

The Status of South Sudan's Peace Agreement Outputs Enabling Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration

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Abstract- Security Sector Reforms (SSRs) are at the centre of post-conflict reconstruction, and they have been marked as an integral pillar of a reconstruction strategy, which demands a holistic approach to prevent the state from relapsing into armed conflict. The Southern part of Sudan has been plagued by armed conflict, despite numerous conflict resolution efforts. The study examined the status of South Sudan's peace agreement outputs enabling disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. John Paul Lederach's peace-building theory, social constructivism, Arnstein's ladder of Citizen participation and securitisation theory guided the study. The study primarily adopted a descriptive cross-sectional survey design, with correlational and explanatory research elements. Quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were used coupled with questionnaires, Content Analysis Guides and focus Group discussions. Target population was former and current members of armed groups in South Sudan. Snowball sampling was used to identify the respondents that were surveyed. Key informants were purposively sampled based on the individuals that provided comprehensive information on the variables under the study. Collected data was presented using descriptive statistics such as tables, pie charts, bar graphs, and percentages, as well as inferential statistics. Findings indicated that the outputs, measured primarily by behaviour change among the armed groups, reflected the weaknesses in the agreements designed to bring these changes, status of armed violence and recruitment into armed groups. Interpretation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the peace agreements were similarly found to be largely deficient affecting transition into effective DDR process. Although there was some use of lessons learnt from previous agreements, there is generally a need to refrain from recycling old ideas in order to realise new results. Disarmament, demobilisation and re integration (DDR) should include inclusivity, transparency to enhance trust and acceptance by all parties to the conflict

Index Terms- Conflict Mitigating Security Sector Reforms; Security Sector Transformation; Mediation

I. INTRODUCTION

Peace Agreements have long been used by states as a way out of long-standing conflict, paving the way for security sector reforms and transformation. The architectural (or structural) design of a Peace Agreement refers to the components that affect its outcomes. The structural design of a peace agreement, and the processes followed from inception to implementation dictates whether not it will be strong enough to stand the test of time and bear positive fruit.

After the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's government in Iraq, the United States and its coalition partners faced challenges in implementing the SSRs. Since the entire military was dissolved and armed groups were required to be disbanded on the order of the coalition, the SSRs process was perceived as imposed and therefore lacked local support (Steffen, 2016). The security gap left through the disbandment of all security forces could not be filled by the coalition. In the process, most of the ex-combatants melted into the civilian society thereby creating a security challenge in Iraq.

In Sierra Leone following a peace agreement between the Government and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the end of the war in 2002, all armed elements including the government forces had to be screened as provided for in the peace agreement (Berdal, 1996). This subsequently led to the peaceful transformation of the security sector. The peace agreement was a culmination of a series of Accords; Abidjan accord of 1996, Conakry Accord of 1997, Lomé accord of 1999 and finally the Abuja Ceasefire Agreement of 2000. In this case, the United Nations and Economic Community for the West Africa States (ECOWAS) member states played a pivotal role during the mediation process (Government of Sierra Leone, 1999).

One of Africa's longest civil wars ended in 2011 when South Sudan declared its independence from Sudan following the effective implementation of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) reached in 2005. (Einas, 2009). Late in 2013, just over two years after attaining independence, the South Sudanese were pushed into a horrific new conflict when a political issue that intersected with pre-existing ethnic and political fault lines started a war, bringing immense displacement and misery.

A peace symposium hosted by IGAD in Addis Abeba in June 2014 brought together members from the Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GRSS), the South Sudan Armed Opposition, ex-prisoners, and other political organizations. Most of the provisions of the agreement apart from the formation of the TGoNU, were either lagging or have not been implemented at all (Blackings, 2018). Most of the timelines in the agreement were unachievable due to their lofty goals. The simple awareness that one could defy the international community's will and get away with it spawned a slew of issues, including armed groups reorganizing and rearming, wilful resistance, abuse, and coercion of individuals or parties attempting or willing to enforce stipulated provisions. Because of the SPLA's lack of professionalism and discipline, the army was unable to rise above the political squabbles as they erupted (Blackings, 2018).

Despite all these efforts, the solutions tailored to ensure successful implementation of SSRs in the post-conflict reconstruction process in South Sudan have been hampered by several challenges stemming from both national and institutional shortcomings. One of the major impediments to this is that the legitimacy of political authority has always been challenged. In addition to being a source of instability and a barrier to the development of an inclusive national identity, "the lack of a legitimate political authority makes it impossible to determine a strategic direction and make the difficult decisions necessary to achieve security sector change" (Detzner, 2017). As a result, no distinction exists between the Army (SPLA) and the ruling party, (SPLM) (Rolandsen, 2007). Because of these overlapping roles, every political difficulty is a security challenge, and every security challenge is a political one. Juma and Odhiambo (2021), posit that the fervor for regionalism is etched in the minds of the political class globally. Some advocate for continental integration while others call for regional groupings that consist of few states whose defining criterion is territorial contiguity.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Conflict in South Sudan has continued to escalate despite IGAD's and international community efforts to cease hostility between the warring parties in the country through the formulation and implementation of successive peace agreements. It can thus be argued that failure to address the gaps in the previous agreements and loopholes in the architectural design of the agreements explains the reason of the relapse into violent conflict. For example, the failure and challenges that engulfed the implementation of the ARCSS (2015), hampered efforts meant to secure tangible conflict mitigating SSRs in South Sudan; consequently, prompting the formulation of the R-ARCISS 2018. The new agreement R-ACRISS (2018) was aimed at filling in the gaps associated with the former Agreement (ARCISS 2015). Regrettably, the new agreement does not seem to have had the desired impact in creating responsive SSRs.

Although numerous studies have examined the nexus between the architectural design of peace agreements on SSR (Blackings, 2018; Young, 2007; Huber & Karim, 2017; Bhattacharya & Burns, 2019; Tshibangu, 2020), a systematic and comparative examination of the influence of the architectural design of ARCISS 2015 and R-ARCISS 2018 peace agreements on SSRs is yet to be undertaken. DDR being an important process that creates a conducive environment for SSR especially in countries emerging from prolonged armed conflict, there is scanty literature on the status of South Sudan's peace agreement outputs enabling DDR.

In view of the foregoing discourse, it is evident that understanding the contribution of the architectural design of peace agreements on conflict mitigating SSR in South Sudan since 2015 remains largely unexplored. This ought not to be so in a country facing a conundrum of security challenges. As such, making empirically informed recommendations on how peace agreements in conflict-prone societies can be designed to achieve conflict-mitigating security sector reforms such as security forces reorganisation, citizen participation for receptivity of improved security, and security sector reforms marked by cultural, human, organisational and political change.

1.3 Objective of the Study

Examine the status of South Sudan's peace agreement outputs enabling disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration.

1.4 Research Question

Have South Sudan's peace agreement outputs enabled disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration?

1.5 Justification of the Study

1.5.1 Academic Justification

This study supplements the limited literature that exists explaining how peace agreements impact the post conflicts security reforms in South Sudan and the effective implementation of SSRs in the country. Therefore, it will offer academicians an in-depth understanding of the relationship between peace agreements and post-conflict SSRs. Providing a platform for the analysis of the relationship in countries that could still be facing such challenges following the end of prolonged armed conflicts. This would result in more research on the study.

1.5.2 Philosophical Justification

The philosophical grounding of this work came from three main theories, namely John Paul Lederach's Peace building Theory, the Securitisation Theory, and Arnstein's Citizen Participation Ladder. The three in conjunction lent themselves well to the discussion of the key constructs of the work which were the structural design of peace agreements, the outputs of the agreements (DDR) and the eventual security sector reform outcomes. It was pertinent to understand how the concepts of the architectural design of peace agreements interact with its outputs to inform the direction of security sector reforms and transformation. The discourse on the application of these theories and models to the study concepts served to extend the boundaries of knowledge in the discipline of peace and conflict studies.

1.5.3 Policy Justification

The study will be essential in guiding the formulation of responsive peace agreements in future. The study would produce empirically tailored policy recommendations rooted in the current socio-economic and political environment prevailing in the country which can offer an acceptable academic discourse that can inform policy direction, consequently, facilitating cessation of hostilities, protection of human rights and a return to the peace process. It would also be instrumental in informing regional bodies in Africa that have taken leadership roles in the mediation of conflict on how best to; approach a conflict situation, compose/constitute the mediation teams, undertake the process and the importance of the actors in the implementation to attain sustainable peace.

II. PEACE AGREEMENT OUTPUTS AND THE DDR PROCESS

DDR process has been considered as preliminary efforts towards SSRs in countries recovering from protracted armed conflicts. UN has played a key role in the process aimed at "contributing towards security and stability in post-conflict environments so that recovery and development can begin" (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2008). However, in many cases, peace is critical for a successful DDR (Ballentine, 2002). In most cases, the DDR process is preceded by the cessation of hostilities and a peace agreement between warring parties. Failure to reach an agreement may result in a process of recycling of combatants by the armed groups in the recruitment camps or centres (Ballentine, 2002). Additionally, if there are divergent interests between the groups which have not been addressed in the peace agreement, the process faces a myriad of challenges (Carames *et al.*, 2006).

Transparency and inclusivity which encouraged trust and confidence between parties, in-depth analysis of the causes of the conflict in formulation and designing of DDR programmes were the issues raised during the DDR conference held by the UN in "Angola, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda, the Republic of Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe." DDR programmes should be fully entrenched in post-conflict reconstruction frameworks and if not adequately addressed in any post-conflict State, the chances of failure are high (Knight, 2008). Success in the DDR process requires concerted efforts of all the actors involved in the peace agreement process. However, the national government and rebel groups play a pivotal role in planning, designing and proper implementation of DDR programmes.

The Importance of Trust-building transparency and Inclusivity cannot be overemphasized. The main objective of an agreement is national implementation which includes assigning roles, responsibilities, and resources to all people both in rural and urban areas (Collier & Hoeffler, 2002). The process involves local, regional, and international actors for its success. In this light, the prospects for the success of peace agreements depend on the existent framework for the participation of the various actors. It is generally believed that the peace agreements should be all-inclusive, address the root causes of the conflict, come out at the ripe moment, be promoted by a neutral facilitator, provide a peaceful solution, and be locally owned by the conflicting parties (Paffenholz, 2015). In this context, it can be argued that any new agreements in South Sudan should be as inclusive as possible.

The implementation process of the ARCISS 2015 was expected to be based on transparency and inclusivity which build trust and confidence locally and internationally (Kelly, 2016). The process comprised of local and international actors who were required to be flexible and reflect the specific context and character of South Sudan. Additionally, the process encouraged public participation in decision-making and implementation. Prospects for the success of peace agreements were however affected by weakened or lack of government structures and institutions, the abundance of ex-combatants, ineffective Disarmament, Demobilization and Reconstruction (DDR) programmes, traditional cultural practices, ethnicity, and lack of political will, which often contribute relapse into conflict. This was exemplified in Darfur where these factors often led to relapse to conflict and failure of peace agreements between 1997 and 2000. Structural weaknesses related to the inability to reign in the proliferation of small arms and the inability to deal with ethnic-based militia groups also contributed to the failure of peace agreements (Ahere, 2012).

It is equally important to ensure the concerted efforts of all the actors. Islam (2017) studied "Conflict Resolution and Civil Society: Experiences of Nepal in Post-Maoist Revolution." This study focused on the process of peace-making to prevent armed conflicts. This process involves various actors participating in the social, economic, and political sectors of a country, although the civil sector has been left out in the case of Nepal. Nepal has witnessed a decade of violence which was ended by the pro-democracy movement launched by the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (CPN-M) and the resigning of King Gyanendra in 2006. The findings show that the role of civil societies in post-Maoist Nepal was well defined and effective as they helped the people in searching for a common ground for conflict mediation and peace in Nepal after years of conflicts. This literature is useful in providing

a variable for measure, the importance of concerted efforts by all actors. However, it left a gap regarding whether this was the case for South Sudan, which the current study endeavoured to fill.

2.1. Conceptual Framework

Wasike and Odhiambo (2016) discuss the role of theories in guiding the thrust of academic studies. They emphasize the importance of theories in offering compelling and incisive causal explanations with calculated precision. They buttress their argument by quoting Smith (1986) who asserts that theories play the role of predicting, prescribing, and evaluating socio-political phenomena hence they cannot be ignored.

2.1.1. John Paul Lederach's Peace Building Theory

The theory was proposed by John Paul Lederach in the late 1980s and early 1990s during the end of the cold war. John Paul Lederach argues that due to the complexity of contemporary conflicts there is a need for holistic approaches away from traditional diplomacy in order to prevent and end the escalation of these conflicts. He suggests holistic approaches that include peace building and peacekeeping as long-term solutions to war that will lead to peace and stability. Since many conflicts are based on identity and relationships between the groups, there is a need to identify and determine the various shared meaning, explore different shared cultures, the experience of different actors, and their perceptions (Wilkin, 2016).

According to Lederach's theory, a change in personal, structural, relational, and cultural aspects of conflict will eventually translate into peace, justice, mercy, truth, and stability (Lederach, 1997). In this case, South Sudan is an example of a society that has lived by the gun for over two decades that requires a total transformation to accept any change. The hardened culture may influence the fallacious belief that "if peace was gotten by the gun, it can be maintained by the gun"; and may remain committed to this culture. It is important to note that post-conflict reconstruction and building stakeholders' confidence in security requires changing the attitude, training, and balancing the ethnic and regional composition of all (Michael, 2003). Lederach's theory, stresses the need for reconciliation and peace building as solutions for building long-term prospects and rebuilding destroyed relationships within the society.

2.1.2. Arnstein's (1969) Citizen Participation Ladder

Arnstein (1969) created a model of a "ladder of citizen engagement" that defines eight categories that correlate to the eight rungs of a ladder. The ladder's rungs represent increasing intensities of participation. The lowest tier of partnerships is the manipulative type, in which citizens are involved by being appointed to rubberstamp advisory boards and committees for the sole aim of educating them and engineering their support. The lowest level represents the perversion of participation into a public relations vehicle by those in power, rather than genuine citizen participation. A situation is presented in which it is the government officials, not the public, who do the educating, the convincing, and the advising. Members of the community are often asked to put their names on documents endorsing policies on which they had no input. Further step, there is the therapeutic partnership. Group therapy is masked as citizen participation' with administrators (typically mental health professionals such as social workers or psychiatrists) assuming that helplessness is synonymous with mental illness and then imposing their own brand of clinical group therapy on the citizens. Many people are working hard, but their efforts are focused on helping people overcome their "pathology" rather than addressing the prejudice and trauma that gives rise to it (Arnstein, 1969).

The next tier up, the Informing Type of Relationship, is characterized by a one-way flow of information from officials to citizens, with no outlet for feedback and no power for bargaining. Citizens are informed of their rights, obligations, and options in this partnership. This type typically shows itself at meetings where attendees are given only the most cursory information and are discouraged from asking pertinent questions. On the fourth level, the Consultative Type of Partnership, officials typically solicit community input but offer no assurances of action based on that feedback. Attitude surveys, neighbourhood gatherings, and public hearings are the most common approaches to gathering public input.

Arnstein (1969) contends that the threshold at which citizens start to have some impact, although tokenism, is the Placation Type of Partnership. Placing a small number of "deserving" impoverished people on the boards of Community Action Agencies or other public organisations is an example of a placation tactic. While citizens are welcome to provide their opinions, they have no meaningful say in policymaking. It is the level of community organization and the quality of technical aid citizens receive in identifying and articulating their goals that determines the amount to which they are appeased. At the next stage, Meaningful Partnership, citizens and those in authority come together to negotiate a new balance of power. They've settled on joint policy boards, planning committees, and methods for resolving impasses as means of dividing and conquering the planning and decision-making workload. No one party can force a shift (Arnstein, 1969). Next comes the Delegated Power Partnership, in which individuals negotiate with government officials to get preponderant say over a certain initiative. At this juncture, citizens are in a position of power that allows them to ensure the program is accountable to them.

The model was found useful in informing the study regarding the variables to be measured so as to determine the level of community participation in the processes of both the Peace Agreement and establishment of the security sector reforms. More importantly, it also provided a means of assessing the type and level of community engagement by government and non-governmental

organisations. The model helps to overcome the weaknesses of Lederach's model, because it goes beyond suggesting the importance of inclusivity to prescribing indicators that can be used to ensure meaningful participation.

2.1.3. Securitization Theory

State actors engage in securitization when they elevate previously mundane political issues to the status of "security," justifying the employment of extreme measures in the name of protecting the nation's citizens (Buzan, 1998). Problems that have been turned into security threats are not always those that are necessary for the objective survival of a state; rather, they are problems that someone has successfully constructed into an existential threat (Giovanni, 2006).

Theorists of securitization argue that the subjects that are most easily securitized receive a disproportionate share of resources and attention at the expense of those that are more difficult to securitize but result in more human suffering. The goal of the study of securitization is to determine "who securitizes, on what issues (threats), for whom (referent object), why, with what effects, and least of all, under what conditions" (emphasis added).

2.1.4. Social Constructivism Theory

Social constructivism contends that societies shape the identities, interests, and capacities of individuals (Barnett, 2006). The theory stresses that human action is linked to the subjective constitution of social reality and interests are constructed by the environment and interactions (Williams, 2007; Barnett, 2006). That acceptable action may inform how the state organizes its security structure and how to defend its interests. Constructivism acknowledges that culture matters to some degree, and it is generally accepted that both cultural factors and realist imperatives are inextricably linked with state and military behaviour.

Social constructivism and organisational culture inform the design of socio-political structures of societies and states. They also influence how that society will react to the changes in the security environment and the socio-political structures. Resistance to change can be informed by history, the experience of that society, how often has change been initiated over the years, and how this change is likely to affect the social structures related to power. Change can be categorised in terms of structure, interests, behaviour, and roles of various components within that society. The socio-political environment that has been shaped by the 'hardened' culture of violence and militarization of the society to an extent that the military assumes the lead role in both the political and social arena may pose a challenge towards post-conflict SSRs. South Sudan is an example of a society that has lived by the gun for over two decades that requires a total transformation to accept any change.

The socio-political landscape in South Sudan is influenced by the supremacy and dominance of SPLA (Military wing) over SPLM (political wing). Interests, capacities, and identities of the society were informed and continue to be informed by the character and nature of SPLA and its organisational structure. This environment shaped the society's thinking, beliefs, and behaviour to the extent that certain post-conflict reconstruction activities may not be informed by the interests of the populace but by those of SPLM/A and its elite. The decision by most of the political class to retain their military ranks is informed by their past military dominance. Retiring from the military is linked to loss of the power to control and dominate. Such organisational culture alludes to social constructivism. Change in the organisation of the security sector may occur only when the political class is willing to institute such changes. This study, therefore, adopts the theories of social constructivism and rational choice together with the organisational culture concept as the conceptual framework since it attempts to explain the socio-political challenges that could affect the architectural design of peace agreements the associated SSRs, and post-conflict reconstruction in South Sudan.

2.2. Conceptual Framework Model

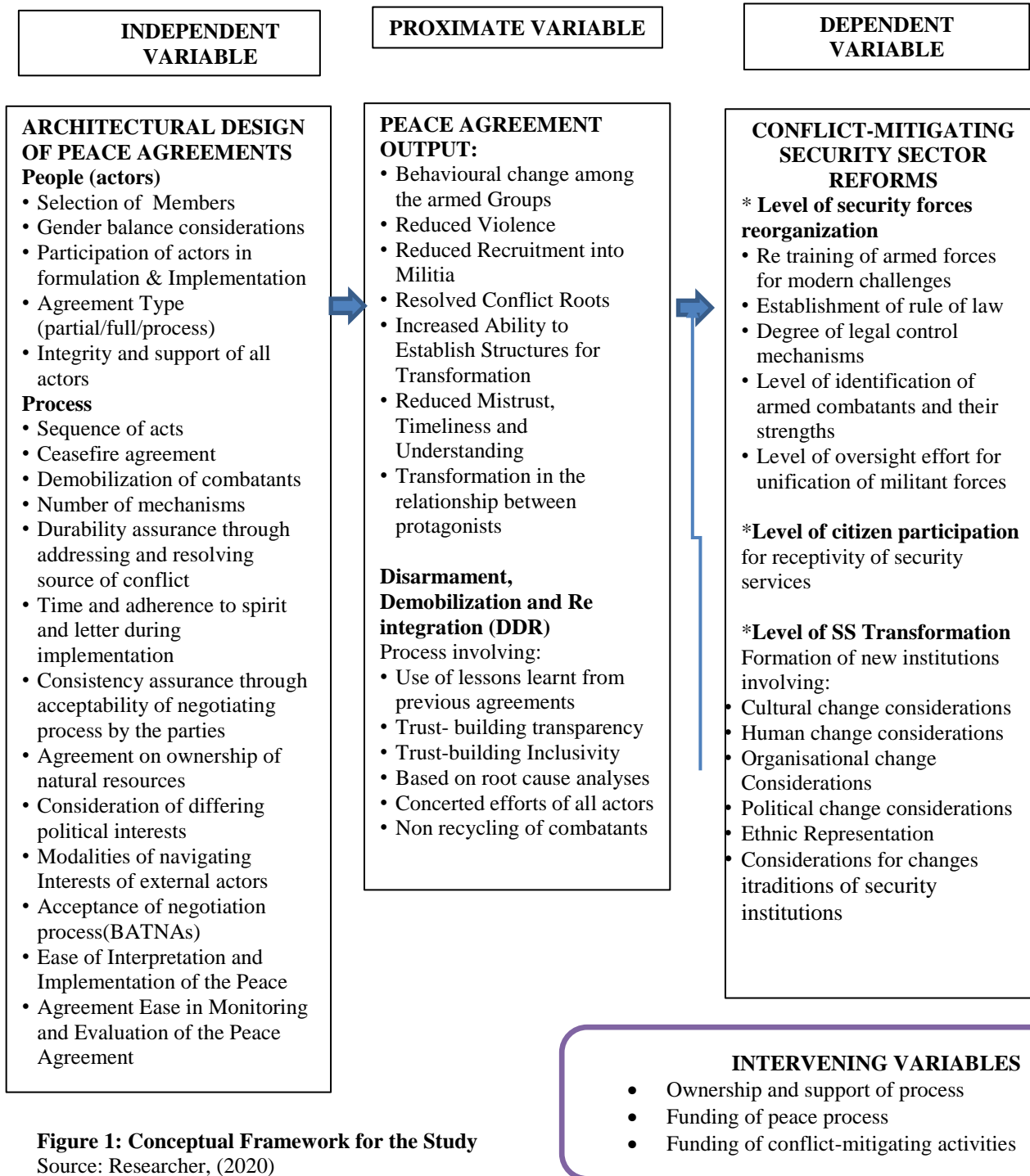


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for the Study
Source: Researcher, (2020)

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study primarily adopted a descriptive cross-sectional survey design, with correlational and explanatory research elements to investigate the effect of the architectural design of peace agreements on conflict-mitigating security sector reforms in South Sudan since 2015.

A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was utilized because ensured the expansiveness of data and exact distinct investigation of attributes of a specimen were utilized to make deductions about the populace.

3.2. Study Area

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South Sudan is a landlocked country of the East-Central Africa region. The country gained independence from Sudan in July 2011. Its capital city is Juba. The country borders Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, and Ethiopia. The study was conducted in South Sudan, in the regions of Upper Nile, Jonglei, Unity, Warrap, Northern Bahr El Ghazal, Western Bahr El Ghazal, Warrap, Western Equatoria, Central Equatoria, and Eastern Equatoria. These regions served as the cluster study sites.

South Sudan is traversed by the White Nile, which forms the vast swampy areas known as the Sudd. South Sudan has a population of about 12 million people, with most people being of the Nilotic peoples, (UNDESA, 2017). The main religion is Christianity. Due to persistent conflict, the country ranks the highest score on the American Fund for Peace's Fragile States Index (2018). The main ethnic groups are the Dinka (about 15% of the population and Nuer (about 10%). The main export from the country is oil. Like most other developing countries, the country is highly reliant on agriculture which includes crop and livestock production. On average, the temperatures are always high. The country experiences both rainfall and dry seasons but on average, the coolest month is January.



Figure 2. Map showing South Sudan Regions under Influence of Different Armed Groups
Source: UNMISS, 2014

3.3. Study Population

The target population was Former and current members of armed groups in South Sudan which is estimated to be more than 300,000. The units of analysis, corresponding were the individual that once belonged to an armed group within the study cluster, and the peace agreement elements that touch on its design, its implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

The study population comprised key informants representing religious leaders, politicians, academicians, media houses, non-governmental organisations, IGAD mediators, JMEC members, and UNMISS staff. The study population also included ordinary community members and members of security agencies participating in separate focus Group discussions.

3.4. Sample strategy and sample Size Determination

The total population (N) of members of armed groups (whether actively or formerly) was approximately 300,000 which is more than 10,000. The sample size for the study (n), was calculated using the formula proposed by Fisher *et al.* (1983), which is quoted in Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) for use in social science surveys. It produces a desired sample size of 384:

$$n = z^2 pq / d^2$$

Where n is the desired sample size if the target population > 10,000

z is the standard normal deviate at the required confidence level i.e. 1.96

p is the proportion in the target population estimated to have the characteristic

(Assume 50% if unknown)

q = 1-p (i.e. 0.5)

d is the level of statistical significance or Alpha

Therefore, the number of respondents sampled was 384.

The study employed a multistage sampling strategy to arrive the study subjects. The whole area was divided up into clusters, each representing the main zones where the groups are located. The zones, were the Pro government zone; anti-government zone; Contested Zone; Government-aligned zone; declared 'peace zone' between SPLA and SSDM/Cobra; Sudan People's Liberation Army

(SPLA) concentration zone and SPLA in Opposition concentration Zone. The distribution of these groups roughly coincided with the administrative areas of Upper Nile, Jonglei, Unity, Warrap, Northern Bahr El Ghazal, Western Bahr El Ghazal, Warrap, Western Equatoria, Central Equatoria, and Eastern Equatoria. These areas formed the 10 clusters of the study.

3.5. Data Collection

The data collected was from both primary and secondary sources, and both quantitative and qualitative tools were used. The primary data tools included a pre coded structured individual questionnaire, Key Informant Interview Guides, Focus Group Discussion Guides, Document Content Analysis Guide and a Digital Camera.

3.6. Data Analysis and Presentation

Questionnaires were cleaned and verified while still in the field. After the data was collected, it was edited, coded, classified, tabulated, and analysed. To make data collection easier, all statements were given numeric codes based on their context. The quantitative data was analysed in tables and charts using SPSS version 20 and the Microsoft Excel Statistical Packages. For explanation and clarification, data from the study were presented using descriptive statistics such as tables, pie charts, bar graphs, and percentages, as well as inferential statistics (Pearson correlation and, regression analysis). Data from Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions were analysed and presented according to the themes of the study and presented alongside the quantitative data in a synchronised manner. Direct quotations were used to present verbal reports that occurred during the research process. Document Content analysis was similarly done according to the themes corresponding with the objectives of the study and presented alongside the other data.

IV. FINDINGS

4.1. Reduced Violence as an Output Indicator

The study results reveal that reduced cases of violence were not realized as an output of the agreement, as only 73 (19.1%) respondents responded in the affirmative when asked about this. The majority (175) of the respondents which makes 45.6% responded in the negative, while 135 (35.3%) responded that this was somehow the case (Figure 3).

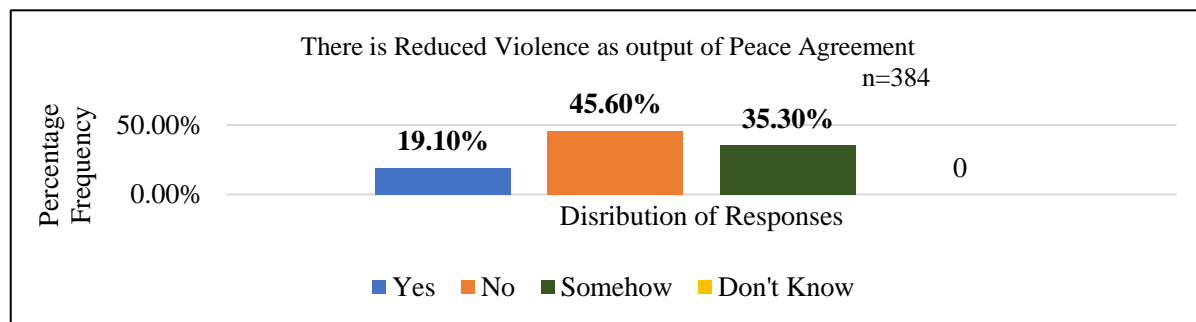


Figure 3: Distribution of Responses Regarding Reduced Violence

Source: Field Data, 2020

The results clearly indicate that there was some return to violence after the peace agreement. Most of the critical phase and implementation mechanisms/institutions in both agreements were predicated on the formation of the transitional government of national unity (TGoNU) which in both cases took a long time to be formed. Comparatively, in the case of the Lomé Accord, an agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and RUF in 1999, instead of the formation of the TGoNU, a “Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (hereinafter termed the CCP), was established to implement a post-conflict programme that ensures reconciliation and the welfare of all parties to the conflict, especially the victims of war”. The peace accord was not as rigid as the case of ARCISS 2015 and R-ARCISS 2018 where the opposition leader was to occupy a position that was almost at the same level as the President but rather in the case of Sierra Leone, the RUF leader Foday Sankoh was to be appointed to “the chairmanship of the Board of the Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development (CMRRD) and enjoyed the status of Vice President and therefore be answerable only to the President of Sierra Leone.” This agreement can be seen as one where the opposition was made to understand and acknowledge the existence of the President of Sierra Leone and in no way they the agreement was raising them to his level like was in the case of the ARCISS 2015 where there were to be two Commanders in Chief during the transition period. By giving Riek Machar such an appointment was to assume that he is equal to the elected president and could be in a way legitimizing his actions to engage in armed conflict. This notion can be seen as one that gave him such audacity that led to the ‘palace coup’ in December 2013 sparking the return to violence.

Document Content Analysis findings showed that, after the formulation of the R-ARCISS 2018, violence declined but was never completely eradicated. Between December 1, 2019, and February 15, 2020, there were more than 449 civilian casualties (EASO, 2020). These conflicts were perpetrated by community-based militias and armed elements such as the SSPDF and SPLM-IO. There was insecurity related to Upper Nile state (Maiwut and Jikou), Western Equatoria state, Central Equatoria state (Yei and Lobonok), Lakes state, Jonglei state (including Pibor), Western Bahr el-Ghazal state, Warrap state, and Unity state. Policing the whole country remained very challenging for the security forces and their authority continues to be challenged by the armed groups.

4.2. Results Regarding Reduced Recruitment into Militia as an Output Indicator

Respondents were asked whether there was reduced recruitment of people into the militia, as positive output indicator of the peace agreements. The results are displayed in Figure 4; out of 384 respondents, 189 (49.1%) responded in the negative while 25 (6.5%) claimed to not know. A third of 30% (115 respondents) said that this was somehow the case.

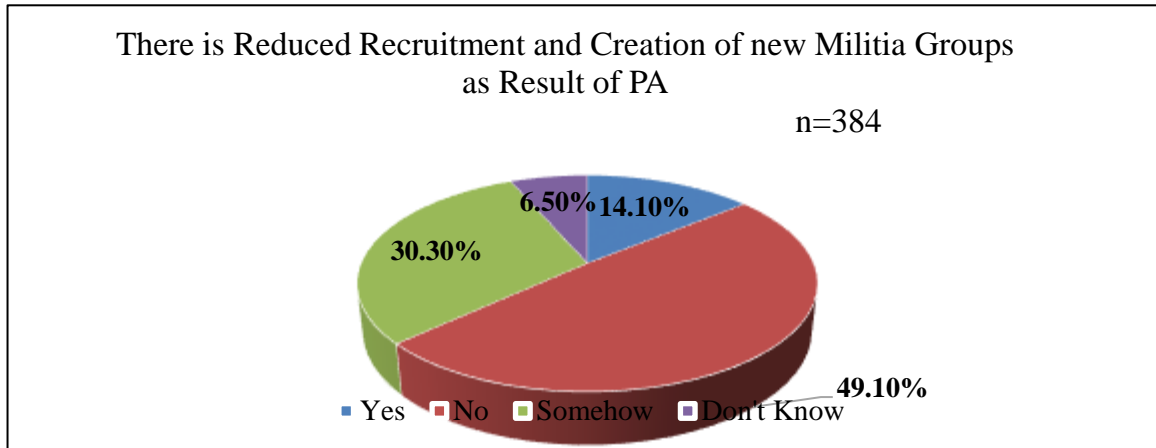


Figure 4: Distribution of Responses Regarding Reduced Recruitment into Militia
Source: Field Data, 2020

Document Content Analysis findings are congruent with this. It is asserted that factionalism, splits, and loose affiliation remain common in SPLM/A and other armed groups in South Sudan. Armed groups continue to coalesce so frequently to an extent that the implementation of a peace agreement becomes a challenge. At the same time, as alluded to earlier it becomes difficult to hold into account most of the armed groups that do not respect the agreement. Peace agreements were expected to reduce this and therefore, respondents were presented with the statement, “peace agreements have addressed loose affiliations of the armed groups.” A summary of the respondents’ opinions is in Table.1.

To this, 127 (33.1%) respondents pointed out that they were not sure. This was followed by 109 (28.4%) who agreed. It can thus be deduced that the peace agreements had sought to address some of the issues related to how military groups were organized in the bid to move them to cantonment areas. However, these efforts were not as strong as shown by 94 (24.5%) who disagreed. This means that some of the groups could continue shifting affiliations; challenging SSRs in the country as argued by Steadman (2001).

According to the international crisis group report (2020), “managing the many armed groups across the country is a particularly pressing concern and the promised army reform is a huge challenge. The other key challenge to SSR is that ex-combatants and various armed groups rank, and file are normally interested in short-term benefits rather than waiting for long periods without knowing their fate. Most combatants expect to be integrated into in South Sudan Peoples Defence Force (SSPDF).

The peace agreement was silent on the recruitment process by the various groups, and it is evident that as they wait for the SSRs armed groups including those that signed the peace agreement are recruiting new members. This situation has monetary implications for the planning and subsequent execution of the DDR process and the SSRs. The numbers of combatants are critical to the commanders and the communities since DDR and SSRs will determine their integration to SSPDF or be given compensation to reintegrate. Combatants are less likely to give up arms or participate in the DDR process if the peace process is shaky and does not guarantee their security and their future as “civilians”. (Hopwood, *et al.*, 2008). This was affirmed by one of the Key Informants said:

The 2015 ARCISS, cognisant of the deep and historical hatred between the Dinka and the Nuer, suggested a military leadership with two Commanders in Chief(C-in-C). This type of organisation sought to entrench division rather than bridge the gap. It was a short-term solution to a deep-rooted problem (Juba, August 10, 2019).

It is thus evident that peace agreements had not dealt with the issue of entrenched ethnicity among the various armed groups which could derail SSRs implementation. A study by Hutchinson (2001) shows that SSRs in South Sudan were challenged by lack of

clarity in the objectives of political movements. When this clarity lacks, like in the case of SPLM/A, the movement remains perpetually susceptible to internal and external manipulation (Hutchinson, 2001). The SPLM/A thus remains largely susceptible to the influences of neighbouring states such as Sudan, Ethiopia, and Uganda as well as the international community.

4.3. Resolved Conflict Roots as an Output Indicator

Respondents were asked whether there was indication that conflict roots had been resolved. A large majority, 294 (76.6%) out of 384, responded in the negative. Only 8 (2.2%) responded in the affirmative, and 81 (21.2%) said somehow.

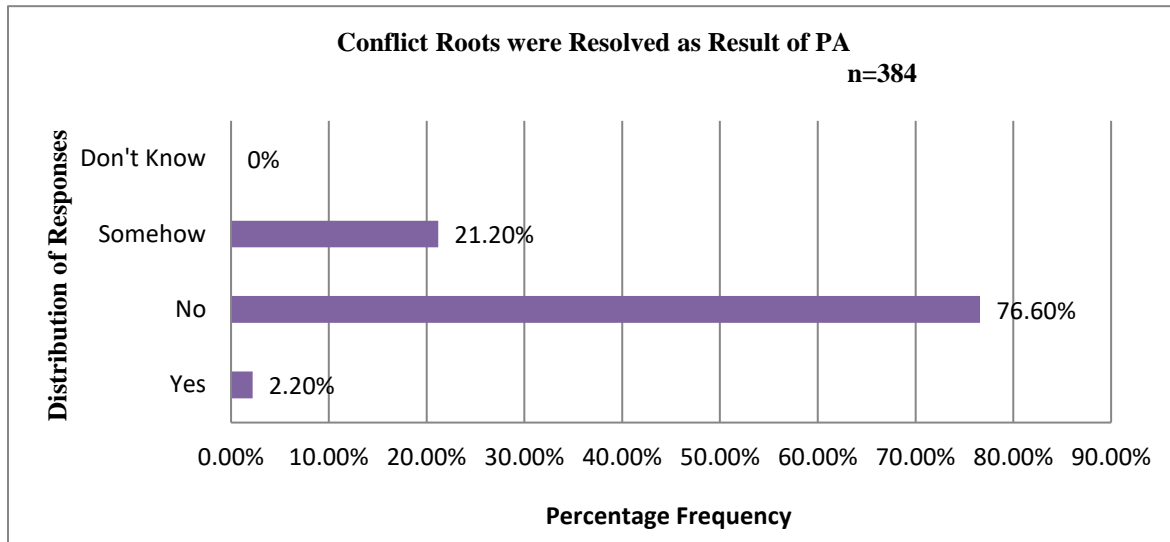


Figure 5: Distribution of Responses Regarding Resolved Conflict Roots

Source: Field Data, 2020

Without the root causes being resolved, there is unlikely to be meaningful support for the process, particularly of the DDR by senior military officials. In this regard, shifting loyalties and rebellion could have negative effects on SSR in South Sudan as revealed in an interview with a South Sudan general who opined;

The resignation and declaration of rebellion against the government of several high-ranking military officers such as “the SPLA Deputy Chief of General Staff for Logistics, the SPLA Head of Military Courts, the SPLA Director of Military Justice, the SPLA Logistics Support Brigade Commander, as well as former Chief of General Staff Paul Malong,” signal further factionalization that will need to be overcome (Nairobi, 8 December 2020).

These findings show that lack of support by senior military officials remained a major challenge to DDR. There should thus be mechanisms for enforcing compliance with peace agreements by military generals irrespective of rank in addition to political, ethnic, and armed group affiliation. These findings can be linked to several factors that have continued to bedevil SPLM/A since its formation and the political environment in South Sudan since independence in 2011. These factors are lack of a strong ideology within SPLM/A, ethnicity, mistrust among ethnic communities, the dominance of the military over the political wing in SPLM/A, and the inability to develop a national conscience.

In South Sudan, the major communities still mistrust each other and often revert to their ethnic cocoons wherever they are required to coalesce as communities within a state thereby reinforcing their ethnic ideologies. Young (2003) contends that the problem of SPLM/A is not that it’s dominated by one ethnic community, but it has done little to fully embrace other ethnicities. This situation continues to exacerbate the proliferation of armed groups thereby emboldening the perceived notion of military dominance. According to Metelits (2004), the continued dominance of the army over the civilian element ensures that the military is focused on command and control of the Government.

4.4. Increased Ability to Establish Structures for Transformation as an Output Indicator

The respondents were asked whether there was an increased ability to establish structures for transformation. Most of them, 255, (66.5%) of the respondents answered no and 46 (11.9%) said they did not know. The remainder 77 (20.1%) answered in the affirmative.

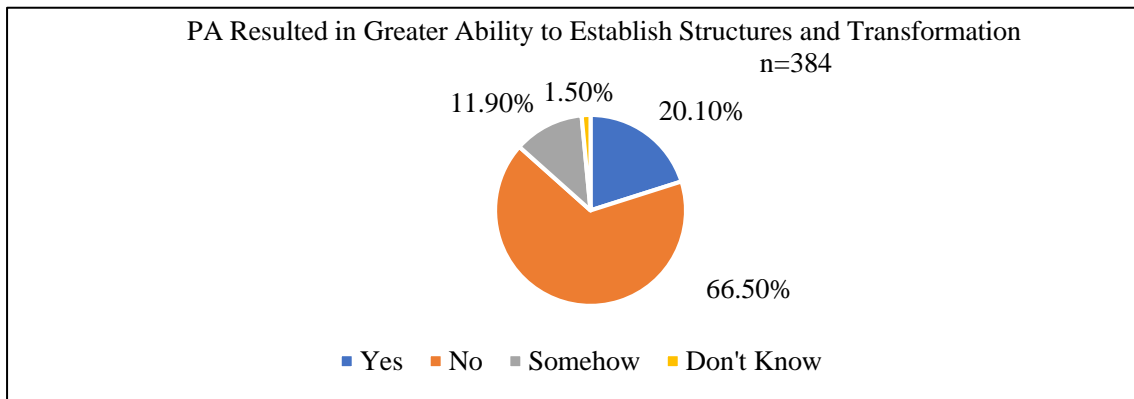


Figure 6: Distribution of Responses Regarding Increased Ability to Establish Structures for Transformation
Source: Field Data, 2020

Document Content Analysis findings from the “Report on the status of implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (1st January to 31st March 2020)” reveal that as of March 31st, 2020, the Permanent Ceasefire between the signatories of the R-ARCISS 2018 had continued to hold (Njoroge, 2020). This showed a high level of commitment by the different parties to the agreement which could have positive ramifications on SSRs in South Sudan. However, the inability of the transitional government to police the country was still evident. Also, a security vacuum emanating from the delay in the restructuring and reconstitution of State authorities including but not limited to the appointment of governors created a rich ground for this violence. There were also cases of continued violent inter-communal clashes, cattle raids, and revenge attacks. Most of these, as already pointed out, took place in Greater Bahr el Ghazal, Lakes, Unity, Jonglei, Greater Upper Nile, and Abyei. Violence was more protracted among the youth and led to the loss of life, injuries, and destruction of property. Odhiambo (2014) argues that: Track Two diplomacy has two broad objectives; first of all, it aims to reduce conflict between groups and nations by improving communication and understanding. It tries to lower anger, tension, fear, and misunderstanding. It tries to humanize the face of the enemy and get one group to understand the other group’s point of view.

The findings further reveal that there had also been delays in the “screening, selection training, and redeployment of the Necessary Unified Forces (NUF).” Although these tasks were supposed to take place in the Pre-Transitional Period, they could not take place and be carried forward into the Transitional Period. By the end of March 2020, the various cantonment sites, barracks, and training centres saw the registration of about 78,500 personnel (Njoroge, 2020). Out of these, about 45,000 organised forces from the government as well as the opposition had moved from cantonment sites to training centres. This was done as a prelude to unification training as well as redeployment thereafter. Commencement of training was however hampered by significant imbalances in the number of government and opposition forces and challenges related to the provision of logistic support. At the same time, the commencement of training prior to DDR was procedurally wrong. One of the JMEC staff noted that:

“Although efforts had been put in place to ensure immediate demilitarization of all civilian areas during the Pre-Transitional Period as envisaged by Article 2.2.3.1 of the R-ARCISS 2018, 19 civilian centres remain occupied by the SSPDF. These include 8 centres in Torit, 5 in Yei, 3 in Malakal and 3 in Yambio” (Juba, August 12, 2021).

Although the number of occupied centres has dropped significantly, defiance to the requirements of the R-ARCISS 2018 by security forces shows a lack of serious commitment to some pertinent issues of security concern by government forces.

V. RESULTS REGARDING EASE OF INTERPRETATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PEACE AGREEMENT

Respondents revealed that, overall, it was not easy to interpret and evaluate the Peace Agreement. Out of 384 respondents, 263(68.4%) responded in the negative when the question was posed to them regarding whether the PA was easy to interpret and implement. Another 115 (30%) answered in the affirmative while 4 (1.1%) did not know whether or not it was.

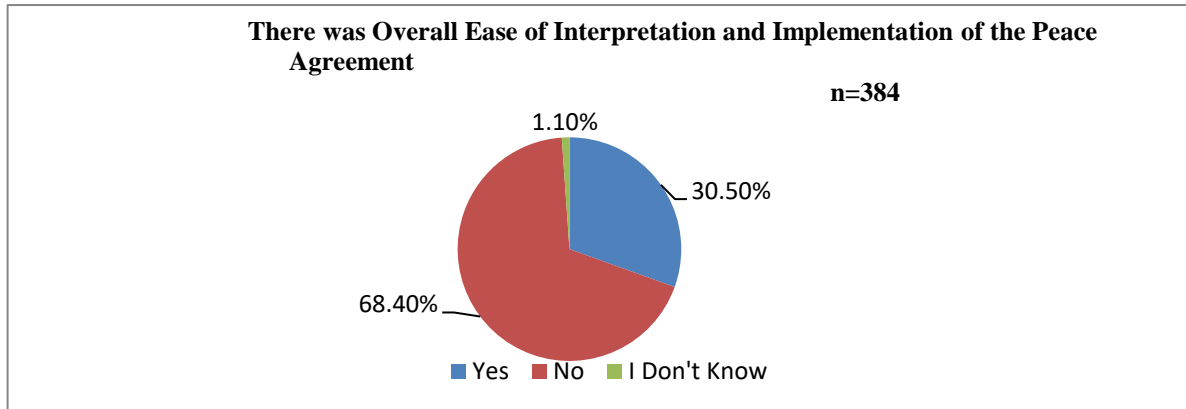


Figure 7: Distribution of Responses Regarding Ease of Interpretation and Implementation of the Peace Agreement
Source: Field Data, 2020

The implementation of a peace agreement determines its success, and it is paramount that the agreement’s framework includes a mechanism that effectively monitors its implementation. At the same time, the mediators must be cognisant of the spoilers and put in place punitive measures should any of the parties renege on their commitments to peace. Juma and Odhiambo (2021) in their article titled “Geo-Political factors Influencing Kenya and Tanzania Foreign Policy Behaviour Since 1967” said that: Geopolitical factors have an overwhelming influence on formulation and projection of foreign policy. The Indian Ocean and the rivalry of superpowers, the Horn of Africa, war on terror originating from the Horn, China and US rivalry, the instability in the Great Lakes region, the discovery of fossil fuels in Kenya and the Nile Basin are well articulated as the geopolitical factors that must be taken into account regarding foreign policy formulation and projection.

The challenges facing interpretation of the peace agreement also led to challenges in ensuring speedy SSRs in South Sudan. One of the key issues entailed cantonment (Blackings, 2018). Cantonment was a controversial issue therefore it took a long time to take stock of the number of troops, both on the side of the government and the various armed combatants. With SPLM and SPLM-IO having differing motives as well as different interpretations for cantonment, it became at tall order implementing some provisions of ARCISS 2015 and the R-ARCISS 2018 in general. Peace agreements should be designed to create a common understanding with little or no room for individual party’s own interpretation. In this regard, SPLM-IO for example saw cantonment as an avenue to stamp their presence and authority in Juba, Jonglei, Unity, and Upper Nile which has been hotbeds for conflict. By so doing, this looked like an opportune moment created by the peace agreement to bolster their national outlook.

Conversely, the government felt that they would gain less from the cantonment provisions within ARCISS 2015 (Blackings, 2018). The requirement of demilitarization of Juba, as espoused in ARCISS 2015, for example, was perceived to be SPLM-IO to a position of advantage since the seat of GoSS is domiciled there. This led to immense reluctance by SPLA to implement the cantonment provision especially in the Equatoria region and Juba. The argument was before the 2013-armed conflict SPLM/A-IO did not have any presence in Juba so the establishment of a cantonment was not necessary. This lukewarm commitment and lack of trust between the signatories to the peace agreement arising from conflicting interpretations led to a dilemma that partially accounted for the collapse of the ARCISS 2015. This makes it apparent the failure to create mechanisms for mitigating challenges related to self-centred interpretations of ceasefire and peace agreements by the different factions in South Sudan can be blamed for the woes that faced ARCISS 2015 as well the delayed implementation of some provisions of the R-ARCISS 2018. Odhiambo *et al* (2013) in their article “War Termination in Somalia & Kenya Defence Forces’ (KDF) Role” stated that: Wars have a political agenda and to effectively bring a conflict to termination, the political nature of the conflict must be addressed. The military as a professional establishment is charged with the means to achieve these political objectives. Decisive military advantage alone however does not necessarily confer an end to the war. The decision to terminate the war is primarily a political decision due to the underlying nature of war as an instrument of policy

There are at least “three types of defects in South Sudan that either enable or block rebel-to-party conversions for the sake of boosting post-war nations' prospects for peace and democracy” (Kovacs & Sophia, 2016). These weaknesses have affected the peace agreements that underpin the interpretation and implementation procedures; slowed the pace of implementation, put a strain on hostile party relations, and in the worst-case scenario, caused some parties to back out of their commitment to a negotiated settlement. During drafting of peace agreements, uncertainty is the most prevalent and most benign of these vulnerabilities. Mediators, or those drafting peace agreements reason that if two parties have clear and opposing desires, and neither side seems to be willing to accept part of its full demand, at the same time the parties are unable to negotiate those compromises in more detail, the question of competing interests

can be resolved by creating a compromise position in a rather rudimentary manner. Mediators may create a formula that is open to at least two different interpretations, which may have at least two definitions, one to satisfy Party A's interests and the other to satisfy Party B's interests.

The mediators, thus, preserve the credibility and comprehensiveness of the draft and, at the same time, take a small step towards elaboration. In other words, ambiguities ensure that, on the one hand, the parties maintain their individual opinions of "how things should proceed" and that, on the other, a shared language is adopted that can be used fairly by all parties later (Van den Berg, *et al.*, 2014). Ambiguities are dangerous because they contribute to misinterpretation and non-compliance with the peace agreement, as compliance is almost difficult to explain if the parties to the agreement lack a clear understanding of compliance conditions. Therefore, the application of a vague or ambiguous arrangement cannot, in good faith, lead the parties to the treaty to comply or to enforce the treaty. This infers that the mediators create such scenarios so that parties can sign the agreement while fully aware that there may be challenges in the implementation.

Table 2 Influence of External Actors in Internal Political Arrangements and Implementation of Peace Agreements

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree		TOTAL		Weighted Mean	Std. Deviation
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Influence of external actors in the internal political arrangements of the country affects the implementation of peace agreements	23	6	68	17.6	86	22.3	161	41.9	46	12.2	384	100	3	1.095

Source: Field Data, 2020

In response, 161 (41.9%) respondents agreed. Since another 46 (12.2%) strongly agreed, this shows that those who agreed with the statements were more than half (54.1%). As such, it can be deduced that interference with the internal political arrangements as envisaged by the peace plans could frustrate SSRs by deepening political animosities between various warring groups. This agrees with Katja (2009) in "should peacemakers take sides? Major power mediation, coercion, and bias" who argues that external interference is a major challenge facing the success of peace agreements.

The thin line between political and military jurisdictions and responsibility in South Sudan has led to political interference thus complicating the socio-political environment. Such interference has often challenged commitment to and implementation of peace agreements in line with the report by Smock and Smith (2008). The unwillingness on both sides to fully embrace any of the peace offerings in South Sudan struggle points to the fact that South Sudan parties have not been able to distinguish between political and military responsibilities in the peace agreement. As lawmakers haggle over equations that share authority, commanders in the field are worried about what will happen to their men and their rank and position. Some are comparatively doing well in the war while others do not envisage laying down their weapons. The complexities of any security sector reform plan and the security provisions of a peace agreement are compounded as the number of active combatants rises.

VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The outputs, measured primarily by behaviour change among the armed groups, reflected the weaknesses in the agreements designed to bring them about these changes, status of armed violence and recruitment into armed groups. Mistrust has not reduced as desired, and there is little increased ability to establish structures for transformation. Interpretation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the peace agreements were similarly found to be largely deficient. As such, transition into an effective DDR process was not possible, as a result of the foregoing; there was little trust building transparency and inclusivity, deficiency in efforts of all actors, recycling of combatants, and limited acceptance of the negotiating process. Although there was some use of lessons learnt from previous agreements, there was generally a need to refrain from recycling old ideas in order to realise new results.

VII. RECOMMENDATION

Disarmament, demobilisation and re integration (DDR) should include inclusivity, transparency to enhance trust and acceptance by all parties to the conflict.

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