation of the

Dinka and Nuer ethnic groups and the reciprocal benefits before looking at the limitations and impact of community reconciliations approaches applied to the Dinka and Nuer ethnic violence. The final section concludes and offers possible remedies to the conflict both at the political and community levels.

5.2 Theories of Ethnicity and Violence

Hutchinson and Smith define ethnic identity and origins as an individual's identification and belonging to a particular cultural community arising from the individual's ancestry and nativity in the parents and grandparents.¹² Kaufman lists five key traits that define an ethnic group: "a group name, a believed common descent, common historical memories, elements of shared culture such as language or religion, and attachment to a specific territory."¹³ In other words, ethnicity is an attribute of birth, though ecological circumstances may vary that fact.¹⁴ In some instances, physical attributes such as skin color or other body features define ethnic belonging.¹⁵ Fearon and Laitin, distinguish two attributes that form the ethnic identifiers: rules of membership, which relate to ancestry or descent, and content, which is "composed of cultural attributes, such as religion, language, customs and shared historical myths."¹⁶ On the second attribute of content, Fearon clarifies that being fluent in a language or adapting to a custom or religion does not necessarily translate into one's ethnic identity.¹⁷ For example, a Sudanese from Darfur who migrated to Israel and fully adopted the Jewish language, religion, and culture cannot be ethnically identified as Jewish. Accordingly, ethnic identity is defined by natural, unchanging biological functions which are passed on genealogically from one generation to the next and which influences their political and social outcomes.¹⁸

Having defined ethnic identity, what then determines ethnic violence and conflict? Fearon describes three elements that determine a violent attack as being ethnic: a) "it is

motivated by animosity towards ethnic others”; (b) “the victims are chosen by ethnic criteria”; or (c) “the attack is made in the name of an ethnic group.”¹⁹ The common denominator in the three elements is ‘ethnic’ which points back to ethnic identity. Three major theories define ethnicity and ethnic violence: The Primordial, Instrumentalist, and Constructivist theories.²⁰

Primordial theorists view ethnic conflicts as being a result of differences in ethnic identities, defined by natural, unchanging biological factors passed on genealogically from one generation to the next.²¹ From a primordial view, cleavages arising from contradictions in the deeply rooted unchanging cultural norms between ethnic groups render violent conflict inevitable.²² Ethnocentrism, meaning cooperative attitudes with in-group members, and xenophobia, meaning hostility against out-group members, are terms associated with primordialism.²³ Fenton argues that the term ‘natural’ is contextually misplaced since artificially occurring patterns, including cultural and social norms in terms of language and historical experiences, sum up the ethnic conflicts.²⁴ In this regard, the constructivists discredit primordialism, arguing that ethnic identities are socially constructed, susceptible to change and categorisation.²⁵ In other words, human nature, including their nationalities, are dynamic and occurrence of ethnic conflict arises out of their evolutions rather than differences in ethnic identity.

Instrumentalism attributes ethnic conflict to competition for economic resources and political manipulation to achieve the interests of the political elite.²⁶ Hutchinson and Smith, however, deem the social, economic, and political construct materialistic and undermines the value of ethnic identity.²⁷ Kaufman clarifies that the instrumentalist idea is that “ethnic groups are merely coalitions formed in a rational attempt to compete for scarce goods in the context of social changes brought about by modernisation.”²⁸ At the helm of the formation of such coalitions is the political elite who aim to control the instruments of political power to enable

control and appropriation of the scarce resources.

5.3 Materials and Methods

The study aimed to investigate the causes of violent conflicts in South Sudan with particular reference to the role of the political elite. A qualitative case study was the preferred overall design approach.²⁹ Focussing on the SPLM in the overall context of the conflict, twenty-nine participants were interviewed following a purposive recruitment process that targeted individuals with in-depth knowledge of the SPLM and the conflict generally.³⁰ These included five subgroups of which eight were from the conflict parties, six from the mediation team, four eminent South Sudanese personalities, seven scholars and four civil society organisation leaders. The group affiliations included the SPLM in government and in-opposition, armed groups, the African Union (AU), United Nations (UN), retired politicians, University heads and professors, and civil society organisations.

A semi-structured interview protocol captured the perspectives of the participants ranging from the historical to the current aspects of the conflict and mainly tested the questions on the causes of the violent conflicts in South Sudan and the role of the SPLM leaders in the same.³¹ The SPLM government members were recruited through a formal request made to the Foreign Affairs Ministry of the Republic of South Sudan, and their opposition counterparts and the mediation team members through telephone contacts established from the AU. Other participants were recruited through word of mouth and email contacts. In conformity to the research ethics requirements, each participant was furnished with an information sheet indicating the research aims and objectives, confidentiality clause, and other related information and the interview process.

The data analysis process began by deductively identifying recurring patterns in the

literature reviewed and inductively from the transcribed data. Four dominant themes emerged, including ethnic violence, covered in this article.³² The transcribed data was uploaded to the NVivo software analysis tool and categorised into dominant themes (nodes) and sub-themes (child nodes), with conceptual reference to the research questions.

5.4 The Dinka and the Nuer

5.4.1 Ethnic origins

The Dinka and the Nuer are Nilotic tribes who have a “common ancestry and share a similar habitat,” and practice intermarriages and bilingualism.³³ Research by British anthropologists Evans-Pritchard and Lienhardt attest to the common ancestry originally known as *Jieng* (Dinka) and *Naath* (Nuer), meaning people.³⁴ According to Evans-Pritchard “Nuer and Dinka are too much alike physically, and their languages and customs are too similar for any doubt to arise about their common origin...” adding, “Both peoples recognise their common origins.³⁵ They share similar agro-pastoralist backgrounds, seasonally migrating in search of pasture and water for their cattle, a vital social and economic wealth, used for food, bride price, and compensation “for homicide and other crimes.³⁶ The Honourable Aldo Ajor, a senior SPLM member and former Deputy Prime Minister and Deputy Speaker of the Sudan Parliament who is from the Dinka community, explains: “...if you observe the Nuer and Dinka who have returned after fighting, you will be surprised. The Nuer and Dinka are the same people, and they live together” (personal communication, 30 March 2018).

Based on that background, the Dinka and Nuer ethnic identities reflect the five ethnic identity traits listed by Kaufman, suggesting they belong to the same ethnic group. However, the common view held in various literature is that the two tribes belong to different ethnic groups and classifies conflicts between them as such.³⁷ Horowitz explains that physical

anthropologists have proven that groups that are regarded “fundamentally different from and or opposed to each another” and yet bear profound physical resemblance and cultures could have been members of the same genetic, ethnic origin that were separated over time.³⁸ Accordingly, Newcomer argues: “...the Nuer are in-fact Dinka” whose existence arose from ecological circumstance, and social mutation and segmentary lineage formations.³⁹ The 18th-century migration of the Jikany Nuer, originally from the Ngok and Rueng Dinka group, due to land scarcity is an example that typifies this point.⁴⁰ In Breidlid’s account, the migration history of the two ethnic groups led to a convergence in Bahr el Ghazal and a belief that a split occurred probably due to disputes over cattle ownership and since then have conflicted for the last over 300 years.⁴¹ The two positions on the Dinka and Nuer ethnic locus are critical in examining the role of ethnic violence in the South Sudan conflict; particularly where the quest for social, economic and political gains that transcend ethnic, historical-cultural values.⁴²

5.4.2 Historical conflicts

As Arnold observes: “There has long been tension between the Dinka and Nuer, whose historical relationships were largely defined by each raiding the other’s cattle.⁴³ The conflicts were not ethnic but internecine and commensurate measures of addressing them, including “intermarriage, customary codes of warfare, religious sanctions, limits on the spread of modern weaponry and the institution of chieftaincy,” were in place. According to Breidlid and Arensen, the conflicts were “with kinship groups and clans than with ethnicity, and intercommunal conflicts usually take place between groups at these two lower segmentary levels.⁴⁴ Boege buttresses this point arguing communities that are segmented into units of “extended families, lineage, clan, tribe,... “, each of the units preserves the right to resort to violence at the segmentary levels.⁴⁵ These segmentary conflict lines of argument further

strengthen the point that the two groups share a common ancestry and identity. However, it does not rule out the fact that evolutions may have occurred over time, redefining the ethnic locus and the nature of conflicts in some sections of these tribes as suggested by Newcomer.

Given the explanations of the Dinka and Nuer ethnic ancestry, the nature of classifications of conflicts between them could take various trends. Taking the argument that both tribes share a common ancestry and identity, and Fearon's three determinants of ethnic conflict mentioned earlier, conflicts between the Dinka and Nuer do not fit in the ethnic description. Likewise, from a primordial standpoint, there should be no conflict between the two tribes based on the common ancestry argument. On the other hand, the argument that the two groups once of the same ethnic identity have evolved over-time evokes a different opinion. From a constructivist standpoint, conflicts between two groups, of the same ancestry, historically arise from dynamic social conditions that have redefined their languages, cultures, nationalities, and boundaries.

5.5 Political Manipulations and Ethnic Violence

5.5.1 The colonial legacy

According to Lake and Rothchild, control of political power and the control of state resources is motivated by the competition for scarce resources leading to ethnic conflict.⁴⁶ Given the evolving nature of ethnic identities, Ramsbotham et al. state that particular ethnic groups or a coalition of a few groups dominated post-colonial centralised governments and state institutions they inherited, consequently disenfranchising the rest, hence the contradictions and violence.⁴⁷ Such inherited state and government control mechanisms are in most cases a reflection of colonial legacies where the distribution of resources was centralised and dispensed to suit the colonial government's political agenda in disregard of the ethnic diversities.⁴⁸ According to

Professor Moses Machar, a former Vice President of Sudan, “Ethnic animosities...started even during the British rule because they have a principle of divide and rule” (personal conversation, 26 March 2018).

5.5.2 The post-colonial era

5.5.2.1 The Sudan regime

Whether the colonial political structures caused discrimination against certain ethnic groups is not in question. Of more importance, is why post-colonial governments maintain the same systems that cause catastrophic ethnic violence? The establishment of the Anyanya movement in 1963 officially marked the beginning of the first civil war in Sudan, in which the South Sudanese movement fought against racial, political, religious and economic oppression by “the northern Arab controlled government.⁴⁹ Following the May 1969 revolution, Gafaar Nimeiri, recognised “the right of Southern people to Regional Autonomy within a united Sudan” leading to the Addis Ababa agreement that ostensibly addressed the social, economic and political grievances of the southerners.⁵⁰ However, Nimeiri abrogated the agreement in 1981, systematically dissolved the Regional Assembly and Governments and finally in May 1983 divided the south into three regions of Upper Nile, Bahr el Gazal and Equatoria, creating ethnic animosity against the dominant Dinka.⁵¹ Nyaba’s views corroborate the geographical boundary distortions orchestrated by Nimeiri that caused animosity between southern tribes; hence, the reason some youth joined the SPLM/A to acquire arms for revenge.⁵²

The Nimeiri regime, in effect, exploited the situation and restored the marginalisation and grievances of the southerners leading to the second civil war.⁵³ The regime’s intrigues ensured that attempts to settle boundary disputes remained a violent venture among the southern ethnic groups.⁵⁴ Copnal however, absolves Nimeiri from being the primary cause of the

problem and argues that the failure of the Khartoum government to “bridge the gap between the north and south” was a situation that was exacerbated by the British colonial legacy.⁵⁵ As indicated earlier, faulting the colonial administration that has long left the scene overlooks the intentions of post-colonial governments. The perpetuation of the problem by the Nimeiri regime was a deliberate effort intended to serve the regimes political interests.

5.5.2.2 South Sudanese political elite

Subsequently, the SPLM/A was born with seeds of ethnic cleavages, reinforced by leadership and ideological disputes, in which the Nuer leaning Anyanya II leadership were pitted against the Dinka leaning Garang leadership in 1983.⁵⁶ Emmanuel Solomon Ajang, a member of the SPLM-In Opposition (IO), narrates the origin of the Dinka and Nuer feuds (personal communication, 20 December 2017):

...Garang’s side attacked and subdued Anyanya II in Bilpam most of whom were Nuer, though their leader Akuot Atem was a Dinka, which created a narrative that the Dinka took over their power by force since they were the forerunners of the struggle. The Nuer, therefore, said that being the case, SPLA would be attacked and unarmed recruits on the way to joining the SPLA in Bilpam were attacked.

The massacre of over 2,000 Dinka tribesmen in Bor by Nuer militia and the reprisal attacks on Nuer civilians in Upper Nile by Garang forces raises questions as to the role of ethnicity in political contests.⁵⁷ Brigadier General Gai Chatiem of the SPLM-IO (personal conversation, 2 December 2017), argues that there was a correlation between the Bor massacre and the 1991 coup attempt:

This was not a question of revenge. There is no correlation with the 1991 killings of Dinka because the killing of Nuer of such magnitude had occurred earlier in 1987 in Gambella at the border with Ethiopia when about 5,000 Nuer were killed by SPLA and about 10,000 head of cattle looted. The 1991 Bor massacre was not directed by Riek Machar but was a

response from the white army composed of the Nuer youth who on learning that Riek Machar had left the SPLA, decided to march to Bor in the background of previous killings of the Nuer.

Chatiem's argument is contradictory when he says that it was not about revenge and at the same time, relates it to the previous killing of the Nuer. The motivation of the White Army Nuer youth march to Bor was to revenge previous killings of the Nuer. However, his assertion that Riek Machar did not order the Bor massacre corroborates Hutchinson's point that the coup plot was not to start a war between the Dinka and Nuer.⁵⁸ Irrespective, sections of the Nasir coup plotters of Anyanya II background under the command of Gordon Kong were a part of the revenge attack in Bor. Wild et al. contradict the view that Riek Machar was not responsible for the massacre, arguing that he armed the Lou and Jikany Nuer against the Bor Dinka and promised them cattle bounties after the raid.⁵⁹ Overall, whether Machar armed the Nuer or not, there was a pre-existing revenge agenda against the Dinka harbored by the Nuer which, the coup attempt availed the opportunity to execute.

5.5.2.3 The post-independence South Sudan

Ironically, the same tactics the Sudan government applied in manipulating South Sudanese ethnic groups is reflected in the recent civil war as the Dinka and Nuer tribal feuds play out. Houle argues that in a situation of social and economic inequality, conflict in a society defined along ethnic lines is more likely to attract violence, at the expense of democracy, in the course of agitation for equality.⁶⁰ This kind of situation introduces the concept of ethnic entrepreneurship where the political elite who represent ethnic communities seize the opportunity to exploit the social and economic grievances of the groups to their political advantage through state and government control hence, the instrumentalist theory.⁶¹ Breidlid and Arensen state: "Ethnically targeted killings must be seen in relation to the conscious

manipulation of ethnicity by political and military leaders...”⁶² This trend started with the colonial administration, and post-colonial governments have successively maintained it.

The immediate aftermath of the December 2013 conflict is characterised by revenge attacks pitting the Dinka and Nuer tribes. Despite the glaring socio-economic inequalities in South Sudan, the ensuing violence between the two tribes does not resonate with Houle’s definition of ethnic violence since it is rooted in political disputes, followed by revenge attitudes, rather than societal socioeconomic agitation. The SPLM disputes involved issues of bad governance and corruption.⁶³ Although ordinary citizens are the immediate victims of corruption, there is no evidence suggesting that the leaders were addressing the grievances of any particular tribal or ethnic constituency in the course of the political disputes.⁶⁴ The involvement of the Dinka and Nuer tribes in the conflict, therefore, was an opportunistic political maneuver that took advantage of the differences between the two tribes. Such political maneuvers could be deemed legitimate if the corruption allegations aimed to genuinely address the interests of the ethnic communities at the center of the political realignments. As is more often than not, the maneuvers are in favor of the political elite while playing the ethnic card. Nevertheless, these tribal groups are not entirely mere victims. The other overlooked side of the coin is the revenge agenda that motivates the groups into being accomplices of the political elite.

According to the Berghof Foundation glossary, ethnicity does not cause conflict per se but “constitute highly influential areas of socialisation and identification among social peers” through which disguised tensions “such as ethnopolitical strife” arise.⁶⁵ Brigadier General Gai Chatiem argues that “Salva Kiir orchestrated an altercation among the presidential guards, by provoking Nuer guards who were part of the late general Paulino Matip’s guards but were absorbed into the presidential guards after Matip’s death forming one presidential guard unit.”

(personal conversation, 2 December 2017). The scourge of ethnicity, since the SPLA and Anyanya II conflict in 1983, infiltrated the military ranks as the SPLA was regarded as *Dikanized* giving a compelling impression that from the onset that the fighting was ethnically motivated.⁶⁶

Bol Makueng Yuol, the SPLM Secretary for Information, Culture, and Communication, argues, “The conflict takes an ethnic trend mainly because we are still at the primary political development. In the course of forming a nation, there is an ideological process which entails a change of attitude argues that the revenge attitude is a manifestation of a people in developmental transition” (personal communication, 21 March 2018). Yuol raises valid points on political development and nation-building as a means of addressing both the political manipulations along ethnic lines and redefining ethnic interests. Other than grappling with the effects of ethnic violence, a clear path to a transition agenda that addresses issues of institutional and nation-building is yet to be tabled. According to Edmund Yakani, the Executive Director of the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization, “the situation is, therefore, such that South Sudan is drawn towards ethnic identity instead of moving towards national identity” (personal communication, 14 March 2018). Nicholas Haysom, the United Nations Secretary General’s Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan articulates the reason for ethnic balkanization (personal communication, 29 November 2017):

South Sudan is a country, which has never existed as a nation, which has forged a degree of support for its independence based quite frankly substantially on external factors...and the factors which bound people together were forged in opposition to the north but not in the making of a separate polity in itself... So the conflict which manifested initially as a political conflict evolved quite rapidly into a tribal...

According to a General, formerly a member of the SPLM, turned opposition leader: “After...15 December 2013, the G10 (Group of Ten) led by Riek Machar made a press conference, but the

Bar al-Ghazal group, including Niel Deng Nial, Paul Mayom, and David Deng Ator Bi withdrew and allied themselves with Salva Kiir.” (personal communication, 17 November 2017). In the Generals views, “tribal hegemony is a foundation for political power in South Sudan, which entails control of the economy with its resources to achieve.” Professor Samson Wasara, Vice-Chancellor of Upper Nile University (personal conversation, 14 March 2018), goes further to explain how disputes at the political level cascade to the tribal level at the grassroots:

...when leaders disagree at the national level, they begin to appeal to their ethnic bases and as you know South Sudan is still a tribal community, which is not very integrated, and also an illiterate community where people do not have the chance to examine and analyse issues...So conflict at the national level spirals down to the grassroots level.

It is possible that if the balance of power had tilted in Riek Machar’s favor, the Dinka group that crossed over to Salva Kiir would have remained in his camp making it a coalition that transcends ethnic divides though centered on the access of resources. In this regard, Kalpakian argues that tribal animosity, though present, should not be overplayed since both leaders have some support of members of other tribes.⁶⁷ Johnson agrees with this point when he says the ministers arrested and implicated in the attempted coup allegation with Riek Machar came from a cross-section of South Sudanese tribes.⁶⁸ Notably in Riek Machar’s camp is Mabior Garang who is the son of the SPLM founding leader, John Garang.⁶⁹ Bishop Emeritus Enock Tombe Stephen Loro poses a question: “...is it a problem between Nuer and Dinka or is a problem between the Dinka themselves?” He then argues it is not saying: “When Salva introduced changes in his cabinet in July 2013, he kicked out, not only his VP Riek Machar, who is Nuer but also other ministers who are also Dinka... you had Rebecca Nyandeng, widow of the late Garang” (personal communication, 15 March 2018).

The above arguments nullify the interpretation of the conflict in terms of Dinka versus

Nuer and rather clarify that it is a political conflict where the belligerent political leaders from the two dominant groups influence their ethnic communities to support their cause. In the process, the existing historical, ethnic feuds between the two communities increasingly come to ahead. In this situation, not only do the political elite take advantage of the existing ethnic conflicts to advance their political agenda, but also the ethnic groups take advantage of the political disputes to advance their revenge agenda. Therefore, there is an intersection of instrumentalism pointing to resources and political manipulations, primordialism relating to common origins and historical conflicts, and constructivism relating to evolving socio-economic interests.

5.5.3 The politicisation of historical tribal conflicts

Johnson relates a graphic account by Majak D'Agoot, the then South Sudan Deputy Defence Minister, as the conflict loomed: "...you have no idea what can happen in this country, but this can set off ethnic violence between the Dinka and the Nuer, which can drive us all down. This can become another Rwanda."⁷⁰ This fear is engrained by the history of violence between the two tribes shaped by political manipulations beyond the traditional but manageable cattle raiding conflicts. Human Rights Watch attributes the spontaneity and escalation of tribal violence to "historical grievances and divisions" relating it to an act of revenge for the Bor Massacre of the Dinka in 1991.⁷¹ Similarly, Blanchard argues, "the current crisis reflects underlying tensions and mistrust among South Sudanese leaders and ethnic groups that date back to Sudan's civil war (1983-2005), and before".⁷²

As mentioned, the Dinka and the Nuer have the same origins and cultures, qualifying them to be members of the same ethnic group. Equally, sections of these two groups have evolved, and their boundaries have changed; thus, a redefinition of the ethnic groups.

Previously, mechanisms and terms of conflict settlements between the two tribes were clearly defined. Currently, the conflicts have found new meanings as political contests play out between political leaders and particularly those from the two tribes. The Honourable Aldo Ajor makes a reminder “that the Nuer and Dinka are people who have been fighting throughout their lives for hundreds of years and a situation that will give them an excuse to do what they know best will not be helpful” (personal communication, 30 March 2018). Ajor’s statement reveals two scenarios; first, the Dinka and the Nuer historical conflicts are turned into tools of political expediencies and second, the two tribes see this as an opportunity to escalate their tribal animosity.

The perpetrators of the infamous 1991 Bor massacre preyed on these two facts as they armed the Lou Nuer against their long-standing Dinka Bor neighbors hence, redefining the known traditional revenge cattle raids into a political massacre.⁷³ Bishop Emeritus Enock Tombe Stephen Loro echoes the same sentiments: “The Nuer issue came in because some people believe the killing of the Nuer in December in Juba, is a revenge of what happened in 1991...the people of Bor were killed by Nuer ...on the instigation of Riek Machar” (personal communication, 15 March 2018). Loro’s arguments clarify that the ensuing Dinka and Nuer conflicts were a result of political constructions by the SPLM/A leaders precipitated by historical conflicts of 1983 and 1991.

5.6 The Militarisation of the Dinka and the Nuer

According to Copnall, the decades of civil war between north and south Sudanese have resulted in armed civilians, including members of informal militia groups, outnumbering security forces.⁷⁴ Consequently, inter-communal conflicts that were traditionally a matter of spears, sticks, and bows and arrows now use sophisticated automatic weapons of military combat

proportions.⁷⁵ Therefore, conflict among the transhumance communities that followed the traditional cattle rustling and kinship pattern have of recent exhibited militarised approaches with catastrophic consequences. For instance, Jonglei state, the most populous state in South Sudan, with an estimated 1.4 million inhabitants including the Bor Dinka, Jikany Nuer, Anuak, and the Murle, is the epicenter of armed ethnic militia activities. This level of conflict supersedes the micro-level kinship conflict that has happened for centuries with clearly defined resolution mechanisms.⁷⁶

Ethnic conflict in South Sudan is closely associated with pastoralists of which the Dinka and the Nuer are. Cattle is the mainstay of their livelihood and as Breidlid et al. put it, “A Dinka will kill and even risk his life for a single cow.”⁷⁷ Bol Makueng Yuol agrees by saying, “Being from a nomadic background, if you are told that your cow has been taken, the children will fight to the last man to recover it” (personal communication, 21 March 2018). Cattle rustling is a cultural norm among pastoralists used to replenish herds depleted by drought or disease and bride price.⁷⁸ It was not meant for targeted killings, though during cattle rustling a small number of deaths could occur calling for homicide compensations and frequently, a reprisal by the rustled community.

The emergence of the White Army² (*dec bor*), who were inspired by the desire for revenge instilled a tribal militia dimension to the conflict in South Sudan.⁷⁹ They give total allegiance to their communities and are independent of external political and military influences, though their interests may ally them to political brokers.⁸⁰ It is important to note that such alliances are reciprocal in the sense that it meets both the political and community interests. According to Jok and Hutchinson, the White Army is an extension of the *burnam*, a

² an informal eastern Nuer youth militia that arose after Riek Machar's 1991 Nasir coup attempt

group of Nuer youth guarding community cattle which has existed since the first civil war that ended in 1972.⁸¹ Fearon and Laitin referring to Deng clarify that the provision of community protection and security was a civic duty entrusted to the youth due to their natural agility and ability to respond to aggression, while Johnson adds that traditional cattle raiding was their other role.⁸² Although their primary role was the protection of community property and cattle rustling, the White Army has been turned into agents of war and revenge by ethnic entrepreneurs.⁸³ According to Hutchinson and Pendle, Nuer prophetess Nyachol abetted ethnic conflict by exerting her spiritual influence in inspiring youth to guard the herds of local communities and political elites as well as being retaliatory agents.⁸⁴ According to Dr. Itto Anne, former Deputy Secretary-General of the SPLM and a member of the East African Legislative Assembly, “The White Army is a militia group whose membership is mainly uneducated Nuer youth ... mobilised and aligned around tribal sentiments ... made to believe in Nuer supremacy and ... fight to gain that supremacy...and the need to revenge.” (personal communication, 26 March 2018).

As alluded by Dr Anne Itto, political power is an unlikely motivation of the White Army but rather revenge and cattle. Boege argues that traditional social entities become parties to a conflict not because of a political agenda, political or economic power, but due to “concepts such as honor, revenge or right to (violent) self-help.”⁸⁵ Thus, the White Army joined ranks with the SPLM-In Opposition (IO) after fighting broke out in Juba, carried out revenge attacks, and abandoned the SPLM-IO on the frontlines after achieving their revenge mission.⁸⁶ Young agrees with Boege when he says that the White Army had no coherent political agenda in its association with the SPLM-IO though they demanded jobs and education in the post-conflict dispensation.⁸⁷ He further argues that the White Army’s motivation to fight is not to defend the political interests of Dr Riek Machar, their Nuer tribesman, but rather to avenge the attacks on

the Nuer by the Dinka.⁸⁸

The loose association with the SPLM-IO explains the source of arms for the White Army to the extent that they were capable of withstanding government forces. Similarly, George Athor, an SPLA dissident, used his South Sudan Democratic Army (SSDA) to re-arm the Lou Nuer White Army, previously disarmed by the SPLA, to fight alongside the SSDA although revenge against the Murle was their primary aim.⁸⁹ According to Young, Athor gave two guns per head to the White Army fighters for family and cattle protection in recognition that their primary reason for joining the SSDA was to acquire weapons to replace those lost in the government disarmament exercise.⁹⁰

Just as the Nuer had *burnam* and later the White Army, the concept of cattle guards and rustlers called *titweng* and *gelweng*, also existed among the Dinka communities, particularly in response to the Sudan government-backed Bagara Arab militia known as *Murahileen* and Nuer raiders.⁹¹ However, with the rise of the second civil war, and aware that the Sudan government were supporting the *Murahileen* and the South Sudan Defence Force (SSDF) to undermine them, the SPLM/A incorporated the *titweng* and *gelweng* into their fighting force.⁹² Due to their vulnerability to the better equipped *Murahileen* and their SSDF supported Nuer neighbors and kin, *titweng* and *gelweng* turned to the Dinka led SPLM/A to beef up protection and restock cattle lost to the *Murahileen* and the Nuer.⁹³ Following the end of the second civil war in 2005, part of the *titweng* and *gelweng* joined the local governance security structures and after independence in 2011, they were transformed into a government-supported militia and renamed *Mathiang Anyoor*³.⁹⁴ The *Mathiang Anyoor* were specifically recruited from the Bahr el Ghazal Dinka community⁴ and were mostly responsible for the attacks on the Nuer civilians in Juba,

³ Brown caterpillar

⁴ President Salva Kiir's home area

Bor and Malakal.⁹⁵ The African Union Commission Inquiry on South Sudan (AUCISS) reported that 7,500 to 15,000 men were recruited outside the regular government military structure and 300 to 700 out of that number were absorbed to the presidential guard brigade.⁹⁶ The number absorbed into the presidential guards acquired the name *Dut ku Beny* (rescue the president).⁹⁷

The recruitment drive was happening as the conflict was simmering, and two things can be deduced from that situation. First, the president relied on the protection of the *Mathiang Anyoor* and *Dut ku Beny* whose origins are the *titweng* and *gelweng* cattle guards. Second, the *Mathiang Anyoor's* primary agenda was revenge as demonstrated by the spontaneous attacks on Nuer civilians in Juba and other locations after the fighting broke out. The *Dut ku Beny* group carried out a similar mission against Nuer members of the presidential guard brigade. Brigadier General Gai Chatiem of the SPLM-IO (personal conversation, 2 December 2017) explains the role of the militias:

The motivation of Nuer killings by these Dinka militias under the presidential guards could be attributed to protecting the power of the Dinka being under threat from the Nuer. This could have been the ideology these young, and uneducated militias were trained to believe which resulted in the spontaneous massacre of the Nuer and distorted the understanding of the nature of the conflict, which was a power struggle within the SPLM ...

As part of the presidential guard, they owe the duty to protect the president, and by extension, his powers which what triggered the outbreak of fighting. However, at the back of their minds, revenge was ringing out, and that explains why they targeted Nuer civilians who were not in any way a threat to the presidential powers. Dr. Itto Anne outlines their role: “Mathiang Anyor was created when the SPLM leadership started experiencing problems. It is in this backdrop that Mathiang Anyoor was put together by Paul Malong basically to protect the interests of the chairman who is the president.” (personal communication, 26 March 2018).

The political objective of creating the *Mathiang Anyoor* is clearly stated, but that is in as far as political interests are concerned. However, the havoc wreaked on the civilian population forms the primary revenge objective of the tribal militia force. Edmund Yakani, the Executive Director of the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization, clarifies the dual interests: “Whenever these disputes occur, ethnicity becomes the center of conversion of political gains... The militia set up that is terrorising the country functions along that character of ethnic identity” (personal communication, 14 March 2018).

5.7 Limitations of Meaningful Community Reconciliation

The Wunlit conference of February 1999, credited for reconciling the Dinka and Nuer communities, “agreed to no more cattle raids, destruction of villages, abductions of women and children, or calling in their armed brethren to defend (and escalate) disputes”.⁹⁸ However, as part of the discussions, Chief Gaga Riak Machar argued that the conflict was caused by soldiers and unless the SPLM/A ended their fight, discussions between the Dinka and Nuer chiefs were meaningless.⁹⁹ In essence, Chief Machar was saying the extent of the conflicts had exceeded the known traditional conflict norms and therefore their resolution capacity. The Right Honourable Aldo Ajor agrees with this point when he says that “...Wunlit was initiated by the Nuer and Dinka chiefs because it was Riek, Matip and the Nuers who were really fighting against the Dinka.” (personal communication, 30 March 2018).

5.8 Conclusion

This article explored the role of ethnicity, particularly concerning the Dinka and Nuer tribes, in the violent conflict in South Sudan. Literature that has dominated discussions on ethnic violence in South Sudan identifies ethnic hatred and political manipulations of the two communities as some of the causes of the conflict. It suggests that ethnicity has a direct role in the political

disputes that have dogged the SPLM, and South Sudan in general, since its inception in 1983. However, when analysed through the primordial, instrumentalist and constructivist theoretical frameworks, we find that the conflicts between the Dinka and the Nuer have historical roots that pre-exist the political era in South Sudan.

Consequently, these groups willingly and consciously pursue violence against each other. Combined with this theoretical outlook, empirical data shows that with the onslaught of the second civil war in 1983, political rivalry between Dinka and Nuer leaders exacerbated the tribal conflicts by taking advantage of their historical conflicts and revenge attitudes for their political gains. Therefore, these two dominant groups seized the opportunity, in a *quid pro quo* relationship with the political elite, to acquire modern weapons to execute their current revenge agenda.

The two communities on their own can deal with localised conflicts that are typically motivated by the need to restock cattle to maintain family, clan and community prestige. Both primordial and constructivist theories suggest that contradictions in the cultural and traditional norms, and the dynamic social, political and economic conditions are factors of ethnic conflict. As long as the two ethnic communities maintain their traditional cattle rustling and other related cultural practices, the conflict will continue, and if there are no political interferences, traditional solutions will suffice. However, a developmental shift in the traditional mindsets could see new priorities in terms of social and economic gains towards a constructivist approach of conflict that revolve around social and economic interests. That way, the focus of the respective communities could shift from the traditional pastoralist values and norms to social and economic interests where their communities will hold the representative political leaders accountable in a democratic dispensation. On the flip side, the shift to economic realities become a breeding ground for ethnic entrepreneurship in the absence of democratic and

accountable leadership. Here, some manipulative political elite moves in to fill the leadership gap desired by the ethnic groups to advance their economic grievances; hence, the instrumentalist viewpoint. Therefore, greed rather than genuine socioeconomic grievances of the ethnic communities' politicians' purports to represent is at the centre of the ethnic violence, in cooperation with the respective ethnic communities urge for revenge.

References were made to 'uneducated youth' concerning the White Army and the *Mathiang Anyoor* militia groups. Political leadership and programs that address the lack of education and equitable economic opportunities could reduce ethnic violence. This point highlights the need for institutional reforms, capacity building and nation-building to mitigate the patron-client relationship that defines the political elite as well as the tribal and ethnic differences to improve the overall democratic sphere in South Sudan.

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Notes

Human Rights Watch, *Sudan, Oil, and Human Rights*, 100; Johnson, "Twentieth-Century Civil Wars," 215.

² Young, *Popular Struggles and Elite Co-Optation*, 21.

³ Johnson, *South Sudan*, 189–90, 201–3.

⁴ Temin, "From Independence to Civil War," 17.

⁵ Young, "A Fractious Rebellion inside the SPLM-IO," 7; Sefa-Nyarko, "Civil War in South Sudan," 204; Vertin, "A Poisoned Well: Lessons in Mediation from South Sudan's Troubled Peace Process"; de Vries and Schomerus, "South Sudan's Civil War Will Not End with a Peace Deal," 334.

⁶ "Briefing," 300.

⁷ Craze, Tubiana, and Gramizzi, *A State of Disunity*, 78–79, 95; Rolandsen, "From Guerrilla Movement to Political Party the Restructuring of Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Three Southern States," 6–8; Blackings, "Why Peace Fails: The Case of South Sudan's Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan," 20.

⁸ Bentley, "Ethnicity and Practice," 24–27; Fearon and Laitin, "Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity," 846–49.

⁹ Southall, "Nuer and Dinka Are People," 466.

⁰ Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, "CRP on the Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan in English," 53.

¹ Wild, Jok, and Patel, "The Militarization of Cattle Raiding in South Sudan," 4–6.

² "Ethnic Groups and Ethnic Identity Formation," 5.

³ *Modern Hatreds*, 16.

⁴ Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 51–54.

⁵ Regmi, "Ethnicity and Identity," 3.

⁶ "Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity," 848.

⁷ "Ethnic Mobilization and Ethnic Violence," 853.

⁸ Fearon and Laitin, "Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity," 848; Fearon, "Ethnic Mobilization and Ethnic Violence," 861.

⁹ "Ethnic Mobilization and Ethnic Violence," 857.

⁰ Fearon, "Ethnic Mobilization and Ethnic Violence"; Fearon, "Ethnic War as a Commitment Problem"; Brass, "Ethnic Groups and Ethnic Identity Formation."

¹ Fearon and Laitin, "Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity," 848; Fearon, "Ethnic Mobilization and Ethnic Violence," 858.

² Fearon and Laitin, "Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity," 849.

³ Hammond and Axelrod, "The Evolution of Ethnocentrism," 927.

⁴ *Ethnicity*, 79.

⁵ Fearon and Laitin, "Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity," 849–50; Wimmer, "The Making and Unmaking of Ethnic Boundaries," 971.

⁶ Brass, "Ethnic Groups and Ethnic Identity Formation," 8–9; Bentley, "Ethnicity and Practice," 26.

⁷ "Ethnic Groups and Ethnic Identity Formation," 9.

⁸ *Modern Hatreds*, 17.

⁹ Bryman, *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*, 46.

⁰ Mack et al., *Qualitative Research Methods*, 2; Baker and Edwards, "How Many Qualitative Interviews Is Enough?," 8.

¹ Ritchie, Lewis, and Elam, "Designing and Selecting Samples," 5.

² Boyatzis, *Transforming Qualitative Information*, 30.

³ Bradbury et al., "The Local Peace Processes in Sudan," 42.

⁴ *The Nuer*, 463–65; Western Dinka in the "Tribes without Rulers: Studies in African Segmentary Systems," 101–14.

⁵ *The Nuer*, 3–4.

⁶ Human Rights Watch, *Sudan, Oil, and Human Rights*, 85.

⁷ Human Rights Watch, 52; Young, *Popular Struggles and Elite Co-Optation*, 22; Sefa-Nyarko, "Civil War in South Sudan," 189; South Sudan Human Rights Commission (SSHRC), "Interim Report on South Sudan Internal Conflict," 5.

⁸ *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 52.

⁹ "The Nuer Are Dinka," 7.

- ⁴⁰Johnson, "Tribal Boundaries and Border Wars," 185.
- ⁴¹*A Concise History of South Sudan*, 77–78.
- ⁴²Esman, "Ethnic Politics and Economic Power," 414–15.
- ⁴³"The South Sudan Defence Force," 503.
- ⁴⁴"Anyone Who Can Carry a Gun Can Go," 3.
- ⁴⁵"Traditional Approaches to Conflict Transformation," 6.
- ⁴⁶"Containing Fear," 44–45.
- ⁴⁷*Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, 102.
- ⁴⁸Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall, 101–2; Fearon, "Ethnic Mobilization and Ethnic Violence," 860.
- ⁴⁹"Shinn, "Addis Ababa Agreement," 240; Lowry in *Peace Makers in Action, Peacemakers in Action*, 191.
- ⁵⁰Stevens, "The 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement and the Sudan's Afro-Arab Policy," 248.
- ⁵¹Scott, "The Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM) and Liberation Army (SPLA)," 69.
- ⁵²*Politics of Liberation in South Sudan*, 25, 26.
- ⁵³Jok, *War and Slavery in Sudan*, 140.
- ⁵⁴Cormack, "BORDERS ARE GALAXIES," 504.
- ⁵⁵*A Poisonous Thorn in Our Hearts*, 3.
- ⁵⁶Craze, Tubiana, and Gramizzi, *A State of Disunity*, 23–24.
- ⁵⁷Jok, *War and Slavery in Sudan*, 127.
- ⁵⁸"A Curse from God?," 318.
- ⁵⁹"The Militarization of Cattle Raiding in South Sudan," 4.
- ⁶⁰"Ethnic Inequality and the Dismantling of Democracy," 475.
- ⁶¹Rothchild, *The SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Ethnicity, Negotiation, and Conflict Management*, 4.
- ⁶²"Anyone Who Can Carry a Gun Can Go," 3.
- ⁶³Johnson, "The Political Crisis in South Sudan," 170–71.
- ⁶⁴Collier and Hoefler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," 564–65.
- ⁶⁵*Berghof Glossary on Conflict Transformation*, 16.
- ⁶⁶Arnold, "The South Sudan Defence Force," 503.
- ⁶⁷"Peace Agreements in a Near-Permanent Civil War," 12.
- ⁶⁸"Briefing," 300.
- ⁶⁹Craze, Tubiana, and Gramizzi, *A State of Disunity*, 96.
- ⁷⁰Johnson, *South Sudan*, 181.
- ⁷¹*Soldiers Assume We Are Rebels*, 18–19.
- ⁷²"The Crisis in South Sudan," 2.
- ⁷³Wild, Jok, and Patel, "The Militarization of Cattle Raiding in South Sudan," 4.
- ⁷⁴Wild, Jok, and Patel, "The Militarization of Cattle Raiding in South Sudan," 1–2; Breidlid and Arensen, "Anyone Who Can Carry a Gun Can Go," 8.
- ⁷⁵Rands and LeRiche, "Security Responses in Jonglei State in the Aftermath of Inter-Ethnic Violence," 5–10.
- ⁷⁶"*A Concise History of South Sudan*, 82.
- ⁷⁷Leff, "Pastoralists at War: Violence and Security in the Kenya-Sudan-Uganda Border Region," 191.
- ⁷⁸Young, *Popular Struggles and Elite Co-Optation*, 13–15; Bradbury et al., *Local Peace Processes in Sudan*, 33.
- ⁷⁹Young, *Popular Struggles and Elite Co-Optation*, 15.
- ⁸⁰"Sudan's Prolonged Second Civil War and the Militarization of Nuer and Dinka Ethnic Identities," 134.
- ⁸¹*South Sudan*, 106; Fearon and Laitin, "Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity," 870.
- ⁸²International Crisis Group, "Jonglei's Tribal Conflicts," 1; Rolandsen and Breidlid, "A Critical Analysis of Cultural Explanations for the Violence in Jonglei State, South Sudan," 51.
- ⁸³"Violence, Legitimacy, and Prophecy: Nuer Struggles with Uncertainty in South Sudan," 416, 423.
- ⁸⁴"Traditional Approaches to Conflict Transformation," 3.
- ⁸⁵Interim Report on South Sudan Internal Conflict, "South Sudan Human Rights Commission (SSHRC)," 5; Young, "A Fractious Rebellion inside the SPLM-IO," 18, 20, 29.
- ⁸⁶"A Fractious Rebellion inside the SPLM-IO," 27.
- ⁸⁷*Popular Struggles and Elite Co-Optation*, 15–16.
- ⁸⁸Young, *The Fate of Sudan*, 310–11, 318.
- ⁸⁹310.
- ⁹⁰Wild, Jok, and Patel, "The Militarization of Cattle Raiding in South Sudan," 5; Jok, *War and Slavery in Sudan*, 71; Young, *Popular Struggles and Elite Co-Optation*, 22.
- ⁹¹Pendle, "They Are Now Community Police," 415–16.

⁹³ Jok and Hutchinson, “Sudan’s Prolonged Second Civil War and the Militarization of Nuer and Dinka Ethnic Identities,” 134.

⁹⁴ Wild, Jok, and Patel, “The Militarization of Cattle Raiding in South Sudan,” 5.

⁹⁵ Blackings, “Why Peace Fails: The Case of South Sudan’s Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan,” 9, 11, 13.

⁹⁶ “Final Report of the African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan-African Union - Peace and Security Department,” 22.

⁹⁷ Pendle, ““They Are Now Community Police,”” 411.

⁹⁸ Human Rights Watch, *Sudan, Oil, and Human Rights*, 158–67.

⁹⁹ Bradbury et al., *Local Peace Processes in Sudan*, 2.

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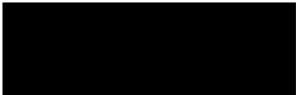
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Name/title of Principal Supervisor: Professor Helen Ware



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Candidate

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Date



Principal Supervisor

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Chapter 6: South Sudan Power Sharing Agreement R-ARCSS: The Same thing Expecting Different Results¹

Abstract

To date, two power-sharing agreements have been signed since civil war broke out in South Sudan in December 2013. The first agreement collapsed just after one year when renewed fighting broke out in July 2016. The second agreement signed in September 2018 continues to experience implementation challenges and ceasefire violations, while some of the parties declined to sign it. This article explores the role of distrust in stagnating the power-sharing agreements, and how trust building could be a game-changer. In a semi-structured in-depth interview, 29 key stakeholders were interviewed, including the conflict parties, mediators, eminent South Sudanese personalities, scholars and civil society leaders. Five major themes emerged: historical conflicts, estranged political relationships, power struggles, resource control and ethnic violence (not included in this article). The results suggest the conflict is sustained by a trust deficit among the parties arising from unresolved historical conflicts to estranged political relationships and power struggles. The article recommends transitional justice approaches for trust building and sustainable agreements.

KEYWORDS: South Sudan, civil war, political relationships, trust building, transitional justice, reconciliation, power-sharing

¹ This chapter was published in the African Security Review journal, Volume 28, 2019 - Issue 2. Although the article refers to five major themes, further analysis after it was submitted for publication identified six major themes

6.1 Introduction

Trust building is fundamental to any successful peace process; however, a systematic understanding of its contribution to conflict approaches is still lacking. For the second time on 16 September 2018, South Sudanese conflict parties signed a power-sharing agreement dubbed the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS).¹ The origin of the agreement dates back to 15 December 2013, a day which will go down the history of South Sudan as a ‘Black Sunday’, when fighting broke out in the capital Juba, later spiralling to violence between the Dinka and Nuer tribes.² After a series of negotiations, the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) was signed on 17 August 2015.³ However, deep distrust and negative emotions characterised the negotiations, a condition which overlapped into its implementation, and ultimately the collapse in July 2016.⁴ Unlike its predecessor, the R-ARCSS brought on board none Sudan Peoples’ Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) parties, armed opposition groups and civil society, including women’s groups. Despite the inclusivity, major challenges have arisen in the R-ARCSS process as five conflict parties under the banner of South Sudan National Democratic Alliance (SSNDA) declined to sign the agreement, while the SPLM-Former Detainees (FDs) signed with reservations.⁵ Furthermore, R-ARCSS is faced with implementation challenges especially the delayed formation of the Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU) which, was due in May 2019 as well as the Security Sector Reform (SSR) process that was a major cause of the collapse of ARCSS.⁶ In light of the collapse of ARCSS, the resurgence of violent conflicts and the uncertainties surrounding R-ARCSS, this paper makes two prime theoretical and the empirical contributions.

First, it furthers a theoretical understanding of the role of trust building in the build-up to peace agreements in two ways. It employs trust as a framework to analyse the trail of conflicts in South Sudan up to the current situation where the issues of distrust and negative emotions have inflamed and sustained the conflicts.⁷ It also examines the merits and demerits of the ‘traditional’ restorative versus ‘modern’ punitive justice approaches as a trust-building mechanism. In this regard, the transitional justice mechanism provided for in the R-ARCSS opens a window for trust building however; controversies on its practicability have hampered its implementation.⁸

Secondly, it empirically advances our understanding of the intricate conflict strands in which researchers identify war legacies, power struggles, wealth and ethnicity as some of the multiple causes of the conflict. By categorising these causes into three distinct primary, secondary and tertiary levels, an understanding of the relevance of trust in addressing the multiples causes of the conflict is enhanced. The conflict in South Sudan has evolved through three phases, beginning with the Sudan pre-independence period from 1955 through to post-independence from 1956 and ending in 1972 when the Addis Ababa accord was signed.⁹ The next phase started in 1983 with the formation of SPLM/A through to 2005 when the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed and finally, the post-South Sudan independence phase from 2013, resulting in the ARCSS followed by R-ARCSS.¹⁰ Throughout these phases, there were internal differences among the southern political elite resulting to power struggles and loss of civilian lives. For example, the 1983 conflict between Anyanya II and Garang’s SPLM/A, the 1991 attempted coup led by Riek Machar against John Garang and the 2013 power struggles between Salva Kiir and Riek Machar all bear humanitarian violations.¹¹ As a result, researchers have weighed in on the long and treacherous conflict and Kalpakian argues: ‘The reality is that that the rebellion was largely centred on issues associated with wealth and power’ adding: ‘However, the probable underlying cause was probably the relative weakness of South Sudan’s

institutions'.¹² Young reminds us that, 'The roots of the leadership and motivations of the SPLM-IO lay deep in second Sudanese civil war and must be understood in order to grasp the current political and military crisis in South Sudan'.¹³

Wealth in South Sudan is associated with oil and according to de Waal, the motivation for control of power was to accumulate wealth or safeguard and expand the already acquired wealth.¹⁴ Khartoum is a covert player in the conflict taking advantage of the situation to gain unfettered access to south Sudan's oil fields during the second and third phases of the war.¹⁵ Salva Kiir, who in the past initiated the Juba Declaration, depriving Khartoum of the majority of proxy militia it uses to destabilise South Sudan and gain access to the oil, now seems to have fallen in the same trap.¹⁶ In this kind of situation, weak institutions best suit the interests of the political elite in pursuit of power and wealth. In the absence of strong institutions necessary to foster trust, as will be discussed, the status quo is likely to linger to the detriment of the power sharing agreement.

This article has been organised in seven sections as follows: The first section presents a theoretical framework that anchors the study on the tenets of trust in relationships and conflict. Additionally, it lays out the levels of conflict and the embeddedness of the categories of trust in the various levels of conflict. Section two outlines the methodology of the study, looking at the participants, and the design and analysis approach. The next section provides a historical and contextual background of the conflict, followed by an overview of the justification of the study, identifying gaps in the power-sharing agreements. The fourth section introduces estranged political relationships as trust inhibitor and conflict enabler, explaining the institutional basis on which political relationships function. Section five addresses the trust-building process before delving into the sixth section, which looks at the possibilities of building trust through a traditional justice approaches in an overall transitional justice mechanism, and drawing a conclusion in the final section.

6.2 Theoretical Background

6.2.1 Trust, relations and conflict

A cross-section of disciplines, including psychologists, sociologists and political scientists, identify trust as a foundational ingredient for interpersonal and impersonal relationships, cooperation and institutional stability.¹⁷ Accordingly, a cross-sectional discipline definition of trust is; the willingness to rely on and be vulnerable to another with confident and positive expectations that the other will deliver.¹⁸ Rousseau et al. list risk and interdependence, in both cases meaning ‘reliance upon another’ to deliver, as the two conditions necessary for trust to persist.¹⁹ According to Lewicki, the absence of trust in relationships is the reason for destructive and acrimonious conflicts where trust is ‘the glue that holds relationships together’.²⁰ Researchers point out three elements that guide an individual’s ability to trust: First is one’s personality, which relates to a belief system resulting from experiences developed from childhood; second, the institutional capacity to provide safety and security in the process of interactions between individuals and third, the experiences or history in a given relationship.²¹ These three elements signify that individuals in their relationships, experience trust either at an interpersonal level or at an impersonal level, where institutions form the basis of trust.

At the interpersonal level, cognitive capacity developed from childhood and experiences of interactions among individuals are the critical trust elements. The cognitive derivative explains McKnight, Cummings and Chervany’s definition of initial trust when ‘parties first meet or interact’.²² At the impersonal level, institutional norms, rules and values, either explicit or implicit, are the basis for trust.²³ In this regard, ‘Institution-based trust means that one believes the necessary impersonal structures are in place to enable one to act in anticipation of a successful future endeavour’.²⁴ However, Khan argues that in the case of informal institutions

where there are no formal written rules, the interactions rely on individuals and therefore an interpersonal appeal.²⁵

Stemming from the interpersonal and Impersonal levels of interactions, four categories of trust emerge. Deterrence-Based Trust (DBT) in which punitive consequences of default sustain trust; Knowledge-Based Trust (KBT), which relates to the ability to predict behaviour of others and; Identification-Based Trust (IBT) in which either party internalises and empathises with the interests of the other.²⁶ Similar to DBT is Calculus-Based Trust (CBT), which in addition to providing for calculated deterrents for trust violations also provides reward measures for keeping trust.²⁷ DBT and CBT occur during impersonal relationships where institutional rules and conditions are crucial in trust sustenance. When the rules or conditions provided are followed trust is the result and the contrary leads to distrust. KBT, on the other hand, arise during interpersonal interactions when positive or negative knowledge of either party result to either trust or distrust. Based on the mutual understanding of interests, IBT stands out as the highest degree of trust, which could be a function of either interpersonal or impersonal relationships. Lewicki visualises it as a situation where the parties ‘understand and appreciate one another’s wants and commit to shared values and the same objectives’ and ‘stabilizes relationships during periods of conflict and negativity’.²⁸

Jones and George argue that trust and distrust is not a matter of different determinants resulting to various categories of trust as mentioned above but an outcome of ‘values, attitudes, and moods and emotions’ which render trust or distrust either conditional or unconditional.²⁹ In their view, conditional trust arises when parties willingly interact as long as their attitudes towards one another are ‘favourable enough to support future interactions’ and unconditional trust when shared values form the basis of interaction among parties as opposed to individual interests. Although Jones and George argue that psychological and emotional tendencies are responsible for shaping trust and distrust, conditional trust is a function of knowledge of the

other party without which trust is withdrawn; hence, KBT. On the other hand, an unconditional trust may be a function of institutional settings where common values normally apply on an impersonal basis whereby the values of DBT, CBT and IBT are applicable.

The SPLM being a political party, trust experiences are a function of impersonal trust in which interactions in relationships occur within an institutional framework of political relationships. However, party members also experience interpersonal relationships through their individual inherent cognitive trust abilities and experiences in the course of their interactions and more so due to the informal setting in which the party was formed.³⁰

6.2.2 Trust in the levels of conflict

An exposition of the various levels of conflict that occurred in the SPLM relationships is necessary to understand the interplay of trust and distrust. Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall identify three levels of causes of conflict, the immediate trigger causes, the ‘underlying sources of tension’, and ‘deeper structural conditions which shape events’ where ‘The longer-term and the immediate causes work together to bring about war’.³¹ Likewise, Fisher et al. use a conflict tree analogy to categorise the three levels of conflict as being the causes at the root, core problem at the trunk and the effects at the branches.³² Since the various levels of conflict work together to bring about war, logically, they need to be tackled together and sequentially at the primary, secondary and the tertiary levels. At the primary level is the historical conflict, at the secondary level the estrangement in relationships arising from the historical conflict and at the tertiary level the power struggles enabled by the estranged political relationships. Interwoven in the three levels of conflict are issues of distrust, which from an institutional standpoint, demonstrate the incongruous nature of the SPLM, hence the lack of DTB. However, from an informal institutional lens, negative experiences the parties have of each other leads to a deficit of KBT and the conflict escalation. In that state, the lack of shared values render IBT

impracticable and hence the difficulty in getting the parties to work together in a power-sharing agreement.

6.3 Materials and Methods

This study originated from the need to explain the reasons for the unsuccessful peace agreements in South Sudan. A qualitative research approach provided the means of interrogation purposely recruiting twenty-nine participants with specific reference to the role of the SPLM political elite in the conflict.³³ Participants were categorised into five subgroups of stakeholders, including eight from the conflict parties, six mediation team members, four eminent South Sudanese personalities, seven scholars and four civil society organisation leaders. Participant affiliations were from South Sudan government, political/military institutions, the African Union (AU), United Nations (UN), eminent politicians and leaders, academicians and civil society organisations.

The protocol design had semi-structured interviews, which captured the rich, in-depth knowledge and experiences of the participants, on the current and historical conflicts in South Sudan.³⁴ Recruitment of mediation team participants was done through telephone contacts established through the AU. Participants from the government and the SPLM party were recruited through a formal request made to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of South Sudan. Other participants were recruited by word of mouth and email contacts. The participant engagement protocol included an information sheet on the study and a consent form providing for choices of audio recording and identification as per the ethics requirements.

The interviews addressed the following research questions:

- (1) ‘Why have mediation efforts not been effective in ending the violent conflicts in South Sudan?’

(2) ‘Which strategies are best suited for resolving the disputes and estrangement among the SPLM members?’

The data analysis procedure involved identifying recurring patterns and themes from the literature review and transcribed data, both uploaded to an NVivo software analysis tool. The identified information was coded with relevant concepts to the research questions forming five dominant themes: historical conflicts, estranged political relationships, power struggles, resources control and ethnic violence. A deductive analysis approach based on literature and historical documents, and an inductive analysis from the emergent themes in the raw data were applied.³⁵

6.4 Doing the Same Thing and Expecting Different Results

R-ARCSS instilled hope for a political solution to the South Sudan conflict, however, will it succeed where ARCSS failed, and if it will succeed what ought to be done differently? Answering these questions requires an interrogation as to why the protagonists are prone to violent conflicts despite existing agreements. For example, the parties failed to observe to the CoHA during ARCSS implementation and similar violations have occurred during R-ARCSS.³⁶ These anomalies are reminiscent of damaged relationships among the parties characterised by deep distrust and in need of repair in order to instil trust and cooperation. Dr Itto Anne, former Deputy Secretary General of the SPLM and a member of the East African Legislative expresses scepticism on the viability of R-ARCSS, saying, ‘... there is no hope because the approach has not changed though more people have been brought on board’ (personal communication, March 26, 2018). This ‘no change’ position resonates with the views of Edmund Yakani, the Executive Director of Community Empowerment for Progress Organization: ‘Once they are in power it is all forgotten because it is all about power ... So the focus of dealing with the disputes was not

based on root causes but more on power stabilisation’ (personal communication, March 14, 2018).

Dealing with root causes entails an examination of the three levels of conflict earlier mentioned in which various forms of distrust are embedded. Since dealing with the legacy of conflicts plays a crucial role in trust building and ending violent conflicts, it is a wonder why it has not received due attention in the course of finding solutions to the South Sudanese conflicts. Whether the mediators and the stakeholders drew lessons from the defunct ARCSS is a matter that could be determined by the R-ARCSS implementation. During the mediation process, Professor Lual Acuek Deng, Managing Director of Ebony Centre for Strategic Studies, argued: ‘Revitalization will not work, they will do something temporary and people will fight again, this is an elite process in which they are unlikely to agree’ (personal conversation, March 17, 2018). Acuek Deng’s pessimism reflects the stagnation of R-ARCSS negotiations in Addis Ababa between February and June 2018, where the parties could not reach an agreement on governance and security issues which attracted threats of US sanctions.³⁷

In another twist of events that unlocked the stalemate in the R-ARCSS negotiations, Sudan single-handedly reinvigorated IGAD’s efforts after shuttle diplomacy engaging Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia.³⁸ In just three months of the Sudan initiative, R-ARCSS was concluded. What was the game-changer? The preliminary meetings led to a ceasefire agreement of 21 June 2018, the texts of which entrusted President El-Bashir with measures to rehabilitate South Sudan’s economy and oil sector.³⁹ This move happened against the backdrop of Sudan’s ailing economy that was widely reported to be facing collapse.⁴⁰ There is no doubt that Sudan lacks the moral capacity to oversee South Sudan’s economic rehabilitation. Therefore, Sudan’s economic interests were primarily the motivation in helping to unlock the stalemate. A Professor of Peace and Development correctly interprets this position: ‘peace can be achieved quickly ... if one of the neighbouring countries with leverage on the government changes its

mind and says this has gone on for too long and people must begin to talk seriously' (personal conversation, March 17, 2018).

The above situation signifies that in the absence of trust, the R-ARCSS signatories, particularly Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, depend on their regional benefactors to sustain the agreement.⁴¹ Since interests change over time, it raises a question whether R-ARCSS will succeed when the interests of the benefactors change. Indeed, the recent overthrow of Bashir in a military coup has raised concerns on the fate of R-ARCSS.⁴² At best, R-ARCSS will yield what Galtung refers to as negative peace which aims to control and reduce overt violence as opposed to positive peace which addresses structural causes of the violence focussing on the 'past, present and future' to achieve social justice.⁴³ The former means the focus of the agreement lies in curbing the power struggles, whereas the latter would simultaneously address the primary, secondary and tertiary causes of the conflict.

6.5 Estranged Political Relationships, the Conflict Enabler

During the signing of the Addis Ababa ceasefire accord in May 2014, signs of anger and bitterness between Salva Kiir and Riek Machar could be read in their body language.⁴⁴ The negative emotions reflect the estranged status of the parties stemming from unaddressed and unacknowledged historical conflicts.⁴⁵ It is an issue Kaufman argues, arise when in the course of implementation of agreements, the underlying unresolved issues of distrust and negative emotions burgeon into full-scale violent conflict and asserts: 'Effective conflict resolution, therefore, requires addressing the emotional and symbolic processes that influence how tangible issues are perceived and how they play out politically'.⁴⁶ The question is how to deal with these negative emotions and attitudes that undermine peace processes.

Political relationships in part function through political institutions whose values, rules and norms regulate the relationships.⁴⁷ Since political institutions are the basis of the

relationships, they are barometers that measure the behaviours and attitudes of its members. Failure to conform to the institutional parameters leads to violations in the relationships and breach of trust, whereas conformity cultivates DBT.

A series of incidents preceded ‘Black Sunday’, including cabinet and party member dismissals, and the dissolution of party organs following contested party reform processes.⁴⁸ These actions culminated in a power struggle, triggering the civil war. In the ensuing mediation processes that culminated in ARCSS and R-ARCSS, the parties exhibited intransigent positions calling for external pressure to arrive at the agreements.⁴⁹ Hartzell and Hoddie explain that

‘in an environment rife with suspicion and concerns on the part of adversaries about what the actions of others will mean for their safety...Power-sharing serves as the mechanism that offers this protection by guaranteeing all groups a share of state power’.⁵⁰

Although the existence of two armies with parallel command structures was a major cause of the breakdown of ARCSS, the conflict parties had voiced concern that the agreement was imposed.⁵¹ Salva Kiir initially declined to sign it and when he eventually did, almost two weeks later, he clearly expressed reservations.⁵² Ambassador Joram Biswaro, Head of the African Union Mission in South Sudan says, ‘I think any agreement that is signed under duress is bound to face failures when it comes to implementation’ (personal conversation, March 29, 2018). According to a member of the mediation team, ‘The dilemma was with the protagonists because after a series of negotiations, they could not agree and so the question was, do we let them negotiate independently or do we craft something and give them to sign?’ (personal conversation, November 24, 2017).

What was the reason for the intransigence? The re-emergence of fighting and the eventual collapse of the agreement in July 2016 indicate that the balance of power objective of the agreement was not achieved. Since KBT refers to trust developed over time based on positive knowledge the parties have gathered of each other, the history of unresolved conflict among the

SPLM parties renders KBT unachievable. Consequently, the lack of KBT played out at the secondary level of the conflict through balkanisations of the SPLM and the forging of alliances against each other. A balanced power-sharing agreement could have saved the situation and in a sense instilled a DBT, since the agreement itself is a basis for deterrence.

6.5.1 Trust in political relationships

Trust in relationships is not only considered the ‘glue’ that holds interpersonal and intergroup relations together but also the ‘social capital’ that fosters functionality and stability in relationships, ‘defined as the actual or potential value derived from a relationship’.⁵³ Therefore, the acrimonious conflict in the SPLM, yet continuing to offer political leadership, renders trust-building pre-requisite in the post-conflict situation.

The enduring estrangements and distrust among the SPLM parties is a result of disagreements and violations of the shared normative values.⁵⁴ Kramer and Tyler list such anomalies as violations of agreements, laws or pacts and changing of the same unilaterally after it has been reached, corruption, lack of confidentiality, abusive authority, damaged identity characterised by public criticism, wrongful and unfair accusations.⁵⁵ According to Finkel et al., breach of trust violates accepted norms and moral obligations in a relationship resulting in a desire for vengeance on the part of the victim, which, may be met with reciprocal behavioural negativity on the part of the perpetrator.⁵⁶ The result of breach of trust is betrayal, leading to vengeance.⁵⁷

As indicated previously, the historical knowledge and experiences of the SPLM members do not inspire trust. Institutionally, the SPLM is a political ‘vehicle’ whose values, rules and norms should be able to moderate the interactions of its members to inspire trust. However, the ‘vehicle’ lacks the requisite institutional capacity necessary to steer the political relationships of its members on a unified course as evidenced by the incessant infighting signifying a

deficiency in DBT. The SPLM constitution reflects such weaknesses. Chapter XX Section 72 stipulates: ‘The Political Bureau shall make rules, regulations and procedures governing Party discipline’.⁵⁸ However, the regulatory provision remained inconclusive, making room for the chaos that arose. During the 14 December 2013, National Liberation Council (NLC) meeting, President Salva Kiir made insinuations of betrayal that ‘he does not want a repeat of the 1991 coup’ (Professor Lual Acuek Deng, personal conversation, March 17, 2018). Such utterances indicate that their relationship is still shrouded in distrust and suspicion based on negative prior knowledge. In a seemingly premeditated situation, fighting broke out the next day followed by allegations of a coup attempt.

The above position also explains the absence of IBT, where the appreciation of shared values would lead to cooperative attitudes. The failure to reach a consensus on the SPLM reforms during the NLC reflects the informal nature of the party. Overall, the political leaders at the party helm have usurped the impersonal relationship role of the SPLM in fostering trust among the members. Hence, there is a perception that the conflict is between Salva Kiir and Riek Machar or as was in the past, John Garang and Riek Machar. However, there have been intervals of harmonious relationships within the SPLM, observed post peace the agreements. In such situations, third parties, for example IGAD, oversight the provisions of the agreements, which instils a degree of DBT.⁵⁹

6.6 Trust Building

Trust and confidence building are terms commonly used in peace contexts, sometimes without strategies that entail their practicability. For example, the Juba Declaration of 2006 in its preamble states: ‘Further determined to build trust and confidence among themselves ...’.⁶⁰ David Shearer, Head of the UN Mission in South Sudan while referring to the implementation of R-ARCSS stated: ‘The big challenge ahead is to build trust and confidence between the

parties and between the parties and the people'.⁶¹ Breach of trust calls for trust building as a precondition for a functional relationship, however, as Shearer pointed out, the challenge is how to make it happen.

The resolution of the conflict in Northern Ireland, though different in context, is credited as one of the reconciliation success stories.⁶² In a study by Democratic Dialogue, it emerged that 'addressing relationships between former enemies and those estranged due to conflict' and 'engaging in confidence – and trust-building measures' were major themes in the Northern Ireland peace process.⁶³ This example of trust building is addressed in a reconciliation framework that deals with past war legacies. Hicks elaborates: 'In cases of humiliation and traumatic experiences of violence, trust building means addressing issues of transitional justice and reconciliation'.⁶⁴

Therefore, the first step in trust building entails looking into past events concerning the current conflict. From the SPLM perspective, the issues of transitional justice would entail revisiting its history from 1983 by examining the violent conflicts leading to the acrimonious separation.⁶⁵ This historical aspect is particularly crucial because as Young points out, the initial force that later took on the name SPLM In Opposition (IO) after the 2013 outbreak of fighting was commanded by former South Sudan Defence Forces (SSDF) and Anyanya II officers that had links to the 1991 and 1983 incidents, Gabriel Tanginye being an example.⁶⁶ These two major unresolved incidents have trust implications and are an *Achilles' heel* in the SPLM relationships.⁶⁷ For this reason, Edmund Yakani, the Executive Director of Community Empowerment for Progress Organization says: 'ARCSS is an outcome that ignored the necessary level of trust that was required for the parties to work together in implementing the agreement ... the level of distrust and lack of confidence is very high and it is historical' (personal communication, March 14, 2018). Within the three levels of conflict, trust building

would commence by identifying the root causes of the conflict at the primary level, in an overall transitional justice framework.

Secondly, since this is primarily a political relationship in which institutional parameters are the basis of interactions, identifying the causes of distrust in that context forms the next step. Defining what political relationships in the SPLM mean, is a means of defining the historical conflicts that occurred and its ripple effects. Hicks is of the view that in addition to distrust, there could be ‘fundamental disagreement on the legitimacy of the existing political order as well’.⁶⁸ In this regard, ideological differences were a major cause of disagreements in the SPLM at its inception in 1983 and 1991, followed by accusations and counter-accusations of dictatorship, coup plots and mismanagement. From an institutional standpoint, these allegations need to be guided by the institutional provisions, which, as mentioned, maybe informal, especially considering the guerrilla nature of the SPLM/A from 1983.⁶⁹ Here, the parties will examine their past actions that contributed to the conflict. The aim is to come to terms with the knowledge of past adverse events. An example is the attempted coup incident of 1991. If harboured, they form the basis of sustained knowledge-based distrust as opposed to KBT.

Thirdly, the parties willingly acknowledge and take responsibility for their role in the conflicts, past and present. The basis is the institutional provisions, formal or informal, whether concerning dictatorship, coup plots, or mismanagement. The continuous reference to the 1991 coup by a section of SPLM leaders, and by extension 1983 SPLM/A formation conflict with Anyanya II leaders, explains their prior knowledge and predictability of the Machar group behavioural trend, and by implication the deficit of KBT. On the other hand, this is the same reason for the Machar group reference to dictatorship and mismanagement as the basis of their opposition. The net effect is the distrust exhibited by the parties, which is an indicator that it is time for the parties to acknowledge the problem and willingly exchange forgiveness to

commence the trust and confidence-building process. The focus here is reconciliation based on the acknowledgment of past and current violations of the institutional parameters. Ramsbotham et al. define reconciliation as ‘restoring broken relationships and learning to live non-violently with radical differences’.⁷⁰ Murphy coins the term ‘political reconciliation’ that arises when political relationships are damaged by negative attitudes such as: ‘anger, hatred, resentment and indignation’ and are addressed by dealing with the negative attitudes beginning with forgiveness.⁷¹ Enright and the Human Development Study Group (1991) define forgiveness as ‘a willingness to abandon one’s right to resentment, condemnation, and subtle revenge toward an offender who acts unjustly while fostering the undeserved qualities of compassion, generosity, and even love toward him or her’.⁷²

As a fourth step, the parties reaffirm commitment to the institutional parameters which govern the relationships. In this regard, Khan points out that identifying a suitable institutional reform strategy is a critical factor in enhancing enforcement and compliance mechanisms that are commensurate to anticipated violations to foster trust.⁷³ At this point, ‘living harmoniously with radical differences’, though contradictory, makes sense since trust is not contingent on an individual but a function of the institutional provisions that govern the relationships. By implication, therefore, the parties are in a position to take more risks based on positive expectations arising from the institutional-based trust in which the four categories of trust discussed earlier apply at the various levels of the conflict.⁷⁴ Since trust violations were identified and acknowledged, the parties ought to discuss strategies to avoid similar occurrences in the future. Additionally, after problem identification, the focus should no longer be on individuals but the problem so identified. The conflict, therefore, should be reframed as an opportunity for recovery, growth and development through peace making in a re-established relationship of trust.⁷⁵ Ultimately, the approach to problem solving shifts from an adversarial to a cooperative one.⁷⁶

6.6.1 R-ARCSS, immediate challenge to trust building

Whether the SPLM protagonists intend to restore their political relations as a party or remain separate political entities is a matter of discussion. Nevertheless, they are expected to form a unity government per the R-ARCSS terms. Ideally, trust building would be the starting point for harmonious relationships though that is a choice only the protagonists can make.⁷⁷ The reality is that they are still divided into various factions yet maintaining the SPLM name differentiated as IG, IO, FDs, IO-Taban and the most recent The Real SPLM of Pagan Amum.⁷⁸ The adherence to the SPLM name demonstrates that the various factions still believe in the political capital the party generates, which could be a rallying point for a unified formation. There was a sign of a possible reunification when on 29 January 2019, President Salva Kiir held a meeting with the SPLM-FDs led by Deng Alor who said on South Sudan state television: ‘All of us have agreed to reunite the SPLM and come back to SPLM as a family’.⁷⁹ A trust building process would be an opportunity to talk about party reforms and identify shared values as a unifying factor.

Since R-ARCSS is the current basis of interactions among the conflict parties, it poses a challenge to trust and confidence building for two reasons. First, Chapter V and Article 2.1.1 provides for dealing with the legacy of conflicts and reconciliation; however, Article 2.2.3.1 limits the extent of the legacy of such conflicts to 2005.⁸⁰ The implication is that prior conflicts, the most prominent ones being in 1983 and 1991, do not constitute the transitional justice process provided under R-ARCSS. This point is crucial because the two key protagonists, Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, are expected to lead the R-TGoNU and yet, as mentioned, the origin of distrust between them is traceable to the 1983 and 1991 conflicts. This exclusion potentially renders trust building an impossible task since conflict legacies identifiable at the primary and secondary levels are rendered null and void. Secondly, Article 2.2.1 of Chapter V stipulates that the implementation mandate of the Reconciliation Commission, to be appointed, will cover

human rights abuses ‘against all persons’ by state and non-state actors and their agents. The mandate is silent on conflicts among the political elite and particularly the SPLM implying R-ARCSS has no mechanism for trust building among the polarised SPLM members who at the same time, dominate the agreement.

6.7 The Possibilities of Traditional Approaches

Article 2.2.3.9 of Chapter V mentioned earlier, offers possibilities for the application of traditional justice mechanisms, including reconciliation and healing. A key indicator of a successful peacebuilding process lies in its ownership and participation of the parties involved.⁸¹ As previously noted, a transitional justice process that South Sudanese identify with is more likely to register the requisite outcomes. For example, Acholi victims of the atrocities of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in northern Uganda embraced the traditional ‘Mato Oput’ reconciliation and healing process instead of the punitive justice system discharged by the International Criminal Court (ICC).⁸² Similarly, the R-ARCSS under the transitional justice mechanism provides for a traditional reconciliatory approach as well as a punitive system through the Hybrid Court for South Sudan (HCSS).⁸³

Further to the shortfall in addressing trust building, a point of contention in the R-ARCSS transitional justice mechanism is with the sequencing of the various components of the process including the hybrid court, truth and reconciliation, and the traditional approach. Which one comes first, or should they be implemented concurrently, or even shelve one or the other? In a study investigating the emergence of the SPLM-IO, Young finds that during the ARCSS negotiations, the government side opposed the question of addressing the root causes of the conflict as tabled by Riek Machar.⁸⁴ According to a General, formerly a member of the SPLM turned opposition leader, ‘... the major reasons for being against ARCSS are fear of loss of control of power through an inclusive process and fear of revisiting and accepting responsibility

for the root causes of current and historical injustices’ (personal communication, November 17, 2017). The General’s views resonate with Bell and O’Rourke who argue that peace agreements that address root causes of conflict pose a challenge to a state’s legitimacy as it exposes failures of the state and overhauls political and legal institutions that address those failures.⁸⁵

The report of the African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan (AUCISS) recommends strengthening of the relevant judicial institutions for accountability of the wanton atrocities committed, which it partially attributes to Salva Kiir and Riek Machar.⁸⁶ Political posturing due to the fear of prosecution, as identified by Bell and O’Rourke, explains the slow pace of the establishment of the HCSS.⁸⁷

In a discussion on the situation in South Sudan, Ambassador Alan Goulty argued that a compromise on the question of criminal justice in favour of a truth and reconciliation process is ‘the only possible way forward’ since ‘nobody is going to negotiate himself into jail’.⁸⁸ Goulty’s concern echoes the point on the fear of justice by the political elite and the repercussions thereof. The Right Honourable Aldo Ajor, former Deputy Prime Minister of Sudan and, former Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Sudan (personal communication, March 30, 2018) echoes similar sentiments:

I think if we go the way of the hybrid court to condemn others, we will not have done something that will enable us to get peace back. I say so because if some of them are convicted..., they will defect and not come to Juba and being warlords, they will stay in villages...and fortify themselves. People like Paul Malong, Peter Gadet, and others will stay in the bush.

In short, Ajor is saying criminal justice if applied as a means of building DBT, will be counterproductive to the South Sudan peace process. Likewise, Ambassador Francis Deng weighs in: ‘African jurisprudence is such that ... the court tries to find a solution that reconciles

people then you are blessed through rituals. In the western world ... they serve you proceedings you win you lose and go your separate ways' (personal communication, March 23, 2018)

In sharp contrast, Human Rights Watch (HRW) argues against any form of compromise saying those indicted for serious crimes should face prosecution under international human rights and humanitarian law and that in the past, making compromises in the hope of stability only resulted in further abuses.⁸⁹ The validity of the HRW argument is that there ought to be some form of accountability whose outcomes translate to deterrence to future impunity, hence, a build-up to DBT. Therefore, where the parties fail to establish a mechanism for DBT at the local level, there should be an escalation of the same based on the merits of international law. However, as pointed out by Goulty, the dilemma is how to bring to justice culprits who wield state power. It gets further complicated where such culprits are responsible for implementing a delicate peace agreement that includes mechanisms to bring them to justice. In a balancing act, the AUCISS report notes the complementarity as well as contradictions between justice and peace. The report suggests that certain aspects of justice be deferred in order to establish a peaceful atmosphere that will necessitate the building of institutions to support justice processes.⁹⁰

Since the process of reconciliation embodies trust building, a mechanism originated by the parties is more likely to succeed.⁹¹ On how it influences the seemingly irreparable relationship between Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, The Right Honourable Aldo Ajor (personal communication, March 30, 2018), further highlights the viability of traditional mechanisms:

...Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, are humans who can be induced to accept one another because the two of them come from ethnic groups that believe in reconciliation. So, if they are to accept our culture, they can shake hands and work for peace. Between Dinka and Nuer...our traditions and customs tell us that when you fight, you don't fight to an end. The same elders and mediators will stop you and [be reconciled] and once you are reconciled, you keep the conflict aside. But

what is happening between them is that their conflict, including those killed, is put aside but not given away completely to the extent that anything that comes in will trigger the matter and lead to a fight.

Despite Ador's take on traditional approaches, the capacity of the traditional leaders to execute the process needs interrogation. Typically, traditional justice mechanisms are processes mandated to traditional leaders with experiential mediation skills, wisdom and unequivocal respect in their communities.⁹² However, at the state level, political will is the master key in unlocking or locking the process. In South Sudan, the role traditional leaders play in the reconciliation processes has been successful at the grassroots levels, as evidenced by the highly acclaimed Wunlit 'people to people' peace processes.⁹³ Unfortunately, South Sudanese traditional leaders have been undermined in the past, in some cases costing their lives, especially where the interests of the state actors were at stake.⁹⁴ To that end, Ambassador Francis Deng is of the view that there should be a domestic solution mirrored by 'their social cohesiveness, their value system, indigenous ways of running matters that have been destroyed and reconstruct them including traditional authority within and between communities' (personal communication, March 23, 2018).

A rather radical but logical view on the subject of the hybrid court came from Professor Lual Acuek Deng who argues: 'the hybrid should not be taken in the sense of South Sudanese and non-Sudanese court, I take it as being traditional with modernity to bring our chiefs to try some of the cases using our own methods' (personal conversation, March 17, 2018). Acuek Deng further argues, 'It will also be a deterrent because if you read the preamble of ARCSS, it is written that anybody who has committed a crime or financial embezzlement will not participate in the next government'. In his view, this kind of hybrid court should have been at the fore of the agreement and would translate to a DBT that would then sustainably drive the political, security and economic aspects of R-ARCSS.

The interpretation of the hybrid court combining tradition and modernity, implemented side-by-side is fascinating and could be a compromise worth considering. However, the question of precedence again arises, given the delicate balance between punitive and restorative justice. Reyntjens and Vandeginste analyse the popular *Gacaca*, a modernised *Gacaca* court combining conventional and traditional justice systems, introduced by the government of Rwanda to offset a backlog of post-genocide cases.⁹⁵ Lessons could be drawn from the popular *Gacaca* based on its merits and demerits.

6.8 Conclusion

This article has argued that trust is foundational for successful interpersonal and impersonal relationships and the absence of a mechanism that deals with trust building stand the risk of prolonging conflicts. The findings suggest historical conflicts in South Sudan have had ripple effects on subsequent conflicts that ultimately erupted in 2013. This eruption systematically emerged through three levels starting at the primary level where conflict legacies structurally occurred, resulting in a breach of trust and broken political relationships. Consequently, at the secondary level, underlying tensions in the form of damaged political relationships arose where the estranged status carries negative emotions such as anger, bitterness and the urge for revenge. Ultimately, the estranged status sustained by deep distrust led to power struggles, characterised by disagreements on governance issues, triggered the conflict at the tertiary level.

Regardless of the terminological differences, various research shows that conflicts occur at three distinct levels. Embedded in the three levels of conflict are issues of deep distrust, which from an interpersonal and impersonal standpoint portray a void in the four categories of trust: DBT, CBT, KBT and IBT. An understanding of the three levels and the trust intricacies therein is crucial because it leads to requisite interventions. The findings indicate that interventions that

do not address trust building while encompassing the three levels of conflict are likely to be unsuccessful, ARCSS being a vivid example. The uncertainties surrounding R-ARCSS implementation show similar tendencies suggesting the need for a reevaluation of its approach altogether.

Previous studies that have dominated the conflict situation in South Sudan correctly identify war legacies, power struggles, wealth and ethnicity as some of the cause of the conflict. What does not emerge from these studies is a systematic approach that harnesses all these multiple causations towards addressing the conflict. Such findings, therefore, prove to be insufficient when the intricate conflict strands are analysed and correlated to the three levels of conflict and the distrust implications.

While this article does not offer conclusive solutions to the conflict, it lays down some practical trust building implications that might be useful addressing the fractured political relationships towards shared political values and cooperative approaches to the conflict. An impersonal approach based on institutional frameworks is pertinent in restoring DBT and from an interpersonal standpoint, dealing with the negatives of the past would change combative attitudes towards establishing KBT. These factored together, and as members share common values, would instil IBT for cooperative problem solving and relationships. Since the effectiveness of trust and reconciliation depend on voluntary participation, the major weakness of this study is that it was not able to establish whether the signatories to the agreement would be willing to embrace such a process. The reason was the hurdles in accessing the two main protagonists as attempts to reach President Salva Kiir through the SPLM secretariat proved futile and Riek Machar was under house arrest in South Africa. Another weakness lies in the determination of enforcement and compliance protocol of institutions once established to regulate political relationships. Notwithstanding the limitation, the study suggests the

exploration of transitional justice with a traditional appeal and beyond encompassing conflicts before 2005 with the objective of trust building.

Overall, efforts geared towards addressing root causes of the conflict in South Sudan are insufficient and a process owned by the conflict parties is more likely to stand the test of time. There, however, remains a great deal of work to be done in this under-researched field.

Notes on contributor

Sam Angulo Onapa holds a Master of Arts (MA) in Peacebuilding from Coventry University (UK) and is currently a Ph.D. candidate at the University of New England, NSW. His study focuses on the conflict in South Sudan, particularly the role of the political elite. Prior to embarking on the study in February 2017, he worked with the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Department, in Sudan and later at the headquarters in Addis Ababa. His role included Administration and Finance oversight in Sudan and South Sudan in addition to facilitating and coordinating peace building projects. In Addis Ababa, he was responsible for peace projects funds management and coordination of the peace projects in Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Burundi, CAR, DRC, Mali and various other post conflict countries in West Africa.

ORCID

Sam Angulo Onapa <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2330-8142>

Notes

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- 5 Sudan Tribune, 'SSOA Holdout Groups'; 'SSOA-TC Changes Its Name'; 'IGAD Threatens to Label'.
- 6 Hauenstein, Joshi, and Quinn, 'Report of the Peace Accords', 27–30.
- 7 Bodtker and Jameson, 'Emotion in Conflict Formation', 261.
- 8 Johnson, *South Sudan*, 295–6.
- 9 Young, *The Fate of Sudan*, 3, 19, 20, 25; Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery*, 15, 23.
- 10 Scott, 'The Sudan Peoples' Liberation', 71; Hutchinson, 'A Curse from God?' 310–11; Johnson, *South Sudan*, 9, 46–8; Brosché and Höglund, 'Crisis of Governance', 78.
- 11 Young, *The South Sudan Defence*, 13; Jok and Hutchinson, 'Sudan's Prolonged Second', 126; Blanchard, 'The Crisis in South Sudan', 6; Brosché and Höglund, 'Crisis of Governance', 77.
- 12 'Peace Agreements in a Near', 12.
- 13 *A Fractious Rebellion inside the SPLM-IO*, 10.
- 14 de Waal, 'When Kleptocracy Becomes Insolvent', 365.
- 15 Ryle et al., *The Sudan Handbook*, 215; Arnold, 'The South Sudan Defence', 449–501.
- 16 Young, *The South Sudan Defence*, 23–4.
- 17 Lewicki, McAllister, and Bies, 'Trust and Distrust', 438.
- 18 Rousseau et al., 'Not so Different After All', 394.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 395.
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- 21 McKnight, Cummings, and Chervany, 'Initial Trust Formation', 474–5; Trust, Trust Development and Trust Repair in Deutsch et al., *The Handbook of Conflict*, 96.
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- 24 McKnight, Cummings, and Chervany, 'Initial Trust Formation', 478.
- 25 'Political Settlements', 11.
- 26 Shapiro, Sheppard, and Cheraskin, 'Business on a Handshake', 366–72; Lewicki and Bunker, *Trust in Relationships*, 142.
- 27 Rousseau et al., 'Not so Different After All', 398–9; Lewicki in Deutsch et al., *The Handbook of Conflict*, 95.
- 28 Trust, Trust Development and Trust Repair in *The Handbook of Conflict*, 96.
- 29 'The Experience and Evolution', 536–7.
- 30 McKnight, Cummings, and Chervany, 'Initial Trust Formation', 475.
- 31 Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, 112.
- 32 *Working with Conflict*, 29–30.
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- 35 Boyatzis, *Transforming Qualitative Information*, 30.
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- 41 Young, *A Fractious Rebellion inside the SPLM-IO*, 53.
- 42 Radio Tamazuj, 'Juba Concerned Over'.
- 43 'Violence, Peace, and Peace Research', 183.
- 44 *BBC News*, 'South Sudan Rivals'.
- 45 Wils et al., 'The Systemic Approach to Conflict Transformation', 15; Hamber, Kelly, and Democratic Dialogue (Organization), *A Place for Reconciliation?* 23.
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- 47 Barkin, 'Realist Constructivism', 333.

- 48 Johnson, 'Briefing', 169–70.
- 49 Craze, Tubiana, and Gramizzi, *A State of Disunity*, 102; Sudan Tribune, 'US Sanctions Delaying Peace'.
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- 51 Africa Research Bulletin, 'SOUTH SUDAN', 21120.
- 52 Craze, Tubiana, and Gramizzi, *A State of Disunity*, 102; Young, 'Riek Machar and the SPLM-IO', 16.
- 53 McEvily, Perrone, and Zaheer, 'Trust as an Organizing Principle', 95.
- 54 Murphy, *A Moral Theory of Political*, 14.
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- 59 United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), 'Report of the Commission', 8.
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- 62 Miall, 'Conflict Transformation', 78.
- 63 Hamber, Kelly, and Democratic Dialogue (Organization), *A Place for Reconciliation?* 43.
- 64 Berghof Foundation, *Berghof Glossary on Conflict*, 37.
- 65 Craze, Tubiana, and Gramizzi, *A State of Disunity*, 23; Human Rights Watch, *Sudan, Oil, and Human Rights*, 100.
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- 67 *From Guerrilla Movement*, 36.
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- 69 Khan, 'Political Settlements', 10.
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- 71 *A Moral Theory of Political*, 9–10.
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- 73 'Political Settlements', 5–6.
- 74 Rousseau et al., 'Not so Different After All', 400.
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- 76 Das and Teng, 'Between Trust and Control', 492.
- 77 Berghof Foundation, *Berghof Glossary on Conflict*, 37.
- 78 Young, 'Riek Machar and the SPLM-IO', 46; Radio Tamazuj, 'South Sudan's Amum Unveils'.
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- 81 Fisher et al., *Working With Conflict*, 147.
- 82 Afako, 'Reconciliation and Justice', 65–7.
- 83 A criminal justice court to be set by the AU comprising of South Sudanese and other African judges.
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- 86 African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan (AUCISS), 'Final Report of the African', 299, 304.
- 87 United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), 'Report of the Commission', 13.
- 88 United States Institute of Peace (USIP), 'South Sudan Crisis'.
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- 90 African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan (AUCISS), 'Final Report of the African', 304.
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- 92 Boege, 'Traditional Approaches to Conflict', 9.
- 93 Ashworth, 'How South Sudan's Churches'.
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	Author's Name (please print clearly)	% of contribution
Candidate	Sam Angulo Onapa	100%
Other Authors		

Name of Candidate: Sam Angulo Onapa

Name/title of Principal Supervisor: Professor Helen Ware



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Candidate

Date



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Principal Supervisor

Date

Chapter 7: South Sudan Conflict: When Mediators Become Spoilers¹

Abstract

Despite playing vital mediation roles in the civil war in South Sudan that erupted in December 2013, the economic and political interests of the mediation partners have adversely impacted the process. This study investigates the motivations behind the economic and political interests of the IGAD frontline states (Ethiopia, Sudan, Uganda and Kenya), the USA and China, that contribute to prolonging the conflict. Twenty-nine stakeholders, including the conflict parties, mediators, eminent South Sudanese personalities, scholars and civil society leaders, were interviewed. Five major themes emerged from the study with several sub-themes, including the role of external actors as a major theme. The results suggest neo-patrimonial leadership by IGAD partners, the neoliberal policies of the USA and the neorealist policies of China, shape their foreign policies on South Sudan; hence their economic and political interests. Although recent changes in political leadership in Sudan and Ethiopia may positively change their interests in South Sudan, uncertainties in Kenya and entrenched neo-patrimonial leadership in Uganda may maintain the status quo. From a neoliberal perspective, the role of non-state actors could play a vital role in neutralising the resistance to the USA political approaches.

Keywords: South Sudan; domestic policy; foreign policy; liberalism/neoliberalism; realism/neorealism; neopatrimonialism; political psychology

¹ This Chapter, yet to be accepted, was submitted for publication in the African Security Review journal

7.1 Introduction

The eight-member East African regional body, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the troika (the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK) and Norway), the African Union (AU), the United Nations (UN) and China are the major regional and international mediation partners in the conflict in South Sudan.¹ The Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS), between the Sudan People's Liberation in Government (SPLM-IG) and the SPLM-In Opposition (IO) signed in August 2015 was the first agreement brokered by the partners after the 2013 civil war. However, the agreement, which collapsed after fresh fighting broke out in July 2016, was shrouded with controversies as the parties reluctantly signed it claiming they did not consent to some of its texts.² An expanded Revitalized-ARCSS (R-ARCSS) which included non-SPLM parties and civil society groups, kicked off in December 2017 but was characterised by stalemates among the conflict parties and conflicting positions among the mediation partners before it was finally signed on September 18 2018.³ Although security issues, boundaries and the number of states seem to be the primary concerns affecting the agreement implementation, the economic interests of the IGAD partners and China, and the political interests of the USA have also adversely affected the smooth running of the process.⁴ However, research on the underlying motivations of the economic and political interests of the partners is limited. An understanding of the motivations underlying the interests could be crucial in engaging and dissuading the partners from partial positions that contribute to prolonging the conflict.⁵ This study investigates the motivations behind the interests of the regional and international partners and how it exacerbates the polarisation of the conflict parties and prolongs the conflict.

This study enhances the conceptualisation of foreign policies in addressing the conflicting roles of regional and international mediation partners in the conflict in South Sudan. Specifically, it explores the motivations behind the interests of the partners using an integrated

framework of foreign policy theories, and concepts in which the international partners are motivated by neorealist and neoliberal foreign policies and the IGAD regional partners' exhibit neopatrimonialism, further involving political psychology. Empirically, it adds to knowledge reported in the recent literature that has examined the economic interests of the IGAD frontline states and China, as well as the political interests of the USA, which lead to overbearing peace approaches. To begin with, Sudan, which has a long historical social, economic and political ties with South Sudan, lost 70% of its oil revenue following the latter's independence.⁶ In order to recoup the lost oil revenue, Sudan's involvement in South Sudan has been the cause of conflict, with the use of proxy militia to control southern oil fields.⁷ Uganda's genuine economic interests in South Sudan have been marred by the intervention of the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) fighting alongside government forces against the opposition SPLM-IO, tilting the balance of power in SPLM-IGs favour, hence its intransigent positions because it feels that with this support it cannot lose.⁸ On the other hand, Ethiopian's mega hydropower project on the Blue Nile has affected the peace process as Egypt's parallel mediation overtures are viewed as an attempt to advance its Blue Nile agenda using the SPLM-IG.⁹ Kenya's economic interests lie in the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia-Transport (LAPSET) project, which is one of its flagship projects and whose success majorly depends on the proposed oil pipeline originating from South Sudan's oil fields.¹⁰ All these factors define the competing economic interests of the IGAD partners. The oil factor inevitably draws in China, which operates the largest oil concession in South Sudan.¹¹

Concerning the Troika, some of the approaches by the USA have had adverse effects on the IGAD lead peace process. For example, ARCSS was an agreement the parties signed reluctantly after expressing reservations about its texts. This capitulation was attributed to US coercion.¹² Furthermore, the transitional justice mechanism which the USA is advocating for a

speedy establishment of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan (HCSS) is considered to be one of the reasons the parties are reluctant in implementing some aspects of the agreement.¹³

7.2 Foreign Policy Theories

International relations presupposes that the foreign policies that guide interactions between nations are based on individual or group political decisions.¹⁴ Realism, liberalism, neorealism and neoliberalism are the major theories that have dominated the analytical discourse on foreign policy decisions since the nineteenth century.¹⁵ Realism focuses on states as the main actors and the nature of domestic politics in which politicians act rationally determines how states behave while maximising power in terms of security and economic interests relative to other countries.¹⁶ The power centric attitude of realists arises from the belief that the geopolitical arena is characterised by anarchy where there is no overarching authority beyond the individual states hence the need to maximise power for a state's survival. Neorealism, though principally driven by theories of anarchy and power, shifts the focus from states and regimes to the structure of international systems to explain how nations behave. In other words, there are underlying power structures that determine the behaviour of states, and when those structures change, inevitably the behaviour of states changes.¹⁷

Liberalism, on the other hand, sees the transcendent capacity of states in international power struggles to use international cooperation and economic and social interdependence in the pursuit of peace and to ensure that democratic values promote fundamental human rights.¹⁸ Additionally, states are not the only primary actors in the pursuit of peaceful coexistence but also intergovernmental organisations, for example, the UN, AU and World Bank, and non-governmental organisations. Neoliberalism emphasises free markets and free trade as a means to liberty and a transnational collaboration that promotes peace and global prosperity.¹⁹

Neoliberalism, although having economic similarities to liberalism, advocates for government deregulation, removal of trade barriers, and generally freeing up of markets.

Although the above theories dominate the field of international relations, how they fit into the African domestic and foreign relations is a point of interest. According to Van de Walle, the majority of African countries are governed by presidential quasi-democratic systems in which power is personalised around the president in a patron-client relationship that usurps the powers and independence of the executive, legislature and judiciary.²⁰ Realism downplays the individual's role in political outcomes and regards power as an independent analytical variable.²¹ Likewise, liberalism focuses on institutional norms rendering the individual role in political outcomes peripheral.²² Kertzer and Tingley propose constructivism as a stopgap measure for the individual void left by realism and liberalism based on 'the cultural underpinnings of the norms, ideas, and interests that help formulate political action and behaviour', however, they find it 'constrained by these larger sociological and cultural forces'.²³ Reiter and Stam argue that scholars have not agreed on a single theory on how domestic political institutions affect foreign policy, but they go on to lay a general framework to that effect.²⁴ Their argument, which is based on democratic principles, assumes that domestic politics and national interest are the basis on which national leaders make foreign policy decisions in the event of promoting war.

There is a historical explanation for the personalisation of power by African leaders which relates to post-colonial administrations where leaders grappled with democratic norms and political competition leading to the coercion of opponents, some by military means, or winning them over through inducements, or exclusion and marginalisation of some groups based on ethnic and religious grounds.²⁵ A study by Bolden and Kirk on African leadership involving participants from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana and Ethiopia, among others, concluded that the subject raises significant concerns 'of leadership that is autocratic, self-

serving and disconnected from the communities it serves...'²⁶ That pattern in which state institutions becomes the means of furthering self-centred political ambition forms the basis of neopatrimonialism where the president controls power and the distribution of resources. Thus, Bratton and Van de Walle argue that 'neo-patrimonial rulers are driven by calculations of personal political survival'.²⁷ In the course of foreign relations, the neopatrimonialism power proclivity defines the interests of such leaders. As Quinn points out, foreign policy in a presidential power centric state becomes a means of acquiring resources domestically and internationally for regime survival.

Across Africa, personality becomes a predictor of political values and decisions hence the necessity of understanding human variables that leads to such decisions from a psychological viewpoint. Political psychology 'concerns the behaviour of individuals within a specific political system' and among others addresses their 'personality, motives, beliefs, and leadership styles, and their judgements, decisions, and actions in domestic policy, foreign policy, international conflict...'.²⁸ Psychologists point to five character traits: neuroticism, extroversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness hence the big five-factor model of personality characteristics, which inform political elite behaviour as political events unfold.²⁹ Apart from neuroticism, there is a likelihood that decisions by leaders who score high in these character traits may result in positive political outcomes which is the opposite of what defines authoritarian leaders. For example, McDermott quoting a study by Hermann found that individuals with open personalities have the propensity for risk-taking from an intuitive disposition and those with agreeableness avoid risks. In contrast, individuals who score low in conscientiousness take risks impulsively and therefore are susceptible to threats.³⁰ Again, McDermott quoting a study by Barber found that leaders with extroverted personalities who also display energetic and passive positive qualities tend to be compliant to needs of others and 'seek love more than power' this is rarely found among African leaders.³¹

Sandy, Boardman and Deutsch list anxiety, hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness and vulnerability as the six subscales of neuroticism.³² While referring to the inability to cope with stressful situations, a study on US elections outcomes, though, with minimal neuroticism impact, shows that political losers were likely to ‘worry about potential losses and to be sensitive to threat-related stimuli’.³³ If related to the African context where economic factors determine the leader’s grip on political power, the impact of neuroticism based on the failure to acquire economic resources necessary to sustain power could be immense. The perceived threats, resulting from the potential loss of political power and the related economic advantages that sustain it, explains Bratton and Van de Walle’s assertion that ‘they constitute the foundation and superstructure of the political institution’.³⁴

The interests of the regional and international partners that impede the peace process in South Sudan will be discussed against the backdrop of these undergirding theories and concepts of domestic and foreign policies.

7.3 Materials and Methods

The study attempts to answer the question as to why mediation efforts have not been effective in ending the violent conflicts in South Sudan. The data source for the study originates from 29 purposely recruited participants representing the conflict parties, mediation team members, eminent South Sudanese personalities, scholars and civil society organisation leaders.³⁵ In order to capture a rich, in-depth and historical knowledge of the conflict, the design protocol featured semi-structured interviews in which participant affiliations included members of the SPLM-IG and IO, political/military institutions, AU, UN, eminent retired politicians, academicians, and heads of civil society organisations. The recruitment process was through telephone contacts established through the AU, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of South Sudan and by word of mouth and email contacts.³⁶ The research ethics protocol included an

information sheet on the study and a consent form providing for choices of audio recording and identification as per the ethics requirements.

The data analysis procedure involved Nvivo coding technique in which transcribed data was uploaded to an NVivo software analysis tool and coded according to recurring patterns and themes from the literature review and transcribed data.³⁷ Hence, the six dominant themes that arose with relevant concepts to the research questions were: historical conflicts resulting in estranged political relationships, power struggles, control of resources and ethnic violence. The role of regional and international partners was the final major theme. The analysis of the literature and historical documents adopted a deductive analysis approach, while the emergent themes in the raw data were analysed using an inductive approach.³⁸

7.4 Regional and International Partners in the Conflict

7.4.1 Regional partners

As earlier stated, IGAD is at the forefront of the South Sudan peace process. However, the process has been impaired by the non-impartiality of the IGAD frontline member states including Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya, who follow their own competing interests.³⁹

General Gai Chatiem of the SPLM-IO (personal conversation, December 2, 2017) argues:

IGAD members (especially Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Sudan) is a biased mediator because they are analysing the conflict in South Sudan in their interest and not in the interest of the people who are dying. This is the reason the revitalisation cannot work, and the conflict is going on.

7.4.2 Sudan, oil and Islamism

Sudan's conflicting economic interests in South Sudan are historically linked to the latter's struggle for self-determination. The 1972 Addis Ababa agreement provided for a semi-autonomous southern regional government to address the political, social and economic

interests of the South Sudanese.⁴⁰ However, the agreement was abrogated in 1983 by President Jaffar Nimeiri to ensure his regime's survival following the growing influence of the Islamic Brotherhood leaning National Islamic Front (NIF).⁴¹ Nimeiri went on to impose the exclusionary Sharia law which was a cause of the second civil war.⁴² In the process, disagreements developed among South Sudanese groups as they attempted to forge a common front under the banner of the SPLM/A, a situation that was exploited by the Sudan regime for its benefit.⁴³ The civil war ended with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in January 2005, and six years later in July 2011, South Sudan became an independent state following a successful referendum.⁴⁴

Despite independence, Sudan and South Sudan remained inextricably linked politically and economically due to outstanding CPA issues. Key among these were oil, assets and liabilities, border demarcation and the controversial Abyei referendum.⁴⁵ Besides, the popular consultations provision in which members of the SPLM-North¹ would decide their preferred system of governance would have played a key role in delinking the SPLM-North² from its southern SPLM mother party.⁴⁶ William Ongoro Peter - Conflict Resolution and Peace-building Specialist with Whitaker Peace and Development Initiative (personal communication, March 21, 2018) summarise these points:

I think it was naive of us to think that we would leave Sudan instantly because there are a lot of things that still ties us to them in terms of the economy, identity issues to do with the Blue Nile, Southern Kordofan and Abyei which are all still to be resolved. ...they are still controlling our oil, which is the most important pillar for our economy and forgot that the SPLM/A North had their presence in South Sudan. Additionally, our citizens are still in Sudan, either in camps or the towns, and many have not received their employment benefits.

Thus far, oil has proven the most complicated issue to address. The CPA provided for fifty-fifty oil revenue sharing between Sudan and South Sudan, although transparency matters clouded

² Former members of the SPLM technically from Sudan, being of the Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan states, aka the Two Areas,

the actual oil output, which was mainly under the control of the Khartoum regime.⁴⁷ A chunk of the oil revenue went to military expenditure for the conflicts in South Sudan, before the CPA, and also Darfur, Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan.⁴⁸ Following South Sudan's independence, oil revenue which Sudan relied on to build its military power reduced to 25 per cent with the South taking 75 per cent.⁴⁹ With the loss of the oil revenue, which the International Monetary Fund (IMF) calculated to be one-third of Sudan's total revenue, the negotiations turned complicated.⁵⁰ For instance, Sudan demanded an outrageous 36 dollars per barrel in pipeline fees, a whopping 8,780 per cent in comparison to 0.41 dollars neighbouring Chad pays Cameroon.⁵¹ Matters were further complicated when Khartoum unilaterally diverted South Sudan oil valued at USD 140 million claiming Juba owed them that amount in transit fees, leading to a shutdown of the oil production and denying both countries this vital source of revenue.⁵² Despite the challenges, an agreement brokered by the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) was signed on September 27, 2012, in which a total package of USD 3.028 billion termed as a Transitional Financial Arrangement (TFA) was pegged to USD 15 per barrel over three and a half years.⁵³

Border demarcation has also proved to be another challenge following distortions that were carried out by successive governments of Sudan in an attempt to redefine borders to relocate the oil fields to the northern territory.⁵⁴ IRIN quoting Sudan expert John Ashworth reports, 'it is widely acknowledged that the current border is not the 1956 border. Successive Khartoum governments have pushed the border southwards, particularly since the discovery of oil in the 1970s'.⁵⁵ The Abyei Protocol of the CPA provided for the formation of the Abyei Border Commission (ABC) whose findings identified Abyei as belonging to Ngok Dinka chiefdoms and that the oil fields are in Abyei area.⁵⁶ The ABC findings, though not explicitly stated, implied that Heglig, which accounts for about fifty per cent of Sudan's remaining oil revenue, would go to the South should the Ngok Dinka decide in a referendum to join the

South.⁵⁷ Khartoum objected to the ABC report and escalated the matter to the Hague Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) which in its July delimited Abyei borders leaving most of the oil fields to Sudan, although most of the grazing lands remained in Abyei.⁵⁸ Some experts have argued that the PCA ruling had not allocated the oil fields, and particularly Heglig and Bamboo, to the north or the South, though they mentioned it lies east of Abyei, since by doing so they would have exceeded their mandate.⁵⁹ In any case, Sudan has not respected the PCA ruling just as it did not respect the ABC decisions.⁶⁰ According to Johnson, a member of the ABC: ‘If Juba can prove that Khartoum either moved the boundary on the ground after 1956 or falsified the map in 2004 then they win their case’.⁶¹

Whether satisfactory border delimitation and demarcations will be achievable and accepted by both sides is a question that remains unanswered almost seven years later. However, Sudan’s interference in South Sudan is a well-choreographed foreign policy aimed at regaining the lost oil revenue for the survival of the NCP regime. This point was earlier made by Quinn, who argued that power-centric leaders strive to acquire economic means for their regime survival domestically and internationally. The Honourable Atem Garang de Kuek, the SPLM Chief Whip argues that ‘Khartoum has always stood against the secession of South Sudan and they have been telling the world that we cannot rule ourselves. Now they are hoping that probably they can negotiate with us on the basis of instability to reunite’ (personal communication, March 18, 2018). Dr Itto Anne, former Deputy Secretary-General of the SPLM and a member of the East African Legislative Assembly, expresses the same opinion saying ‘...they have never forgiven South Sudan for having broken away and we always hear them say, we allowed you to go, but in future, we are hoping we can come together’ (personal communication, March 26, 2018). Sudan’s perceived intentions of reuniting Sudan and South Sudan may be farfetched; however, it has covertly infiltrated the South Sudan government and state and according to Ambassador Francis Deng (personal communication, March 23, 2018):

...elements of the political party in the north who were Southern Sudanese became incorporated in the government in the South. Others believe that the SPLM is being taken over while the leadership say ... we have to broaden the scope to bring in non- SPLM members.

Thus, the link behind the antagonistic behaviour of Sudan to achieve its economic objectives lies in the long history of oppressive military and Islamic neo-patrimonial governments that personalise power for regime entrenchment and exclusion of non-conforming groups.⁶²

7.4.3 Uganda and the UPDF control

When the 2013 fighting flared up, the UPDF was applauded locally and internationally for intervening in what appeared to be an impending massacre in Juba, but the subsequent intervention alongside the government side attracted keen interest.⁶³ The matter of the approval of the UPDF deployment in South Sudan was brought to the floor of the Parliament of Uganda by the defence minister citing four grounds: ‘to save Ugandans and assist to prevent genocide, avert negative developments in national and regional security, protect constitutionalism and respond to dangers to a fraternal neighbour’.⁶⁴ The approval request came after one month of the UPDF involvement in active combat, meaning there was no prior approval for the deployment as provided for under the Ugandan constitution.

An examination of the Hansard reporting of the January 14, 2014 debate on the deployment of the UPDF in South Sudan reveals certain flaws. First, the opening statement by the Minister of Defence was that ‘on the December 15 2013, there was an attempted coup against the democratically elected Government of South Sudan, which had negative security implications for Uganda and the region’.⁶⁵ This statement relied on the announcement made by Salva Kiir, which was denied by Riek Machar and was also rebutted by several researchers and stakeholders in South Sudan for lack of evidence.⁶⁶ For example, according to Hilde Johnson, Head of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the position of the mission was that the attempted coup narrative was unconvincing.⁶⁷ In the parliamentary debate, one opposition MP

dismissed the coup d'état narrative arguing that the conflict was a result of election preparations in which key members of the SPLM, including Riek Machar, expressed interest in competing against Salva Kiir.⁶⁸ Secondly, the government's assertion that Uganda was footing the UPDF bills was contradicted by the South Sudanese Defence Minister who was categorical that Juba was footing the bills.⁶⁹ These inconsistencies raise questions as to whether the motive of deployment was purely for Uganda's security or other interests.

That said, South Sudan is one of the largest markets for Uganda's industries, subsistence farmers, small enterprises and petty traders and therefore highly significant for the economy of Uganda.⁷⁰ In 2018, South Sudan was Uganda's second-largest export market for goods and services worth 355 million dollars, second to Kenya's 580 million.⁷¹ This export volume is an undisputed justification for Uganda's security concerns in South Sudan.⁷² However, Uganda's refusal to withdraw the UPDF from South Sudan territory where a neutral UN Regional Protection Force authorised by the UN Security Council resolution could fill the security vacuum raises concerns as to what Uganda's interests are beyond trade.⁷³ Furthermore, contradictory statements on the UPDF deployment and the Ugandan president's statement urging Riek Machar to surrender or face defeat demonstrate Uganda's biased position and ulterior interests in the conflict.⁷⁴ A Professor of Peace and Development in Juba argues that 'If Uganda was not allowing in arms, helicopter gunships and so on, the war could have probably ended' (personal conversation, March 17, 2018). William Ongoro argues: 'Politically, we are indirectly ruled by the President of Uganda because if there is a problem in South Sudan, the leadership always rush to consult Museveni for advice... they are directly involved in promoting the war and conflict' (personal communication, March 21, 2018). Dr Anne Itto alludes to money laundering of mutual benefit arguing that 'If investigated, it will be discovered that lots of resources that belong to South Sudan are sitting in Uganda in the form of bank accounts and assets...' (personal communication, March 26, 2018).

The general framework laid by Reiter and Stam on the effect of domestic political institutions assumes that democratic political leaders will be restrained from engaging in foreign policies that do not represent the interest of the electorate. Short of that, the leadership would account for any unpopular foreign policy, come the next elections. In the glare of the shrinking democratic space in Uganda, the political leadership is not bound by any restraining factors since elections are a formality, merely for government legitimisation, as demonstrated by the removal of the presidential term limit in 2005 from the constitution and most recently the presidential age limit.⁷⁵ Therefore, President Museveni, who is one of the longest-serving presidents in Africa, is eligible to run for office in the 2021 elections.⁷⁶ Tinkering with the constitution and other such actions resonate with a neo-patrimonial regime that captures the superstructure of political institutions earlier alluded to by Bratton and Van de Walle, to do personalised business.⁷⁷ Mesquita argues that the quest by totalitarian political leaders to maximise their wealth and stay in power leads them to determine their behaviour and actions to achieve their goal, thus explaining the underlying neo-patrimonial factors in Uganda's interests in South Sudan.⁷⁸

7.4.4 Ethiopia's Blue Nile waters

Edmund Yakani, the Executive Director of the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization, considers that: 'Kenya and Uganda are also playing a negative role in the sense that they believe Ethiopia is dominating IGAD and therefore undermine Ethiopia in the way they handle South Sudan' (personal communication, March 14, 2018). Besides IGAD members, Egypt's overtures to South Sudan has implications for the peace process, and it has everything to do with gaining leverage over Ethiopia and Sudan on the Blue Nile impasse. Egypt has relied on the 1929 colonial Nile agreement reinforced by the 1959 bilateral agreement with Sudan to flex its muscles in controlling the Nile waters at the expense of the upstream countries including

Ethiopia, Uganda and South Sudan.⁷⁹ The Ethiopian Grand Renaissance dam under construction on the Blue Nile has faced opposition from Egypt, although Sudan supports the project.⁸⁰ According to *The Arab Weekly*, ‘Egypt’s improving ties with South Sudan is part of a campaign to protect Nile water rights and win over African allies to pressure Khartoum and Addis Ababa over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam’.⁸¹ The so-called Cairo Declaration of Unification of SPLM of November 16, 2017, under auspices of Egypt also explains the reason for the involvement.⁸² Nicholas Haysom, the United Nations Secretary General’s Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, argues there ‘is clearly an alignment of Egypt with Uganda in opposition to Sudan and Ethiopia which has at its essence to do with the Nile waters conflict and not South Sudan conflict’ (personal communication, November 29, 2017).

In order to appropriately define Ethiopia’s interests in South Sudan, it is crucial to understand the background of the ruling party, the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). The EPRDF is a coalition of political parties that took over the government after the overthrow of the Derg military government in 1991.⁸³ The EPRDF coalition, dominated by the Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front (TPLF), deploys coercive means using state security agencies against political opposition in which many have been jailed in addition to some extent of exclusion along ethnic lines.⁸⁴ In order to perpetuate its grip on power, it controls state economic and social structures for the benefit of loyal party members.⁸⁵ With Uganda firmly in control of the Juba government and in coordination with Egypt on the SPLM reunification, Ethiopia’s best option is to maintain a firm grip on the mediation process hoping Egypt’s veiled Blue Nile agenda in South Sudan would diminish. Ethiopia’s investment in the Grand Renaissance Dam has become a symbol of national pride; however, the semblance of neopatrimonialism means it is significant for the survival of the EPRDF. As put by de Mesquita, the interests of leaders that are beneficial to the country at large are good.⁸⁶ This situation makes up for the otherwise oppressive and non-democratic atmosphere the state has

created over the last thirty years, although there are signs of progress with the new government.⁸⁷ Unless Ethiopia's Blue Nile impasse with Egypt is resolved or Egypt keeps out of South Sudan, Ethiopia is likely to maintain the same foreign policy stand on South Sudan even with the most democratic dispensation at home.

7.4.5 Kenya and the LAPSSET project

Competition between Kenya and Ethiopia to take the chief mediator role relates to the high economic stakes in South Sudan that undermine IGAD's mediation and agreement implementation roles.⁸⁸ Professor Isaac Cuir Riak, Vice-Chancellor of Upper Nile University, argues that '...Kenya and Uganda are expecting the economic benefits, but above that, they want the oil pipeline to go through their country' (personal communication, March 20, 2018). According to the Rift Valley Institute, the LAPSSET project is part of Kenya's 'national long-term development blueprint, which is aimed at transforming the country into a mid-level economy'.⁸⁹ The point to note in this context is that South Sudan oil production is the most viable in the region, reaching an average of 350,000 barrels per day before the war broke out in 2013 and is critical for the viability of the LAPSSET project.⁹⁰

In the mixed broth of the divergent interests of the IGAD members that have been extended to the precincts of the IGAD peace process, maintaining leverage is critical for Kenya's project and interests.⁹¹ However, how Kenya does this is a matter of its domestic and foreign policies. Kenya's political history is moulded by the authoritarianism of a one-party state that changed to a multiparty in the 1990s; however, the use of political power to manipulate elections, corruption and patron-client tendencies that follow reflect a sense of neopatrimonialism.⁹² Kenya's political parties, coalitions and elections are about powerful tribal individuals who bribe their way to leadership positions and lack a commitment to the national constitution and institutional mechanisms.⁹³ LAPSSET is an oil-based project of

national interest which provides Kenya with the ideal scope for neopatrimonialism; thus, the trend is detectable in Kenya's nuanced oil sector where politicians control the oil blocks and hence are fronts for concessions to oil companies and their families.⁹⁴ Besides, the use of government-owned Kenya Commercial Bank which facilitates the financial transactions of sanctioned individuals who fuel the conflict and also the deportation of refugees affiliated to the SPLM-IO are testimonies of decisions based on neopatrimonialism.⁹⁵ Such actions in violation of international laws are most likely of a reciprocal economic nature that benefits powerful individuals. Nyamilepedia News reported that Salva Kiir contributed US 10 million to finance President Uhuru Kenyatta's 2017 election and if that is the case, then there is a major quid pro quo relationship between the two leaders at a personal level.⁹⁶ Thus, underlying the national economic interests that LAPSSET and the banking sector represent, the personalisation of power games arising from the domestic front plays a key role in shaping the economic interests of Kenya in South Sudan.

7.4.6 The USA and democratic peace

Of the three Troika partners, the USA is the most instrumental in its lobbying and keeping the conflict parties at the negotiating table rather than on the warpath. However, in some instances, the USA role has proven to be counterproductive.⁹⁷ As earlier explained, in the ARCSS process that later collapsed, the parties expressed their reservations to the agreement arguing that the mediators imposed it. Barney Afako, a member of the IGAD and the UN Mediation Support Unit Standby Team (personal conversation, November 20, 2017), recalls the circumstances leading to the failure of the agreement:

...it wasn't a real agreement in that both sides felt it was being imposed although in the end Riek Machar's side signed it as the best deal it could get, because of the urgency of dealing with the humanitarian situation and because of the fact that the talks themselves were funded externally, so there were budgetary issues and also the political interests of those funding the talks were for a speedy deal and that led to the kind of elite pact which

in fact wasn't a genuine agreement and that's why it fractured immediately...They signed, as you recall, quite reluctantly, Salva Kiir did not sign on the day, and when he did, he did not sign with any enthusiasm but with reservation and that is a sign that it is not a genuine agreement and indeed in South Sudan, many are sceptical about the agreement.

Aldo Ajor, former Deputy Prime Minister of Sudan and former Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Sudan agreed thus: 'The agreement was made without the input of the parties to the conflict and signed with the reservation of Salva Kiir and even the hesitation of Riek Machar...and so Donald Booth³ would then address the Security Council' (personal conversation, March 17, 2018). Young argues that the international community not only 'successfully forced Kiir to sign the ARCSS' but also forced Riek Machar to take up his First Vice President position in the unity government 'even though critical provisions of the peace agreement were not implemented'.⁹⁸

During the ARCSS implementation stage, it was alleged the USA attempted another controversial approach and according to Ambassador Francis Deng: 'The pieces are now being put together by various initiatives internally, regionally, internationally also with some ideas of regime change or reforms and all that is still in the air' (personal communication, March 23, 2018). Bol Makueng Yuol, the SPLM Secretary for Information, Culture and Communication argues that there was a regime change agenda because 'they set a narrative that liberation movements turning into ruling parties hang on to power and so NRM of Uganda, ANC of South Africa and EPRD of Ethiopia and also Rwanda Patriotic Front which is now about 20 years old, SPLM seems to be following suit' (personal communication, March 21, 2018). Except for the ANC, the point he has made is true, and the result is high handedness by the regimes in power, which is a ground for political instability. On how the regime change agenda would be executed, Makueng rhetorically asked 'how would the UN renew the stay of foreign forces on a sovereign

³ U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan and South Sudan

nation without its consent? This is an indicator to that effect'. The same position was reflected by the Information Minister Michael Makuei, who lambasted the UN Security Council for extending the UNMISS mandate without the government's consent and pointed a finger at the US for being behind a regime change agenda referring to a statement made by US Ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley that 'described Juba as an unfit partner in the pursuit for peace'.⁹⁹

According to an International Crisis Group report, at the height of the Addis Ababa peace talks in 2015, President Obama pushed regional leaders to demand the stepping aside of Kiir and Machar.¹⁰⁰ The report adds that when Kiir's forces ejected Machar from Juba in July 2016, the US manoeuvred his house arrest in South Africa and also considered replacing Kiir but 'found neither political mechanism nor regional support for doing so'. It is against the regime change narrative that Kiir's government frustrated the deployment of the regional protection force in Juba, which was expected to provide a neutral environment for the implementation of the power-sharing agreement.¹⁰¹ Professor Samson Wassara, the Vice-Chancellor, University of Bahr El Ghazal, however, dismisses the notion of regime change arguing that 'At the end of the day they find excuses for their failures in saying that the west is advocating for regime change which is baseless' (personal communication, March 14, 2018).

The 2015 ARCSS in its preamble states: 'Further re-affirming these commitments to form a Transitional Government of National Unity, comprising all the Parties, to lead South Sudan to democratic Elections and a permanent constitutional order'. Democracy and constitutional order are fundamental tenets in the liberal and neoliberal approaches to conflicts which the US stands for. As previously pointed out, the disagreements leading to the breakout of civil war in 2013 arose from the SPLM party elections in preparation for the 2015 general elections.¹⁰² Based on the utterances of the US emissaries to South Sudan and the UN Security Council, President Kiir and Riek Machar's actions and attitudes do not reflect the democratic expectations set out in the power-sharing agreements and even before that. This situation must

be frustrating for the US, and therefore, a push for regime change is understandable on their part. Their reliance on the regional partners, who are divided and have taken different sides in the conflict renders regime change an impossible task. The net effect is that the conflict parties have been emboldened to resist any situation perceived to create an opportunity for regime change, even where it is a part of the agreement. For example, Chapter 2 on security sector reforms including Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) leading to a unified force is yet to have the cantonment process initiated to achieve a unified force, with a no show from the government forces to begin the disengagement.¹⁰³ Therefore, will a government that has expressed fear of regime change easily demobilise its loyal forces for a unified one whose loyalty they cannot guarantee? The same pattern of delays is likely to occur when it comes to electoral and party reforms which are crucial for free, fair and transparent elections and any democratic peace. Besides, the delays in the setup of the HCSS relates to similar fears.¹⁰⁴ These are issues that represent liberal and neoliberal political policies of the US.

Another aspect is that in a democracy, domestic policies championed by the electorate or their representatives play a crucial role in defining foreign policies.¹⁰⁵ Liberals and neo-liberals accentuate the role of non-state actors in foreign policy formulation. According to Rebecca Hamilton, a small bipartisan coalition of members of Congress known as the “Sudan Caucus” worked for decades to make Sudan a US foreign policy priority’ but it was during George W. Bush’s term that evangelical activists pressed hard to form the US foreign policy.¹⁰⁶ From that perspective, viewing the US role in South Sudan purely from the state perspective portrays a limited interpretation of their foreign policy interests, especially when talking about the regime change agenda. What needs to be investigated is how the democratic peace approach and free markets can suit the local context in an environment riddled with uneducated, poverty laden and war trauma stricken groups.

7.4.7 China and the ‘Going out Strategy’

The geopolitical concerns over the South Sudan conflict drew in China, which, despite its policy of non-interference in the internal matters of a sovereign state, has actively engaged both sides of the conflict.¹⁰⁷ The ‘Going out Strategy’ of 1999 aimed at promoting China’s overseas investments with Africa as the top destination based on its abundant mineral resources.¹⁰⁸ Sudan fits in this equation because, whereas Africa was ranked the second-largest overall supplier of crude oil to China, Sudan and Angola were the top suppliers.¹⁰⁹ Following the signing of the CPA and the evident signs that South Sudan was heading towards independence, China developed close ties with the leadership despite being behind the arms supplies to Sudan in its war against the SPLM/A.¹¹⁰ The reason was that most of Sudan’s oil is found in the southern territory. The courtship also resulted in arms supplies to the South Sudan government, before and after the 2013 civil war breakout. According to the UN Panel of Experts report on the investigation of arms supplies to South Sudan, a Chinese government corporation was identified as a major supplier of arms.¹¹¹ This position runs contrary to the foreign policy pledge China made to South Sudan after its independence, key among them being ‘mutual non-interference in internal affairs’ although it justifies ‘equality and mutual benefit’.¹¹²

The arms supply has prolonged the war as the opposition side also receive supplies from the Sudan government, and indirectly to the SPLM-IG. Ultimately, China continues to lose out in its oil investments as the war rages, and its 2014 moratorium on arms sales to South Sudan was a positive development.¹¹³ Besides, IGAD enlisted China, together with the AU, Troika, and EU in what it termed IGAD Plus to invigorate the peace process.¹¹⁴ China and Russia’s abstention from the Security Council Resolution 2304 that extended the UNMISS mandate, demonstrates veiled cooperation with the troika.¹¹⁵ As the US was fronting for a resolution on an arms embargo on South Sudan, there were reports that China and Russia were unlikely to

block the resolution though they said the resolution should originate from African member states.¹¹⁶

Thus, China's shift in its non-interference policies is self-justified by its strategic investments in South Sudan's oil sector through the China National Petroleum Company (CNPC) which is a part of its 'Going out Strategy'.¹¹⁷ The arms supply moratorium though a positive step has not stopped South Sudan from importing weapons with the help of Uganda. Thus far, South Sudan's capacity to import weapons of war is supported by China's oil investment portfolios, and therefore China is a party to the conflict escalation. The 'Going out Strategy' fits the neorealist definition of underlying power structures that determine how states behave in foreign relations, hence is the undergirding factor in China's economic interests in South Sudan.

7.5 Conclusion

This study has investigated the role of the regional and international partners in the escalation of conflict in South Sudan. It builds on previous studies by exploring the domestic and foreign policies that drive the partners' interests in South Sudan. Previous studies have underscored the economic interests of the IGAD frontline states and China, and the overbearing political interests of the US as some of the reasons for prolonging the conflict. Oil, arms supplies and the Blue Nile River waters are some of the economic interests while coercions in mediation and implementation approaches to conflict are among the political interests identified by previous studies. Despite the clarity that these studies bring in pointing out the counterproductive interests of the partners, the motivations behind these conflicting interests are little explored in the literature. This thesis suggests the economic interests of the regional partners are influenced by neo-patrimonial leaders whose domestic policies are centred on personalisation of power, shaping their foreign policies on matters that are crucial for regime survival. Concerning the

global partners, long-standing ideological neorealist and neoliberal policies are critical in shaping their foreign policies and interests.

Sudan has, over the years, established the exclusionary Muslim Brotherhood ideology as a system of governance, impinging on the rights of non-conforming citizens. The system has been sustained by autocratic military regimes who personalised power and used oil wealth for regime survival. South Sudanese bore the brunt of the impunity leading to the rebellion, and despite independence, the quest for oil wealth by Sudan necessary to sustain its neo-patrimonial regime's survival continued. The fall of the Islamic government may see a shift in the domestic policies and hence, foreign policies of Sudan towards a mutually beneficial relationship with South Sudan.¹¹⁸ Uganda's military presence in South Sudan is maintained by a personalised leadership that has usurped the roles of institutions in the governance of the country and hence lacks accountability mechanisms to check the leader's foreign policy excesses. Ultimately, neopatrimonialism defines Uganda's economic interests in South Sudan and calls by regional governments, and the international community for the withdrawal of the UPDF may remain unheeded in addition to the supply of illicit arms that was sighted by the UN Panel of Experts members. Ethiopia's Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam project is of national strategic importance; thus the government defines its role in South Sudan against the backdrop of the Nile waters impasse with Egypt. The more liberal approaches to governance and diplomacy by the new Prime Minister could redefine Ethiopia's engagement in South Sudan.¹¹⁹ Kenya's LAPSSET project is of national strategic economic interest, and although the country displays democratic processes, the levels of corruption, rigging and manipulations of elections to support the personalisation of power defines their economic interests in South Sudan. As the new Government in Sudan attempts to gain international acceptance, Kenya may have to come to terms with South Sudan's possibility of maintaining its oil exports through Sudan, rendering its role in LAPSSET unviable.

The neoliberal democratic peace approaches inform the US's urgency to implement the R-ARCSS. However, the involvement of non-state actors such as the Enough Project of George Clooney and John Prendergast, which is already active, may result in a shift in their foreign policy based on the current political context.¹²⁰ China's 'Going out Strategy' is part of its neorealist foreign policy which provides the lifeline of South Sudan's cash flow to finance the civil war. Although China has adopted a more peaceful and cooperative approach to the conflict away from an armament strategy that fuelled the conflict, their economic leverage on South Sudan could be a key factor in alleviating the conflict. Overall, the role of IGAD in the mediation of the conflict remains the major source of the prolongation of the conflict on account of the largely economic interests of its individual members. The AU principle of subsidiarity notwithstanding, it would be appropriate, as already argued by some sections of the South Sudanese leaders, for the AU to appoint a more neutral mediation party. Due to the transitions in the political leaderships in the IGAD region and the nuanced neo-liberal role of the non-state actor's, further research on the domestic and foreign policies of the regional and international partners is recommended.

Notes

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Candidate

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Candidate	Sam Angulo Onapa	100%
Other Authors		

Name of Candidate: Sam Angulo Onapa

Name/title of Principal Supervisor: Professor Helen Ware



Sam Angulo Onapa

Candidate

11 April 2020

Date



Principal Supervisor

11 April 2019

Date

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This thesis was designed to explore and understand why the conflict in South Sudan has been so enduring, and why various efforts intended to end the conflict and its violent repercussions have continually remained ineffective. Significantly, the thesis was designed to understand the root causes of the estrangement among the SPLM political elite. Additionally, the study sought to explore possible strategies that would potentially address the status quo in the protracted civil war that has caused the third-largest humanitarian crisis in the world. The many years of war highlight the complexity of the conflicts in which several agreements were made and violated in equal measure. IGAD brokered the collapsed August 2015 ARCSS agreement, and despite the reinvigorated R-ARCSS of September 2018, the parties continue to exhibit distrust and a lack of commitment to the agreement. Overall, trust among the parties is a vital component for a sustainable agreement, without which, the power-sharing formula is unlikely to achieve the desired end. Essentially, identifying the root causes of the conflict forms the basis of understanding the origins of distrust among the parties, and the point at which the process of trust-building begins towards restoring the fractured relationships for sustainable agreements. Previous studies on this subject generally provide some vital insights into the causes of the conflict. However, these findings are inconclusive on several questions. The overarching question posed to explore the conundrum was:

- (1) “What are the causes of the disputes and estrangement among the SPLM political elite leading to the violent conflicts”?

The secondary questions were:

(2) Why have mediation efforts not been effective in ending the violent conflicts in South Sudan?

(3) Which strategies are best suited for resolving the disputes and estrangement among the SPLM political elite and the conflicts in South Sudan?

In order to achieve the study objective, a semi-structured in-depth interview protocol was designed to respond to the research questions whereby selected knowledgeable and experienced individuals of diverse backgrounds with current and historical experiences of the conflict were interviewed. These included SPLM members in their various factions, eminent South Sudanese persons, academics, civil society organisation leaders and mediators. Given the complexities and nuances of the conflict, the holistic knowledge and understanding shared by the participants provided invaluable information on the evolution of the conflict from the formation of the SPLM/A in 1983 and subsequent conflict events from then to the current time. Furthermore, the theories of conflict and trust provided an analytical basis for a deeper understanding of the conflict evolution which also enhanced the understanding of possible pathways to addressing them. The analysis of the insightful findings suggests the root causes of the conflict are situated in conflict legacies that first manifested in 1983 with the formation of the SPLM/A.

Six themes systematically emerged from the analysis from transcribed data and the literature reviewed: Historical conflicts, estranged political relationships, control of resources, ethnicity, power struggles, and the role of regional and international partners, as a result, five significant findings which are listed below were identified. Participants generally expressed pessimism over the prospects for successful implementation of R-ARCSS.

This chapter primarily highlights and synthesises the findings of this study, its implications and suggests areas for future research. Following the introduction, the second section revisits the research questions and makes connections between previous research, an analysis of the

results and existing theory and restates the major research findings. The third section, divided into two subsections, presents the empirical contributions to knowledge and the implications for policy and practice, as well as the theoretical implications. The fourth section makes recommendations for future research and policy.

8.2 Main Research Findings and Empirical Contributions

The main findings in this study are chapter-specific arising from Chapters 4 to 7 in which the particular research questions were addressed. The findings are synthesised in this section, by stating the position of previous research on which this study builds, the theoretical underpinnings and a synopsis of the research participants' views.

8.2.1 What are the causes of the disputes and estrangement among the SPLM political elite leading to violent conflicts?

8.2.1.1 Root causes

Chapter 4 explored the origins and multiplicity of the causes of the conflict in South Sudan in an attempt to answer the question of the causes of disputes among the SPLM leadership and the resultant violent conflicts. Several previous studies have established that internal power struggles in the ruling SPLM party were the cause of the outbreak of fighting in December 2013 (Johnson, 2016, pp. 154–155; Thiong, 2018, p. 15; Vertin, 2018, p. 2). Additionally, and as discussed in Chapter 4, several other studies further suggest that the power struggles were a result of unresolved underlying structural contradictions in the form of historical conflicts, poor governance and political and economic grievances (Bradbury et al., 2006, p. 21; Rolandsen, 2015, p. 165; Sefa-Nyarko, 2016, pp. 204–205). The main historical conflicts referred to above relate to the 1983/1984 SPLM/A and Anyanya fights, and the 1991 coup attempt led by Riek Machar against the John Garang led SPLM/A (Craze

et al., 2016, p. 23; Human Rights Watch, 2003, pp. 92–93; Young, 2005, p. 539, 2007, p. 13, 2015, p. 10).

The findings of this thesis are consistent with the positions in previous studies in as far as the power struggles and the underlying causes are concerned. In response to what the causes of the disputes and estrangement among the SPLM political elite were, the participants interviewed overwhelmingly identified power struggles as being the cause leading to the outbreak of fighting in December 2013. However, there is a lack of clarity in previous studies on what the underlying causes of the conflict represent. First, the generalisability of the root causes of the conflict becomes problematic when analysing the linkages between the causal factors of the conflict. For instance, Blanchard (2014, p. 2) states that “The current crisis reflects underlying tensions and mistrust among South Sudanese leaders and ethnic groups that date back to Sudan’s civil war (1983-2005), and before”. How do these underlying tensions explicitly relate to the current conflict and violence? Secondly, what these underlying tensions exactly represent, unless it is clearly stated, renders the identification of the conflict causes a matter of speculation.

Accordingly, the first major finding of this thesis shows that the conflict systematically emerged through three levels which this research categorised as the primary, secondary and tertiary levels, as elaborated in Chapter 2, Section 2.1. Applying a conflict analysis approach (Fisher et al., 2000; Ramsbotham et al., 2005), the thesis found that at the primary level, historical conflicts, where disputes arose among the SPLM/A leadership on the objectives and ideology of their struggle in 1983 and 1991. The disputes arose because some of the leaders preferred a struggle that would lead to political and economic freedoms of South Sudanese in a united Sudan while others wanted a cessation of South Sudan. Although the leaders attempted to stay united and continue with the struggle, they were in an estranged political status characterized by negative emotions such as anger, bitterness and the urge for revenge,

arising from the violations that occurred at the primary level. Another issue was that John Garang was undemocratic and dictatorial in his style of leadership. The estranged status of the SPLM leadership forms a major underlying core problem of the conflict at the secondary level. Consequently, the estranged status of the leadership persistently incites power struggles at the tertiary level in the course of political engagements, thus triggering the violent conflicts. The participants interviewed attributed these disputes to the foundation of the SPLM/A in 1983 when disagreements arose between the John Garang led group and Anyanya II on leadership and objectives of the struggle where the former fronted for a united Sudan and the latter, the separation of South Sudan. The conflict pattern, according to the participant submissions, has since followed in 1991, 2002, 2004, 2008 and the current conflict that erupted in 2013. Thus, political relationships among the SPLM leaders while in an estranged status form the basis of the underlying core problem that incite power struggles.

The significance of broken political relationships should not be overlooked as an explicit understanding of this factor as an underlying core problem of conflict which leads to potential sustainable solutions while its neglect prolongs the conflict (Haus, 2003; Marks, 2011). In this regard, Thiong (2018, p. 2) suggests the need for further research on the role of negative emotions in the conflict. The majority of participants in the study acknowledged the absence of reconciliation among the SPLM leadership following the historical conflicts which they identified as a reason for the continuation of the conflict. Nevertheless, some participants were of the view that historical conflicts do not have a bearing on the current conflict as they have been overtaken by the current events in which non-SPLM members became a part of the mediation process and ultimately the agreement. Other institutions participants argued that the introduction of non-SPLM parties would not change the situation as long as the historical differences remain.

The theme of the control of resources was found to be inextricably linked to power struggles as power is a means to control wealth and resource control is a key means of asserting power. Some participants were of the view that power provides the instruments for the control of wealth, and that it was a system inherited from the colonial administration where power, resources and the institutions that manage them were centralised at the expense of the peripheral communities. The Arab dominated post-colonial Sudan government took advantage of this centralised system, including divide and rule policies, using it against the Southerners, and the Southern politicians too followed the same order after the independence of South Sudan (Jok, 2001, pp. 16–18, 139).

The distinctions in the conflict levels are further reinforced by conflict theory orientations of the conflict management, resolution and transformation theories. For instance, the eruption of the conflict in December 2013 was a direct result of power struggles and the control of resources which occurred at the tertiary level of the conflict and necessitated an intervention that would curb the rampant violence that followed where mainly innocent civilians were affected. The CoHA agreements and the deployment of ceasefire monitors were, therefore, a necessary conflict management approach at the tertiary level, which was limited to stopping the exchange of fire without addressing the consequences of the conflict. Furthermore, the ARCSS and R-ARCSS mediation processes enabled the parties to negotiate their positions and the possibility of dealing with the root causes of the conflict at the primary level, in a conflict resolution approach. However, the collapse of the ARCSS and the challenges facing the implementation of the R-ARCSS, indicate the lack of recognition of, and hence measures to address, estrangement in the political relationships as a core problem. Conflict transformation presupposes that conflict is a phenomenon which cannot be eliminated, but the relational attitudes and emotions that make it destructive can be transformed towards positive outcomes; it could be an option at this stage.

8.2.1.2 Explaining tribal violence

Further to the primary question of the causes of the conflict, Chapter 5 examined the role of ethnicity and the political elite in the conflict in South Sudan. Throughout the second Sudan civil war that broke out in 1983 in the south of the country up to the current South Sudan civil war that erupted in December 2013, various researchers have cited ethnicity as a factor in the violent conflicts (Sefa-Nyarko, 2016; Temin, 2018; Vertin, 2018; Young, 2003). This claim is primarily because ethnic violence has consistently occurred during power struggles among the political elite as was the case in 1983, 1991 and 2013 (Arnold, 2007; Blanchard, 2014; Human Rights Watch, 2017; Vertin, 2018). Other researchers have further clarified that ethnicity has been politicised in political power struggles and the control of oil resources and hence, wealth (Craze et al., 2016; de Waal, 2014; Grawert & Andrä, 2013; James, 2015; Thiong, 2018). This thesis agrees with previous studies that the political elite had a hand in the manipulation of ethnic groups leading to the violence. However, singling out political manipulation of ethnic groups as a driver of the violence creates an erroneous impression that the political elite bears sole responsibility in inciting ethnic violence. Most studies on ethnic violence have tended to focus on inter-ethnic relations rather than political and ethnic relations in the ethnic violence context (Arnold 2007; Boege 2006; Breidlid and Arensen 2014). Thus studies that examine the close interactions between the political elite and the ethnic groups, particularly the Dinka and the Nuer have been limited. Such studies are necessary for a deeper understanding of the factors that breed ethnic violence in the current conflict.

The second major finding of this study shows that there is a quid pro quo relationship between the political elite and tribal groupings, particularly the Dinka and the Nuer, in which both parties have vested interests in the violent conflict. In the course of political disputes, the political elite resort to their tribal base for support to retain or capture power. In doing this,

the arm with modern weapons the tribal groups who, in addition to fighting for the elite, use these weapons to execute their existing tribal grievances against each other. Early researchers Evans-Pritchard (1940), Lienhardt (1958) and Newcomer (1972) found that the Dinka and the Nuer, despite the same ancestry, have a long history of traditional conflicts centred on cattle raids and counter raids. These raids were once carried out using rudimentary weapons, and traditional conflict settlement mechanisms were in place to address them. Though the origin of the conflict is not ethnic, modern arms have escalated the extent of the traditional tribal conflicts to unmanageable levels. Therefore, the two co-existing conflict strands need to be isolated and dealt with to assess their role and influence. This research has found that there is no direct causal role of ethnicity in the conflict, although there is a correlation between the political elite and the ethnic groups in the course of the conflict. Ethnic violence, which is one of the major themes, turned out to be a dependent variable arising from historical conflicts among the elites at the primary level, estranged political relationships at the secondary level and the power struggles effects at the tertiary level.

The participants in this study, some of whom are eminent persons from the two communities, provided historical as well as current perspectives on conflicts involving the two groups. These ranged from their tribal origins and experiences during colonial and post-colonial Sudan eras and the recent post-independent South Sudan period. The common perception has been that the conflict in South Sudan is ethnically based. Historical analysis shows that the two groups share the same ethnic origin and that their relationships demonstrate kinship even in conflict. Participants did point out that the politicisation of ethnicity has evolved through the colonial era to the successive post-colonial governments to the current situation. As such, the majority of participants argued that political manipulations of ethnic groups provided the opportunity for acts of revenge by the Dinka and Nuer based on historical, ethnic conflicts that pre-existed the SPLM party. They further argued that politicians belong

to ethnic communities, and when political differences and conflict arise, the politicians resort to their ethnic or tribal base for support, including combat capability. Additionally, other groups view the Dinka as dominating the political and military hierarchy, creating grounds for ethnic animosity during political disputes. As stated in the previous section, the foundation of ethnic strife was in the colonial legacy where governance structures responsible for the control and distribution of resources were centralised to the benefit of those in power while disenfranchising particular groups perceived to be favouring the opposition.

Coupled with this historical background of the Dinka and the Nuer, an examination of the theories of ethnic violence portrays a more precise understanding of the role of ethnicity in the conflict. Beginning with the postulation that the Dinka and the Nuer share the same ethnic background, primordialists, who attribute ethnic violence to differences in ethnic identity, would therefore not categorize it as an ethnic conflict. Constructivists, on the other hand, argue that ethnicity is dynamic and its evolutions redefine geographical boundaries and social constructions. With the reconstructions, ethnic violence between groups that once belonged to the same ethnic identity becomes a possibility. Instrumentalists attribute ethnic violence to competition for economic resources and agree that political manipulation contributes to this rivalry. Accordingly, the once primordially identified groups have evolved due to geographical and social constructions and the contradictions between them have been exploited for political gains as they fulfil their historical intergroup feuds.

8.2.2 Why have mediation efforts not been effective in ending the violent conflicts in South Sudan?

This section addresses two aspects of the second question as to why the conflict continues to escalate despite concerted mediation efforts. First, it covers the findings arising

from Chapter 6, which addresses estranged relationships and distrust. Secondly, it discusses the findings from Chapter 7 on the role of regional and international mediators in the conflict.

8.2.2.1 Distrust perpetuates the conflict

Chapter 4 analysed the root causes of the conflict in which the six thematic areas emerged. Chapter 6 built on that analysis where, as a consequence of distrust, the parties had become politically estranged. The third major finding arises from the research question as to why violent conflict persists despite concerted mediation processes. Several previous studies identify distrust as a recurring pattern that has rendered the implementation of the peace agreements unachievable (Johnson, 2016, p. 151; Rolandsen, 2015, p. 164). Indeed, researchers have argued that trust is a necessity for a healthy and functional relationship (Lewicki 2006; McKnight, Cummings, and Chervany 1998; Rousseau et al. 1998). Despite the identification, it is unclear how this concept fits into the conflict continuum to warrant any action. The occurrences of distrust as an obstacle to the peace processes are randomly mentioned without explaining its origin (Johnson 2016:151; Rolandsen 2015:164; Roque 2014:4), and yet its effect in perpetuating the conflict is vital.

The third major finding of this thesis shows that distrust within the SPLM originated from its formation in 1983 and systematically transitioned through the three levels of conflict identified in Chapter 2 and 4. In that regard, subsequent internecine conflicts in the SPLM/A, including the current crisis that broke out in 2013, are inextricably linked to the 1983 conflict. The power-sharing agreements are not based on addressing the secondary level causes of the conflict where the parties continued to exhibit deep distrust and anger in the course of the negotiation of the agreements, signifying the estrangement in their relationships. The more the origin and pattern of distrust within the SPLM, and indeed the government, are known, the more focused the solutions to the conflict will need to be. Distrust and negative emotions

which, are outcomes of estranged relationships, are a factor and if unaddressed form a recipe for violent conflicts (Hamber, Kelly, and Democratic Dialogue (Organization) 2005; Kaufman 2006; Wils et al. 2006).

In this thesis, the majority of participants acknowledged the long-standing rivalry that exists between the main protagonists, Salva Kiir and Riek Machar. With that in mind, the participants expressed scepticism at the possibility of a successful implementation of R-ARCSS. One participant gave a blow-by-blow account of how the President angrily recalled the events of 1991 during the SPLM National Convention in December 2013 and vowed that he did not want a repeat of the same, and the following day fighting broke out. In essence, the participants were saying that the parties have to date not been able to move forward from the state of distrust arising from historical conflicts. As discussed in Chapter 6, processes that exclude mechanisms for dealing with the estranged relationships, and the associated negative emotions, are unlikely to succeed. Some participants were of the view that the bad relationships between the parties had reached irreparable proportions, while others argued it is possible to salvage the situation through a reconciliation process. Recognising seemingly irreparable relationships, an unconventional stop-gap measure, discussed in Chapter 7, where either one or both these main protagonists would be removed from the scene was considered. Some participants, especially from the government side, called it a regime change agenda, although the idea was to remove parties perceived to impede the peace process. Ultimately, that option failed and having both back in an agreement signifies the pivotal role of these two individuals in the conflict and the need to address their deeply fractured relationship.

Going back to Chapter 6, the participants were of the view that traditional, transitional justice mechanisms could play a key role in building trust among the belligerents. However, some argued that the role of historical conflicts had been overtaken by events following the inclusion of non-SPLM actors in the mediation process. Nevertheless, this thesis found that

historical conflicts, including that of 1983/84 and 1991, where disagreements occurred on the objectives of the struggle at the primary level, caused deep fissures in the political relationships which then manifested at the secondary level. The ripple effects continued to the tertiary level, where the power struggles occurred. This situation is compounded by the fact that this is a political relationship which is regulated by the values, rules and norms of political institutions, an aspect that is lacking in the SPLM party and South Sudan as a whole (Barkin 2003:333). Chapter 6 pointed out this weakness in which the SPLM in its Constitution mandated its Political Bureau to formalise rules and regulations by which the party would be governed, yet this did not happen. Therefore, the mechanics of distrust in political relationships are better understood within institutional trust frameworks, as discussed in Chapter 6, through which, the political relationships function.

8.2.2.2 The role of regional and international partners

In addition to the deep distrust underscored by the obstinate attitude of the protagonists discussed in Chapter 6, Chapter 7 explored the role of regional and international actors in the escalation of the conflict. IGAD, supported by the Troika, the AU, the UN and other international partners, has played a leading role in the mediation of the conflict since it broke out in December 2013. However, some interests that will be discussed later have put these partners on a collision course with the peace process while exacerbating the polarities among the SPLM political elite. The report of the UN Panel of Experts in South Sudan points out the partisan role of the IGAD members in the peace process (2016, pp. 10–11). Despite the evidence of these anomalies, contrary to impartiality norms of mediation (Blackings, 2018, pp. 14–16; Vertin, 2018, p. 1), the mediation status quo remains. As a result, the South Sudan government side is on record as calling for a change in the IGAD mediation leadership and venue from Addis Ababa to Nairobi (Johnson, 2016; Vertin, 2018). Although extensive

research has been carried out on the negative role of the mediation partners, there is a paucity of research explaining the motivations behind the partisan activities of the partners in the peace process. The fourth finding of this thesis shows that these positions that are contrary to mediation norms arise from the domestic policies of the partners, as described in Chapter 4. An understanding of the domestic policies *vis-à-vis* foreign policies helps clarify their legitimacy or lack thereof in terms of both international and national laws, which may in turn help inform the justification to pressure these partners to end their incongruous role in the peace process. For example, the UN Security Council Resolution 2428 (2018) imposed an arms embargo on South Sudan in an attempt to deescalate violent conflict in the interest of negotiated political solutions (International Crisis Group 2019:7, 29). As stated in Chapter 4, China and Uganda were reported by the UN Panel of Experts as being in flagrant violations of the embargo for their own interests. If, in this context, the domestic policies that are responsible for shaping the foreign policies of the partners would lead to mutually beneficial national outcomes, then the peace process would then be the first beneficiary.

To the contrary, a review of previous research finds that the IGAD frontline states which include Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya, have undermined the peace process in their own economic interests while at the same time upstaging each other in the peace process (Fleischner 2015; International Crisis Group 2019; Johnson 2016:272–78; Vertin 2018). As elaborated in Chapter 7, substantial studies have examined how the economic interests of the IGAD frontline states, particularly in oil resources and the use of the Nile waters, undermine the South Sudan peace process. Existing literature focuses mainly on oil being the main economic interest of Sudan, Uganda and Kenya, and the Nile waters over which Ethiopia is competing against Egypt. Concerning international partners, the Troika has been part and parcel of the South Sudan peace process since the Second Civil War. The USA is the leading Troika partner; however, some of its input has had adverse effects on the IGAD led peace

process that warrants investigation. The ARCSS was an agreement the parties objected to, and its signing was attributed to USA coercion (Young 2017). Furthermore, prioritising the punitive criminal justice system expected from the HCSS above restorative justice approaches possible under a transitional justice system is the reason the parties are reluctant to pursue some aspects of the agreement (International Crisis Group 2019:18).

A closer look at the domestic policies of the IGAD partners reveals that national, personal or oligarchic interests drive them whereas the Troika is about the urgency of liberal peace policies. For example, where the Ugandan leaders collude with their Southern counterparts to launder money, such interests can be interpreted to be either personal or oligarchic. In concurrence with previous studies, the general view of the participants interviewed is that the interests of the regional and international partners have adversely affected the smooth running of the peace process in South Sudan. IGAD members were particularly singled out as bringing their differences into the internal matters of South Sudan, while the Troika was faulted for being high handed by dictating and imposing the peace agreements. Sudan was said to have used southern proxy militia groups since the advent of the Second Civil War and in the present time has strategically positioned NCP leaning southern politicians in the Kiir government. Others pointed out that Sudan has historical political, economic and cultural ties with South Sudan, and, as a result, Sudan still endeavours to interfere in the internal affairs of South Sudan. Some argued that certain South Sudanese leaders collude with their Ugandan counterparts to stash ill-gotten wealth in Ugandan banks, and that Kenya is a haven for the leaders and their corrupt wealth. This issue was investigated by the Enough Project, where collusion between South Sudanese officials and their regional counterparts provided grounds for allegations of money laundering (Fleischner 2015). Also cited are Uganda's military dominance, Kenya's banking sector control and Ethiopia's Blue

Nile water impasse with Egypt in addition to self-serving manoeuvres and intrigues among the IGAD partners.

In response to this complexity, this thesis examined domestic policies in those states and how they have shaped their foreign policies on South Sudan. Starting with Ethiopia, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam aims to boost industrialization which is a source of employment in Africa's second-largest population, and therefore a project of strategic national interest (NATO Strategic Direction South Hub, 2019, p. 6). This project has faced stiff opposition from Egypt, which believes its share of the Nile waters will be considerably reduced by the project, and chooses to use South Sudan as a proxy, in light of Ethiopia chairing the IGAD process (Kalpakian 2017:11; Lawson 2017:129–32). The LAPSSET project is one of Kenya's flagship projects under the Vision 2030 national development plan that aims to transform the economy of the country (Rift Valley Institute, 2013, pp. 2–3). As discussed in Chapter 7, a proposed oil pipeline from South Sudan to the Kenyan port of Lamu is the backbone of the LAPSSET project. The magnitude and importance of these two projects to the economies of the two countries, Ethiopia and Kenya, first and foremost, portray their national interests. The strategic importance of South Sudan as far as these projects are concerned, and in light of political manoeuvres, has informed how the two countries have shaped their foreign policies on South Sudan.

The UPDF deployment in South Sudan initially served elements of national interest as the forces evacuated Ugandans trapped in the war (also elaborated in Chapter 7). However, the refusal to withdraw its troops and the continued fighting alongside South Sudanese government forces reflects a self-serving economic interest of the Kampala leadership, devoid of national interests, in shaping its foreign policies on South Sudan (Temin, 2018, pp. 18–19). Contrary to pronouncements in the Ugandan parliament by the Defence Minister that Uganda meets the costs of UPDF deployment in South Sudan, his South Sudanese counterpart stated

unequivocally that their Juba government pays for the deployment. This contradiction points to the possibility of ulterior motives, beyond the national interests of Uganda. Sudan on the other hand, before the 2019 coup, deeply entrenched the Muslim Brotherhood ideology initially under the NIF and later under the NCP, in which an oligarchy of Islamists maintained their grip on power and infringed South Sudanese social, political and economic rights. It is from that background that policies on South Sudan have been shaped right from the Second Civil War, where such ideologies in the form of sharia laws were extended to the non-Muslim southern territories.

Deeply entrenched political Islam in Sudan, Nile waters and hydropower generation in Ethiopia, patron-client politics in Uganda, and the LAPSSET project in Kenya are all factors that affect these countries' foreign policies on South Sudan to the detriment of the peace process. From their standpoint, a situation that would enhance peace in South Sudan at their expense in terms of their economic interests is not desirable. Given the estrangement in relationships among the conflict parties, the conflict of interest displayed by the IGAD partners in competition with each other has only exacerbated the situation. For example, the SPLM Arusha reunification process mentioned in Chapter 4, was perceived by Ethiopia as a parallel process and displayed the differences particularly between Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda (Johnson, 2016, pp. 271, 272). As previously mentioned, the process that was intended to reconcile the parties and address their estranged status ended prematurely. Furthermore, Egypt joined in the fray to try and salvage the process. However, and as already mentioned, Egypt's role could be interpreted as using the process as a proxy to its Blue Nile dispute with Ethiopia. The ultimate effect is that the estranged status quo among the parties is sustained to the detriment of the peace process

On the Troika side, the USA urged the implementation of a neoliberal agenda. Though perhaps well-intentioned, it has proven to be counterproductive to the overall peace process

as the conflict parties have expressed concern about elements of undue influence. Notably, the imposition of the 2015 agreement and the push for the establishment of the hybrid court, in disregard of other transitional justice mechanisms, are cases in point. US policy in which democratic peace takes precedence has led to the neglect of complementary avenues such as truth commissions, healing and reconciliation. As observed in Chapter 6, initiatives that are perceived by the conflict parties to enforce justice mechanisms are likely to face opposition. Ultimately, the level of deep distrust, which is a characteristic of the political estrangement among the parties, persists as a result of the USA positions. However, all the aspects of transitional justice ought to be rationally considered.

8.2.3 Which strategies are best suited for resolving the disputes and estrangement among the SPLM political elite and the conflicts in South Sudan?

Having established that the trust deficit in the SPLM leadership is a major obstacle to durable peace, the third question that Chapter 6 addressed is which strategies are best suited to address the conflict, particularly the estrangement among the SPLM political elite and the conflict in general. Several previous studies have suggested trust-building, either directly or indirectly, as a necessary means of forestalling the perpetuation of the conflict (Jok 2014:17; Rolandsen 2015:164; Schomerus and Allen 2010:11; Vertin 2018; Young 2015). A study by Blackings (2018:23) found that the failed ARCSS “was entered into with full mistrust” and that “little was done to build trust between the two key antagonists”. Adebba and Prendergast (2018:3) concur, stating that “so far, agreements designed to stop the fighting have lacked concrete incentives for building trust and confidence between warring factions.” To further exemplify this point, Johnson (2016:155), after justifying the analysis of the events of 2004 instead of 1991 as a basis for understanding the 2013 conflict, goes on to say: “The lack of

genuine reconciliation led to deepening mistrust rather than to a strengthened sense of common purpose”.

The significance of trust-building cannot be overstated as a means of supporting successful mediation processes in the conflicts in South Sudan since trust is the ‘glue’ that sustains relationships (McEvily, Perrone, and Zaheer 2003). Despite its significance, discussions of the mechanisms of trust-building are lacking in previous literature on this conflict. There is a necessity to offer pathways to practicability, failing which the mention of trust-building will remain a diagnosis without a prescription for treating the problem. The fifth major finding demonstrates that there is a lacuna in trust-building in as there is no mechanism for achieving the desired process.

Several participants in the research process pointed out the inability to reconcile historical conflicts and grievances in the SPLM party as a reason for the persistent conflicts. Others were of the view that the potential solutions provided by the mediation are not addressing the root causes of the conflict but are just an attempt to stabilise power competition. Some participants argued that the parties had deliberately avoided the matters of root causes of the conflict. The reason is that addressing root causes would unravel their complicity in the atrocities meted out to innocent civilian populations during the war. Prosecutions could lead to the loss of power on their part, hence the objection to the establishment of the hybrid court (HCSS) provided for in the R-ARCSS. Complicity in war crimes could also be the reason the coverage of transitional justice and reconciliation in the R-ARCSS overlooks the historical conflicts that occurred before 2005, which in essence rules out the possibility of trust-building based on past conflicts of 1983, 1991 and other prior conflicts, although the same pattern followed the 2013 conflict. Furthermore, the provisions of Chapter V of the ARCSS and R-ARCSS agreements do not provide for trust-building between the parties though they focus on those affected by the conflict. Some participants argued that the hybrid court, which is a

criminal justice approach, is counterproductive. They proposed a reconciliation approach based on traditional justice mechanisms, hence an indigenous solution. Either way, a trust-building mechanism that focuses on reconciliation is necessary since criminal justice in this context is a recipe for further acrimony.

The SPLM Arusha reunification process, briefly mentioned in Chapter 4, in the framework agreement stated its first objective as being to: “address the root causes of the current crisis in order to expeditiously reconcile its leadership and membership to restore unity and harmony in the party” (Chama Cha Mapinduzi, 2014). In the agenda of the framework agreement, it delves into the history and evolution of the SPLM. Although the final agreement, signed on January 25, 2015, succinctly identifies the institutional weaknesses in the SPLM, and meticulously provided for its restructuring and strengthening, it is silent on the root causes and reconciliation aspect mentioned in the framework agreement (Chama Cha Mapinduzi, 2015).

Chapter 6, in its conceptual framework, brought clarity to the impersonal relationships regulated by institutional frameworks, that should be the basis of the SPLM political relationships (Barkin 2003). Additionally, the personal knowledge the parties have of each other forms the basis of interpersonal relationships (McKnight et al. 1998). On this institutional basis, trust is developed, and four categories of trust form the ingredients of regulating political relationships. Thus, Deterrence-Based Trust (DBT) prescribes punitive consequences of distrust, whereas Knowledge-Based Trust (KBT) provides the ability to discern behaviours of members, and Identification-Based Trust (IBT) is where the parties identify and empathise with the interests of the other (Lewicki & Bunker, 1994; Shapiro, Sheppard, & Cheraskin, 1992). Additionally, Calculus-Based Trust (CBT), provides both for calculated deterrent and rewards measures (Deutsch et al., 2006; Rousseau et al., 1998).

8.2.4 Conclusion of main findings

This thesis set out to examine the causes of the intractable conflict in South Sudan, the reasons why the mediation process has not been effective in ending the conflict, and strategies that would address this conflict. After a systematic review of the literature, document analysis and field interviews, six major themes emerged from the process, namely: historical conflicts, estranged political relationships, power struggles, control of resources, ethnic violence and the role of regional and international partners.

8.3 Contributions to Knowledge and Implications for Policy and Practice

This section presents the original contributions this thesis makes to knowledge, starting with the empirical contributions and the implications for policy and practice. The second subsection presents the theoretical implications.

8.3.1 Empirical contributions

With regard to the debate on the causes of conflict in South Sudan, this thesis contributes to a holistic understanding of the origins and linkages in the six causal areas in the conflict. It explicitly identifies the root causes, proximate causes and the triggers of the conflict (Fisher et al. 2000; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall 2005). Furthermore, this thesis contributes to a systematic understanding of the role of distrust in perpetuating the conflict through the three levels. This clarity forms the first step in addressing the deep distrust among the conflict parties, which contributes to predictable conflict outcomes.

Additionally, this thesis enhances the existing understanding why mediation processes have not been effective in ending the violent conflict, even five years since the process started. Specifically, it enhances knowledge concerning the paradoxical roles of the

regional and international partners that have impeded the peace process. It explores the deeper issues that drive the interests of the concerned partners by looking at their domestic policies and how they influence their interests in South Sudan, and how they negatively impact the already estranged status of the SPLM political leadership.

The final empirical finding of this thesis shows that the articulation of trust-building as a conflict strategy for South Sudan is lacking not only in the real world of policy but also in the available literature. In this regard, the contribution to new knowledge that this thesis makes is the presentation of a trust-building strategy that could address the incessant distrust among the SPLM leadership, and ultimately, the continuation and escalation of the conflict. It further highlights the importance of identifying and prioritising the implementation of transitional justice mechanisms that are contextually suitable to the conflict in South Sudan and embraced by the parties to the conflict.

8.3.2 Theoretical Implications

Chapter 2 of this thesis presented several conceptual and theoretical frameworks that underpin the thesis. The theoretical frameworks included conflict theories, theories of ethnic violence, theories of trust and theories of foreign policy. The concept of levels of conflict was also presented. This section discusses how these theories and concepts are connected to the findings of the thesis. In so doing, this thesis contributes to the current debate on the causes of the conflict in South Sudan by providing a unique integration of these theoretical and conceptual orientations. Hence, it contributes to furthering the understanding of the existing theories as they relate to the causes and intractable nature of conflicts.

8.3.2.1 Theories of conflict

The first finding of this thesis demonstrated how the conflict in the SPLM systematically evolved through three levels namely; the primary where historical conflicts occurred, the secondary level where estrangement in relationships are domiciles and the tertiary level where power struggles manifested as the trigger to the conflict. As discussed in section 8.2.1.1, ideological differences in the SPLM led to violent conflicts in 1983 and 1991, which remain the basis of conflict legacies in the party at the primary level. This situation left the SPLM parties polarised and in a state of estranged relationships; hence, the underlying cause of the conflict at the secondary level. The underlying tensions were ultimately triggered by the power struggles leading to the outbreak of fighting in December 2013.

Beginning with the December 2013 conflict at the tertiary level, conflict management was the immediately applicable approach to the conflict. This intervention entailed the negotiations, signing and implementation of the CoHA, in a ceasefire mechanism. However, and as conceptualised in Galtung's conflict triangle in Figure 2.2 in Chapter 2, conflict management dealt with the behavioural aspects of the conflict, particularly violence against civilians. However, and as discussed in Section 2.1.1., the other aspects of the triangle; attitudes and contradictions, are not in the purview of conflict management.

Accordingly, the political mediation process that ensued was critical in tackling attitudinal aspects of the conflict domiciled in the secondary level of the conflict, in the form of estranged political relationship, in an overall conflict resolution approach. As highlighted in Section 2.1.2, this opportunity of dealing with the negative attitudes of the parties, hence the underlying causes of the conflict, was missed as the balance of power through the collapsed ARCSS and later R-ARCSS power-sharing agreements became the focus.

As stated in the first finding, the genesis of the conflict conundrum in South Sudan lies in the legacy of historical conflicts, categorised as contradictions in Galtung's conflict triangle.

Accordingly, and as discussed in Section 2.1.3 of Chapter 2, addressing this problem entails an approach that deals with the contradictions, attitudes and behaviour hence, conflict transformation. There was an attempt to address these three critical variables of the conflict through the SPLM Arusha reunification process, which ended prematurely. The theoretical underpinning of conflict transformation approaches thus becomes apparent as they are applied to address the estrangement in political relationships at the primary and secondary levels of conflict defined by the conflict analysis concepts. Dealing with the estranged political relationships is decisive for sustainable conflict solutions which have been identified as a gap in the mediation process. The thesis, therefore, contributes to the furthering and understanding of existing theories of conflict as it relates to the causes and intractable nature of conflicts.

8.3.2.2 Theories of ethnic violence

The second major finding of this thesis shows that both the political elite and the tribal groups of the Dinka and the Nuer have vested interests in the conflict, contrary to some assertions that the ethnic violence is entirely politically motivated. This thesis, therefore, enhances the theoretical understanding of ethnic violence constructs by demonstrating the linkages between ethnic origins, evolutions, competition for resources and political elite manipulations. As discussed in Section 2.2.1 of Chapter 2, an analysis of the ethnic aspect of the conflict in the prism of Primordial theory, revealed that the Dinka and Nuer share the same ethnic origin, a condition that would render the argument of conflict based on identity difference invalid according to primordialism.

However, according to constructivist theory, ethnic boundaries may be defined by variable social, economic and political interests and conditions. Evidence shows that environmental conditions have redefined the social identities of the two groups rendering conflict between them likely. As also discussed in Chapter 5, Section 5.4, ecological

circumstance, and social mutation explain the variations between these two groups, and conflicts between them are historical, and occur within segmented family levels.

Instrumentalist theory is premised on the fact that conflict between ethnic groups is motivated by competition for resources and forms the basis for political elite manipulation. However, in the context of the South Sudan conflict, there is no evidence that the ethnic violence that has consistently been a feature of political disputes is a cause of the conflict, although the political elite may have taken advantage of the historical, ethnic feuds to their advantage and vice versa. Accordingly, the investigations shed new light on the complementary goals of the political elite and related ethnic groups in the conflict, where the mention of ethnicity as one of the causes of the conflict was generally anecdotal.

Thus, the primordial common ancestral backgrounds, the constructivist ecological factors that redefine ethnic boundaries and identities, and the instrumentalist competition for resources that attract political elite involvement, are all factors that simultaneously are at play in the interacting ethnic and political elite conflict relations.

8.3.2.3 Theories of trust

The third major finding of this thesis arises from the question as to why mediation efforts have tended to be ineffective in ending the violent conflicts in South Sudan. It has a link to the first finding in terms of its placement in the three levels of conflict, as explained in Section 8.2.2. However, it focuses on the deep distrust generated by the contradictions arising from the legacy of historical conflicts and creating a disposition towards estranged political relationships at the secondary level of the conflict. The application of institutional trust, through which impersonal relationships are sustained, augmented by an interpersonal trust is critical in changing behaviours and attitudes as a precursor to addressing the contradictions at the primary level of the conflict. This necessity for behavioural and attitudinal change directly

points to the third research question, which calls for strategies for dealing with the estrangements within the SPLM and the South Sudan conflict in general. The findings relating to this third question show that trust-building, though necessary, and the process that entails it, is lacking.

The trust frameworks discussed in Chapters 2 and 6 suggest that sustainable political relationships leading to sustainable conflict solutions are achievable. Reversing distrust in estranged relationships is possible through a trust-building process. In this regard, measures aimed at instilling Deterrence Based Trust (DBT), which, ensures political leaders observe institutional norms, values and rules, is vital for stable political relationships, as the parties enter into a power-sharing agreement. A consistent build-up of DBT, and Calculus Based Trust (CBT), by the parties creates a positive image of their trustworthiness and in effect leads to Knowledge Based Trust (KBT), which portrays a positive knowledge the parties have of each other, over time in the relationships. As these three categories of trust are practised in the relationships, Identity Based Trust (IBT) subsequently emerges. Here, the parties identify with each other based on shared ideology, values or goals and cooperatively address challenges that may occur in their relationships, while empathising one with another. This deliberate cultivation of these categories of trust has a net effect of restoring estranged political relationships after conflict and minimising the occurrence of distrust, political posturing, suspicions and intransigent positions that have characterised the negotiations and implementation of the failed ARCSS and the current R-ARCSS.

This thesis, therefore, enhances the theoretical knowledge on the under-researched subject of trust-building and its application in peacebuilding processes. Unlocking the four categories of trust is crucial in overcoming the role of distrust in perpetuating conflict. Furthermore, it enhances understanding of the strengths and weakness of the parties in its application.

8.3.2.4 Foreign policy theories

Another aspect of the third research question on the reasons for the ineffective mediation efforts leads to the fourth finding that the positions of the regional and international mediation partners contravene mediation norms. This situation has led to further polarising of the conflict parties and enabling the existing estrangement in their relationships to the detriment of the mediation process and power sharing agreements. This thesis extends existing theories in understanding the role of the foreign policies of the partners in the perpetuation of conflict. The analysis of the theories of foreign policies in which realism and liberalism, and neorealism and neoliberalism, proved to be inadequate in explaining the role of all the IGAD regional partners in their engagements in South Sudan, either that of individual leaders or as group political decisions. However, these theories were sufficient in explaining the role of the Troika and particularly the USA, and China.

The application of political psychology which looks at the individual behaviour of the leaders in the context of political decisions, and their character traits as influenced by patrimonialism where power is centred on the leader, revealed the interests of the IGAD partners. The reason is that policies of some of these IGAD member states support individual or group interests rather than national interests. A combined exploration of these theoretical orientations enables a deeper understanding of the factors that influenced the individual and oligarchic actions of some of the political leaders on South Sudan, and their influence on the estranged SPLM leaders.

Overall, the originality of the contributions which this thesis makes to the growing body of knowledge about the restoration of peace after decades of war lies in the systematic reporting of participants' beliefs as to the causes of the South Sudanese conflict and the analysis of the reasons why it has proved to be so long-lasting. The analysis of the role of South Sudan's neighbours in prolonging the conflict, especially, presents new insights. The

thesis also fills a gap in examining the role of the lack of trust between the main protagonists and creates a new understanding of how trust-building across the SPLM leadership could be possible through transitional justice approaches firmly based upon traditional justice mechanisms. Given the dilemma in choosing between criminal justice and restorative justice approaches, this thesis offers a hybrid justice system in which traditional justice mechanisms could be implemented alongside criminal justice.

8.4 Implications for Policy, Practice and Future Research

This thesis has generated several findings and original contributions based on an in-depth interview strategy that focused on the role of the SPLM political elite, the resurgent violent conflicts in South Sudan and strategies that will address these problems. These findings lay the ground for further future research to improve knowledge and policy practice in the area of peacebuilding in South Sudan.

The thesis found that distrust among the parties who are in an estranged relationship has continually created power struggles and subsequently violent conflicts, rendering trust building a prerequisite to sustainable peace. As this thesis shows, research on this aspect has been limited, although various studies recognize the significance of trust-building without elaborating what it entails. It recommends the establishment of institutional trust mechanisms that would support the regulation of the actions of political leaders for peaceful political engagements. It is, however, noted from this research that the trust frameworks are achievable only when there are accountability mechanisms in place for non-compliance with the institutional norms, values and rules. Currently, this position may not be the case in South Sudan. This thesis has suggested some trust-building approaches which may be useful for policymakers and practitioners and recommends further research to build on these approaches, particularly on contextually suitable and mutually acceptable trust-building approaches.

Secondly, though the research design purposefully targeted key members of the SPLM, the top most leadership were inaccessible. Since the implementation of the failed ARCSS and the current R-ARCSS largely depends on the two SPLM leaders, the justification for trust-building presupposes that they would embrace the process, which may not be the case. An engagement with the leaders to determine whether they would validate a possible trust-building process that involves them would be worthwhile. Therefore, without further research that is specifically designed to target the two parties and identifies a transitional justice process that is contextually suitable and accepted, there may be no guarantee that trust-building will succeed in the current circumstances.

Finally, ethnic violence is a pattern that has existed partly as a consequence of political power struggles throughout the history of civil wars in South Sudan. The reason is partially attributable to the centralised governance structures and institutions which not only cannot regulate the fragile political relationships nor do they have the will or capacity to provide resources and social services to both communities equitably. This thesis recommends further research into the lack of institutional capacity in regulating both the political relationships and the distribution of resources.

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Appendices

Appendix A



School of Humanities
Armidale NSW 2351
Australia
Phone 61 2 6773 3062
Fax 61 2 6773 3520
school-of-humanities@une.edu.au

The Director
Peace and Security Department
African Union Commission
Addis Ababa
14th July, 2017

Dear Director,

Re: Short Term Research Attachment – Sam Angulo Onapa, PhD candidate

I am writing to you to formally introduce Mr Sam Angulo Onapa, a PhD candidate in good standing at the University of New England, Australia, and to request your support and facilitation of his short term research attachment to the African Union in Addis Ababa for purposes of research data collection. The expected attachment period is 3-6 months, commencing October 2017.

Mr Onapa's research topic is entitled "*Dealing with Estranged Political Relationships: A Pre-requisite for Sustainable Peace in South Sudan*". The study has two key purposes:

1. To understand the causes of estrangement in relationships among the SPLM political elite in the lead up to the resurgence of violent conflicts in South Sudan
2. To identify strategies that will address the estrangement in the relationships within the SPLM to ensure the political mediation process are sustainable.

I can assure you that Mr Onapa's research has been fully approved by the University of New England Human Ethics Committee, and the ethics protocol for the research ensures the full confidentiality, security and safety of participants and data collected.

I would greatly appreciate any support and assistance that you could offer Mr Onapa, through your good office, to enable the conduct of his research. Please do not hesitate to contact me if further clarification is required on this request.

Yours Sincerely,

A large black rectangular box redacting the signature of the sender.

Lloyd Weeks

Professor Lloyd Weeks
Head, School of Humanities
University of New England
Armidale NSW 2351
AUSTRALIA

Phone: +61 2 6773 3982
Email: lweeks2@une.edu.au
Web: www.une.edu.au/staff-profiles/lweeks2

Appendix B

AFRICAN UNION
الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE
UNIÃO AFRICANA

P.O. Box: 3243, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Tel.:(251-11) 551 38 22 Fax: (251-11) 551 93 21
Email: situationroom@africa-union.org

Ref.: PSD/305/1144597-17
Date: 8 August 2017

Dear Professor Weeks,

Thank you for your letter requesting the African Union to avail its support to Mr. Sam Onapa, PhD candidate at the University of New England, NSW, Australia.

The African Union is seriously concerned about the persistent conflict in South Sudan, and welcomes any research that could contribute meaningfully to its peaceful resolution. It is our belief that any solution would have to prioritise the need for reconciliation and healing of the long-suffering population and, in that vein, the African Union would welcome the research Mr. Onapa proposes to undertake, on *"Dealing with estranged political relationships: A prerequisite for sustainable peace in South Sudan."*

The African Union has long called on universities and research institutes to undertake research that can contribute meaningfully to solving the challenges facing Africa. In the *Tripoli Declaration on the Elimination of Conflicts in Africa and the Promotion of Sustainable Peace*, adopted by the Special Session of the Assembly of the African Union on the Consideration and Resolution of Conflicts in Africa, held in Tripoli, Libya, on 31 August 2009, the Heads of State and Government declared that, "Making and sustaining peace and security is also an intellectual challenge. We therefore undertake to build the capacity of our universities and research institutes to explore the nature of African conflicts, to investigate what succeeds and what fails in conflict resolution efforts, and to arrive at African-centred solutions, drawing from our own distinctive and unique experience."

Professor Lloyd Weeks
Head, School of Humanities
University of New England
Armidale, NSW 2351
Australia
Email: lweeks2@une.edu.au



Appendix C



EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN
KAMPALA - UGANDA

Ref: **EMB/RSS/UG/9.3.2018.A.6**

Date: **March 9, 2018**

The Undersecretary,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and
International Cooperation
Juba, South Sudan

RE: Request for facilitation of a meeting for a Researcher, Sam Angulo Onapa with concerned authorities

The Embassy of the Republic of South Sudan in Kampala, Uganda is hereby requesting your esteemed office to facilitate a meeting for Sam Angulo Onapa, a Researcher at the University of New England in Australia, currently conducting a research at the African Union Peace and Security Department, Sudan and South Sudan Desk, with concerned authorities. His research interviews are on the Conflict in South Sudan.

Kindly find attached herewith his documents in regard to the research, for detailed information.

Please, accept the assurance of my highest consideration.

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN

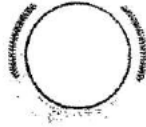
FOR: Head of Mission



Appendix D



AFRICAN UNION
الاتحاد الإفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE
UNIÃO AFRICANA

Plot No. 167, Tongping (1st Class) Residential Area, P.O. Box 341,
Juba, South Sudan
www.africa-union.org

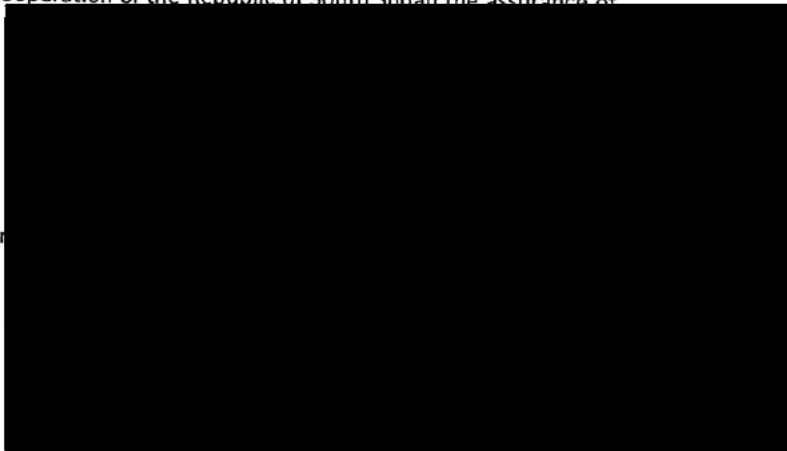
Ref: AUMISS/J/07/D3/2293 18

The African Union Mission in South Sudan [AUMISS] presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of South Sudan, and has the honour to introduce to the esteemed Ministry, Mr. Sam Angulo Onapa, a researcher at the University of New England in Australia. Mr. Onapa is conducting studies at the African Union Commission Peace and Security Department on peace and security in South Sudan.

AUMISS would be most grateful to the esteemed Ministry for the extension of courtesies in assistance to the research being conducted by Mr. Onapa.

The AU Mission in South Sudan avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of South Sudan the assurance of its highest consideration.

The Undersecretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Inter
Republic of South Sudan
Juba



Appendix E

27



**THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
OFFICE OF THE UNDERSECRETARY**

RSS/MFA&IC/AU-IGAD/18-46

Note Verbale

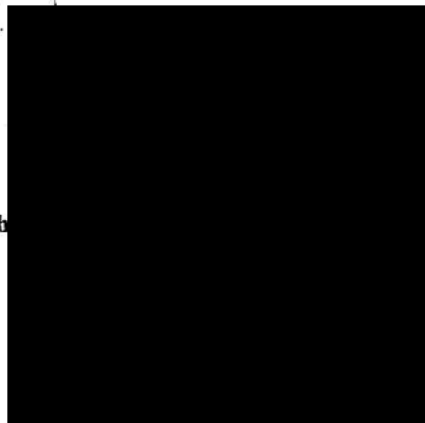
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of South Sudan presents its compliments to the Commission of the African Union and has the honor to refer to your Note Verbale: AUMISS/J/07/03/2293.18, dated 12th March 2018 regarding Mr. Sam Angulo Onapa, a researcher from the University of New England in Australia.

The Ministry would like to inform your esteemed Mission to convey to Mr. Onapa that he sees the Director of Regional Organizations upon arrival in Juba for further information in connecting him to the right people.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of South Sudan avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Commission of the African Union the assurances of its highest consideration.

March, 2018

**African Union Liaison Office in South
Juba**



Appendix F

PART F1 – DECLARATION BY APPLICANTS

All of the required signatures in this part must be provided before this application can be processed. (Refer to *Special Circumstances* in the *Appendix – How to submit your application*.) I declare that the information provided in this application is truthful and as complete as possible.

- In signing this application, I declare that the research protocol conforms to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, 2007*, which I have read.
- I undertake to conduct the research in accordance with the approved protocol, the *National Statement*, relevant legislation and the policies and procedures of the University of New England.
- I have read and agree to comply with the University of New England's Research Data Management Policy and pursuant policies and procedures and have a plan for managing and/or sharing Research Data securely.
- I understand and agree that project files, documents, research records, and data may be subject to inspection by the University of New England's, HREC, the Research Ethics Officer, the sponsor or an independent body for auditing and monitoring purposes
- Where I am the project supervisor for the research described herein which will be conducted by a student of the University of New England, I declare that I have provided guidance to the student in the design, methodology and consideration of ethical issues of the proposed research.
- I make this application on the basis that the information it contains is confidential and will be used by the University of New England for the purposes of ethical review and monitoring of the research project described herein, and to satisfy reporting requirements to regulatory bodies. The information will not be used for any other purpose without my prior consent.

All investigators named at B2 , B3 and B4 are to sign this declaration.

	Name	Signature	Date
Chief investigator or project supervisor	Professor Helen Ware	[Redacted Signatures]	22/08/2017
Co-Investigator or Student Researcher	Dr Rebecca Spence		17/08/2017
Co-Investigator or Student Researcher	Mr Sam Angulo Onapa		17/08/2017
Co-Investigator or Student Researcher			
Co-Investigator or Student Researcher			

Appendix G



Ethics Office
Research Development & Integrity
Research Division
Armidale NSW 2351
Australia
Phone 02 6773 3449
Fax 02 6773 3543
jo-ann.sozou@une.edu.au
www.une.edu.au/research-services

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM TO: Prof Helen Ware, Dr Rebecca Spence & Mr Sam Onapa
School of Humanities

This is to advise you that the Human Research Ethics Committee has approved the following:

PROJECT TITLE: Dealing with Estranged Political Relationships: A Prerequisite for Sustainable Peace in South Sudan

APPROVAL No.: HE17-206

COMMENCEMENT DATE: 15 October, 2017

APPROVAL VALID TO: 15 October, 2018

COMMENTS: Nil. Conditions met in full

The Human Research Ethics Committee may grant approval for up to a maximum of three years. For approval periods greater than 12 months, researchers are required to submit an application for renewal at each twelve-month period. All researchers are required to submit a Final Report at the completion of their project. The Progress/Final Report Form is available at the following web address:
<http://www.une.edu.au/research/research-services/rdi/ethics/hre/hrec-forms>

The NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans requires that researchers must report immediately to the Human Research Ethics Committee anything that might affect ethical acceptance of the protocol. This includes adverse reactions of participants, proposed changes in the protocol, and any other unforeseen events that might affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

In issuing this approval number, it is required that all data and consent forms are stored in a secure location for a minimum period of five years. These documents may be required for compliance audit processes during that time. If the location at which data and documentation are retained is changed within that five year period, the Research Ethics Officer should be advised of the new location.

Appendix H



Ethics Office
Research Development & Integrity
Research Division
Armidale NSW 2351
Australia
Phone 02 6773 3449
Fax 02 6773 3543
jo-ann.sozou@une.edu.au
www.une.edu.au/research-services

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM TO: Prof Helen Ware, Dr Rebecca Spence & Mr Sam Angulo Onapa

School of Humanities

This is to advise you that the Human Research Ethics Committee has approved the following:

PROJECT TITLE: Dealing with Estranged Political Relationships: A Prerequisite for Sustainable Peace in South Sudan

APPROVAL No.: HE17-206

COMMENCEMENT DATE: 15 October, 2017

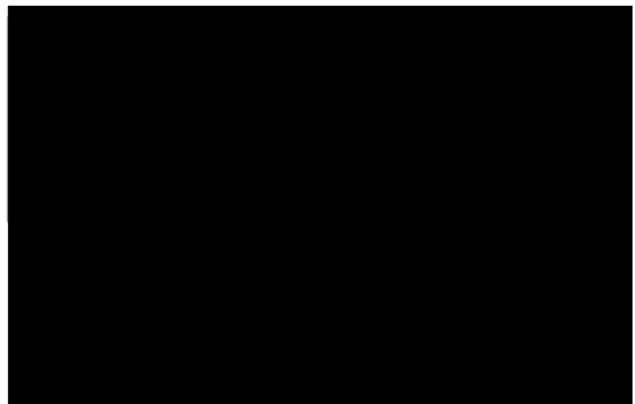
APPROVAL VALID TO: 30 April, 2019

COMMENTS: Nil. Conditions met in full

The Human Research Ethics Committee may grant approval for up to a maximum of three years. For approval periods greater than 12 months, researchers are required to submit an application for renewal at each twelve-month period. All researchers are required to submit a Final Report at the completion of their project. The Progress/Final Report Form is available at the following web address: <http://www.une.edu.au/research/research-services/rdi/ethics/hre/hrec-forms>

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Appendix I



School of Humanities
 University of New England
 Armidale NSW 2351
 Australia
 Phone: +61 2 6773 3951
 E-mail: mbranag2@une.edu.au
 www.une.edu.au

INFORMATION SHEET

for

PARTICIPANTS

I wish to invite you to participate in my research project, described below.

My name is Sam Angulo Onapa and I am conducting this research as part of my PhD in the School of Humanities at the University of New England. My supervisors are Professor Helen Ware and Dr Rebecca Spence.

Research Project	“Dealing with Estranged Political Relationships: A Prerequisite for Sustainable Peace in South Sudan”
Aim of the Research	The research aims is to identify strategies that will lead to sustainable peace in South Sudan and most specifically by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Seeking to understand the causes of estrangement in relationships among the SPLM political elite in the lead up to the resurgence of violent conflicts, and ii. To identify strategies that will address the estrangement in the relationships within the SPLM, to compliment the political mediation processes and break the cycle and resurgence of violent conflict.
Interview	I will conduct a face-to-face interview in Addis Ababa. The interview will take approximately 40 minutes. With your permission, I will make an audio recording of the interview to ensure that I accurately recall the information you provide. Following the interview, a transcript will be provided to you if you wish to see one.
Confidentiality	Any personal details gathered in the course of the study and subsequent publication of the results, will only be identifiable with your permission provided for in the consent form. No individual who chooses to remain confidential will be identified by name in any publication of the results. All names will be replaced by pseudonyms; this will ensure your anonymity. However, If you agree I would like to quote some of your responses. This will also be done in a way to ensure that you are not identifiable.
Participation is Voluntary	Please understand that your involvement in this study is voluntary and I respect your right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence and without needing to provide an explanation.
Questions	The interview questions will not be of a sensitive nature; rather they are general, and will enable me to enhance my knowledge of the division within the SPLM leadership and how it affects the conflict in South Sudan.
Use of Information	I will use information from the interview as part of my doctoral thesis, which I expect to complete in February 2020. Information from the interview may also be used in academic journal articles and conference presentations before and after this date. At all times, I will safeguard your identity by presenting the information in a way that will not allow you to be identified.
Upsetting Issues	It is unlikely that this research will raise any personal or upsetting issues but if it does you may wish to contact AU Medical Services on telephone number 011 551 53 28 or 011 551 46 42
Storage of	I will keep all hardcopy notes and recordings of the interviews in a locked cabinet in my

Information	office at the University of New England's School of Humanities. Any electronic data will be kept on cloud.une.edu.au, UNE's centrally managed cloud server managed by the research team. It will also be kept on a password protected computer in the same location. Only the research team will have access to the data.
Disposal of Information	All the data collected in this research will be kept for a minimum of five years after successful submission of my thesis, after which it will be disposed of by deleting relevant computer files, and destroying or shredding hardcopy materials.
Approval	This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No HE 17-206, Valid to 15/10/2018).
Researchers Contact Details	Feel free to contact me with any questions about this research by email at sonapa@une.edu.au or by phone on +61421 643 648 in Australia or in Addis Ababa on +251 93 6983007 You may also contact my supervisors'. My Principal supervisor's name is Professor Helen Ware and she can be contacted by email at hware@une.edu.au or by phone on 02 6773 2442 and my Co-supervisor's name is Dr Rebecca Spence and his/her email address is rspence@une.edu.au and phone number is 02 6773 5095.
Complaints	Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact: Mr. Boitshoko Mokgathe, Head of the Sudan/South Sudan Desk Peace and Security Department African Union Commission Headquarters P.O. Box 3243, Roosevelt Street (Old Airport Area), W21K19 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Tel. No. +251 92 952 3969 Email mokgatheb@africa-union.org Or Mrs Jo-Ann Sozou Research Ethics Officer Research Services University of New England Armidale, NSW 2351 Tel: (02) 6773 3449 Email: ethics@une.edu.au Thank you for considering this request and I look forward to further contact with you. regards, Sam Angulo Onapa

APPENDIX J

CONSENT FORM for PARTICIPANTS

Research Project: Dealing with Estranged Political Relationships: A Prerequisite
for Sustainable Peace in South Sudan

- I,, have read the information contained in the Information Sheet for Participants and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. Yes/No
- I agree to participate in this activity, realising that I may withdraw at any time. Yes/No
- I agree that research data gathered for the study may be quoted and published using a pseudonym. Yes/No
- I agree to be identified in this research. Yes/No
- I agree to having my interview audio recorded and transcribed. Yes/No
- I would like to receive a copy of the transcription of the interview. Yes/No
- I am older than 18 years of age. Yes/No

.....
Participant Date

.....
Researcher Date

APPENDIX K

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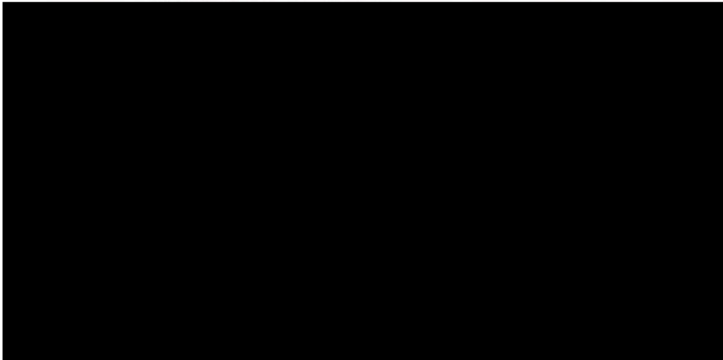
Date: 12/05/2018

PhD Research Placement Authorization /Agreement

Name of Research Candidate	Sam Angulo Onapa
University name and address	University of New England School of Humanities University of New England Armidale NSW 2351 Australia
Placement Department	Peace and Security Department African Union Commission Headquarters P.O. Box 3243, Roosevelt Street (Old Airport Area), W21K19 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Placement Period	Commencement Date: 1 st December 2017 Completion Date: 31 st May 2018 Total placement Duration: 6 Months
Place of Work during placement:	Sudan South Sudan Desk 3 rd Floor, Julius Nyerere Peace and Security Building AUC, Addis Ababa
Research Topic	Dealing with Estranged Political Relationships: A Pre-requisite for Sustainable Peace in South Sudan
Main Contact at the AUC	Mr. Boitshoko Mokgathe, Head of the Sudan/South Sudan Desk Peace and Security Department Tel. No. +251 92 952 3969 Email mokgatheb@africa-union.org

Working Hours	Monday to Friday, 8 am to 5 pm
Placement description of work to be undertaken,	Review of AUC Documents, participate in authorised meetings and conferences relevant to the research topic. As well as carry out interviews with staff and relevant stakeholders on the research topic
Confidentiality Clause	All information and data accessed will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used for academic purposes only
Research Outcome	The results of the research will be shared with the African Union Commission

Authorised



Date:

17/11/18

17/11/18

Date: