

State in Transition: Peacebuilding after civil war, development, and governance issues in South Sudan.

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Abstract

South Sudan has made progress transiting from conflict-laden to unity focused state. The aim of this critical review was to explore the transformation progress, and the impacts of inclusive governance in peacebuilding. The study adopted an empirical research design to determine inclusive governance and citizen engagement in key decision making in South Sudan. Applying Positivist, and Pragmatist research philosophies. The researcher analysed existing studies, and reports on inclusivity and peacebuilding commitments in South Sudan. The findings revealed that good governance, inclusive participation, equitable resource allocation, accountability, transparency, enabling judicial framework and political good will leads to states' transition and lasting peacebuilding.

Date of Submission: 04-10-2021

Date of Acceptance: 18-10-2021

I. INTRODUCTION

South Sudan prides itself as the newest country to gain statehood, and while this new status of independence was met with pomp and much color, the South Sudanese people have reaped little if any of the fruits that come with independence. After decades of armed conflict with the mostly Arab north that killed almost 2.5 million people and displaced millions more, the signing of the CPA led to a ceasefire between the SPLM led by Col. John Garang and the Khartoum-based Arab government in 2005. This was followed by a referendum in the south and a declaration of independence on 9th July 2011, (Hendricks & Lucey, 2013) but this newfound independence brought with it a host of challenges. In 2013, civil war again broke out between factions allied to President Salva Kiir and former First Vice President, Riek Machar. This ended in a ceasefire in August 2015, only for conflict to arise again in 2016. According to Banke-Thomas et al., (2019), there have been over 400,000 deaths and over 4.5 million people internally or externally displaced since this last civil war began again in 2016.

Presently, South Sudan has one of the highest poverty rates in the world, characterized by high unemployment, malnutrition, weak institutions, lack of services, limited human resources, and general instability (Banke-Thomas et al., 2019). As a state in transition from conflict to democracy, where the voices of the people were heard, and a republic where the rule of law is respected and upheld, for South Sudan, the rewards and benefits of self-government and self-determination are yet to be seen. The constitution enshrines what the ideal South Sudanese society should look like, yet civil and governance issues have taken a backseat to the conflict between warring factions, mostly government agents locking horns for the country's resources and power. The 2040 National Vision for the country (African Center for Strategic Studies, 2019) along with the promulgated constitution articulates the desires of the newly formed republic as an exemplary nation that is well-educated and informed, prosperous, productive, compassionate, democratic, and accountable, amongst other ideals. However, the post-conflict and transitional phase of South Sudan has been far from this, and the end only seems bleaker with the current administrative crop. In research from the African Center for Strategic Studies (2019), the problems that bedevil South Sudan can be ascribed to poor governance, a fractured and predatory security sector, and an unclear national security strategy that considers all peoples and minorities. Thus, this paper explores how peacebuilding in South Sudan can be successful, and how the newest independent nation can move beyond this state of transition.

South Sudan achieved independence from the Khartoum-based Arab regime in 2011. A new constitution was promulgated with a National Vision Plan that aimed to lift the country out of the throes of conflict into a brighter tomorrow. There have however been several breakouts of armed conflict, catapulted by mostly government operatives fighting internally against each other for power, and pitting the two major ethnic

groups i.e. the Dinka and the Nuer, represented in the major government factions against each other. While the two ceasefires observed in 2013 and 2015 brought a lull to the fighting at the national level, it has been observed by the United Nations Human Rights Council that about 75% of the country is still embroiled in fighting at the local level, with armed militias both in support and against the current regime locking horns (African Center for Strategic Studies, 2019). The South Sudanese continue to be amongst the most poverty-afflicted people in the world, with vital services and sectors such as education, healthcare, and security gravely affected by this ongoing and ever-looming state of conflict.

The research problems underpinning this paper are thus to identify civil, development, and governance issues that affect South Sudan's move from transitional democracy in this post-conflict period, into a state of true democracy and a true republic. The concept of democracy in this context implies a state where the voice of the people is heard and takes precedence, while the concept of a republic in this sense implies a state in which the rule of law vis-à-vis the constitution and other national policies is upheld. The key research problem will be to identify the methods and means by which peacebuilding efforts in South Sudan can achieve success.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The challenge of peacebuilding in transitional states & post-conflict arenas

Krampe et al., (2021) note that for international and domestic actors, the process of peacebuilding in post-conflict areas is among the most difficult policy arenas to understand and operate in. Measures such as environmental and natural resource governance are some of the methods of resolving such conflicts (Krampe et al., 2021). However, different authors and scholars have acknowledged that the challenges associated with peacebuilding in conflict-affected states are rarely straightforward and that the indirect effects of war compound these challenges further. Beyond dramatically reducing violence and preventing the rekindling or relapse into violent conflict (Hendricks & Lucey, 2013). , peacebuilding efforts seek to help societies and governments in post-conflict states reset their paths to that of a more sustainable peace.

Peacebuilding challenges in the context of South Sudan

For South Sudan, oil is the major resource and export, and whilst this resource could be used to improve the livelihoods of people, for example, by increasing spending on healthcare and other basic services, it has been used instead as a catalyst and fuel for the ongoing conflict (Banke-Thomas et al., 2019). From Banke-Thomas et al., (2019), it is further noted that expenditures continue to be skewed towards defense, with over 70% of the total budget over the last three years before the report going to state and military spending, while healthcare and education only make up a combined total of 6% of government expenditure.

Peace-building initiatives in South Sudan are largely driven by external actors such as the AU, the UN, IGAD, and donor agencies such as the USAID and DFID (Shulika, 2013). The conflict in South Sudan isn't a linear one; there are several factors and actors at play, at the national, international, sub-national, and local levels. There have been different attempts to shift the paradigm, working not just with government stakeholders, but also with local organizations, agents such as NGOs and international institutions, and people, focusing on more sustainable projects that benefit people at the grassroots (Shulika, 2013). Endeavors to reform the society and transition from the post-conflict status have mainly focused on state-building issues, resources such as oil, and border demarcations, focusing less on the problem of nation-building, broader representation in government, as well as more complex issues such as national and social identity (Shulika, 2013). Shulika (2013) therefore argues that unless these and other issues are resolved, sustainable peace and development in South Sudan will remain elusive and the country will be in a state of perpetual internal conflict.

Civil Development & Governance Issues in South Sudan Vis-à-Vis Peacebuilding

Shulika (2013) further argues that there is a need for the promotion and coordination of a constructive relationship between the South Sudanese state and civil society, an important facet of any existing or emergent democracy. There is a need for building inclusive political processes that facilitate cooperation between the state and society, and there is also a need to develop the capacity of the state to perform its duties in a manner that satisfies the expectations of the people (Shulika, 2013). Intertwining the need for effective governance in an atmosphere that respects democracy and civil rights implies that, in the case of South Sudan, the current political-led processes have proved ineffective, and the existing institutions don't work. Some questions to be asked in the context of South Sudan (African Center for Strategic Studies, 2019) and effective democracy include: is there a legitimate political opposition that is allowed to speak out, does the media have the freedom to report independently and objectively, and is there a civil society that can help hold government officials and the political class accountable?

From the African Center for Strategic Studies (2019) report, the government is, in fact, responsible for further fragmenting the political and population constituencies, has placed the needs of the people in the backseat by being unable or unwilling to provide for essential services and has lost legitimacy among some

factions by being non-inclusive. Kon, (2015) notes that the independence of South Sudan didn't strengthen the will of the political crop to eradicate marginalization, discrimination, the politicization of national resources, or injustice. Kon, (2015) further notes that the justice system characterized by a lack of an independent judiciary and parliament limits the role such institutions, characteristic of transitional and effective democracies, play in enforcing law and order. The process of peacebuilding in South Sudan is thus one that requires an active engagement of the entire post-conflict society. Shulika, (2013) suggests the mechanism of the Paul Lederach Pyramid Model of conflict transformation, which emphasizes the importance of coordinating peace-building activities between and among the various leadership levels.

Achieving sustainable and long-lasting peace in South Sudan

In terms of how these processes can be achieved, Shulika, (2013) recommends an indigenous intervention mechanism that encourages the active engagement of the entire post-conflict society in its peacebuilding and development initiatives. Some parties have suggested that there seems to be no political pathway to ending the current impasse in South Sudan (African Center for Strategic Studies, 2019) and that all electoral and political contests be taken off the table for a finite period. It has also been further suggested that for the sake of the civilian population involved, essential services such as food, healthcare, education, and security be administered externally, say under the auspices of the AU and the UN, to give a basic return to normalcy, to allow people resume their livelihoods, and to ensure security and stability. The African Center for Strategic Studies, (2019) proposes that the South Sudanese people need to have a national conversation about what kind of state they want, and regarding how their constitution should enshrine the principles of governance and layered accountability.

III. MATERIAL & METHODS

Inclusive governance is vital to the realization of peacebuilding in South Sudan. The state emerged from conflict and is in the process of transition. This research seeks to determine the extent of equitable representation of indigenous groups, ethnic majority, minority and the marginalized, and how inclusivity is helping the country transit to stability through peacebuilding.

The study adopted an empirical research design to determine inclusive governance and citizen engagement in key decision making in South Sudan. Applying Positivist, and Pragmatist research philosophies. The researcher analysed existing studies, and reports on inclusivity and peacebuilding commitments in South Sudan. Based on intrinsic interest to observe the challenges the South Sudanese people face, humanitarian reports and global news on S. Sudan's transition to peaceful co-existence and resilience provided a pivotal direction for the study. Critical analysis was necessary to integrate the reality in South Sudan with the existing literature on transition from conflict to nationhood reconstruction. Emphasis was placed on humanitarian reports, and the South Sudanese's stability strategic plans, which were qualitatively analysed against the realities and conflict situations in South Sudan.

The study was review-based and involved a systematic investigation of secondary literature. Scientific mapping technique was used to study bibliographic networks and extract secondary data for the study (Tieman et al., 2017). The approach has previously been used in various academic fields, including environment science, sustainable transport, waste management, and city logistics (Tieman et al., 2017). By applying scientific mapping techniques, the researcher synthesised findings from journals, keywords, newsletters, humanitarian organizations and academic research on conflict resolution and peacebuilding in S. Sudan.

Scientific mapping followed a systematic procedure. The procedure begun with literature retrieval and selection, followed by descriptive analysis, Vos Viewer coding and scientometric analysis, time view and clustering of keywords, thematic discussions, findings and conclusions (López-Belmonte et al., 2020).

Statistics and data were obtained from electronic databases, refined, classified and encoded. Tests such as journal co-citation analysis were performed to determine collaborative research network related to G&SL humanitarian organizations in the South Sudan to understand partnerships and linkages between inclusive governance and peacebuilding (López-Belmonte et al., 2020). Second was organizations collaboration analysis to determine collaborative research initiatives on conflict resolution, peacebuilding initiatives and inclusive governance. Third was document co-citation analysis to identify mostly cited studies on peace building, conflict resolution and inclusive governance (López-Belmonte et al., 2020).

Fourth, the test entailed keywords co-occurrence analysis and clustered them into various research themes. The analysis helped clarify knowledge structure relating to state transition, peacebuilding and inclusive governance (López-Belmonte et al., 2020).

Advanced retrieval functions in various databases were of great significance during the study (Nguyen, 2009). The retrieval was restricted to research articles, humanitarian organization reports, and South Sudanese government strategies on conflict resolution, peacebuilding and inclusive governance. The retrieved records were imported to EndNote software, inspected and filtered for unqualified and duplicate literature. This was followed by carefully reading the abstracts to determine studies consistent with the research questions (Nguyen, 2009).

IV. RESULTS

A total of seven literature were screened and used for content analysis in this study. The articles were grouped under four categories. The first category consisted of four articles published by the United Nations. The remaining articles consisted of those on policies and governance, news reports and commentary on the South Sudanese inclusive leadership. Two of the United Nations' publication focused on growing humanitarians, while the other two discussed the failures to achieve a full transition due to non-inclusiveness. Commentaries focused on the foundations of a peaceful state, while the policy acts and governance strategies focused on conflict resolution, inclusivity and good governance. Struggles over elective posts, control over resources and lack of representation in key decision making at national and local communities were issues bedeviling South Sudan; hence, hindering peacebuilding.

Inclusion and key decision-making challenges were found to have contribute to subnational conflicts, fracture within Revitalized Peace Agreement, and the proliferation of weapons. The articles also linked political instability to political infighting. Other challenges that hinder transition and peacebuilding are lack of self-reliance, and high levels of humanitarian needs. The findings from the literature associates the rule of law, respect for human rights, democracy and good governance with social, economic and political transformation and peacebuilding in South Sudan. The results from the articles also reveal inclusivity as a booster for non-discriminate peaceful coexistence.

V. DISCUSSION.

Humanitarian needs challenges.

United Nations (2021) humanitarian needs overview reveals lack of durable peace in South Sudan a major setback to sustainable development and stability of the country. Sub-national violence and intensified conflict witnessed since 2013 shocked the nation leading to internally displaced persons (IDPs). Humanitarian needs are some of the factors limiting peacebuilding. United Nations (2021) estimates 8.3 million persons in dire need of humanitarian assistance in South Sudan in 2021. The humanitarian needs reflect rising food insecurity, which hinder peacebuilding efforts. The inception of Transitional Government of National Unity in 2020 was meant to solve inclusivity challenges; hence, attainable peacebuilding. United Nations (2021) notes the 2020 peace pact led to appointment of governors, chief administrators, and ceasefire in major parts of the country. However, United Nations (2021) argues the revitalized peace is slow, which puts South Sudan at a disadvantageous state of achieving lasting peace. South Sudan must prioritize addressing the humanitarian needs and involve all the community's key administrative decision-making processes.

Inclusive governance.

Inclusive (n.d) democratic governance can be measured by looking at minority representation in public service sector before violence outbreak in South Sudan. Inclusive (n.d) identifies challenges with inclusivity in South Sudanese governance. For instance, rewarding warlords and ethnic favoritism breed dissatisfaction and limit peacebuilding efforts. Misrepresentation equally causes tensions among the citizenry and possible outbreak of violence. Other areas of perceived non-inclusive governance include militarization of public service, and unequal share of resources.

Transition and peacebuilding efforts

Adams (2003) is in full support of good and inclusive governance for peacebuilding. Political and economic transformation for South Sudan could be enhanced through good governance, respect for human rights, democracy, the rule of law and social justice. Institutional reforms and improvements on governance structure would catalyze the challenges of peacebuilding in South Sudan. In the view of Adams (2003), South Sudanese transformation efforts should be based on combating corruption, transparency, accountability in all spheres, enabling legal framework, and citizen participation in key decision making. Poor functioning governance structures in South Sudan coupled with lack of political will, ineffective and weak leadership, and sectarian violence prevents state's transition from on and off violence to lasting peacebuilding. Adams (2003),

Inclusive (n.d) and UN (2021) contends good governance, democracy, accountability, and constitutionalism promotes peacebuilding.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study revealed that the challenges South Sudan has encountered as a new, post-conflict sovereign state aren't unlike those that have been encountered by other post-conflict states, and that such challenges can only be overcome through the goodwill of the political class. The study concludes that attaining peaceful conflict resolution in South Sudan is and should be an ever-ongoing process, while sustainable peace is a long-term goal.

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Jacob C Makol. "State in Transition: Peacebuilding after civil war, development and governance issues in South Sudan." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 26(10), 2021, pp. 41-45.