

UNITED NATIONS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN AFRICA: A CASE STUDY OF
SOUTH SUDAN (UNITED 2019-2024)

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JULY, 2026.

TITLE

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A RESEARCH PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL
SCIENCES, GODFREY OKOYE UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B. Sc.), IN
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DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
GODFREY OKOYE UNIVERSITY

SUPERVISOR: DR IFEDI FRANSISCA

JULY, 2026.

DECLARATION

I hereby, declare that the project entitled, “UNITED NATIONS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN AFRICA: A CASE STUDY OF SOUTH SUDAN (2019-2024)” presented by me to Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu State, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree (B. Sc.) in International Relations is a record of a bona fide project work carried out by me and has not been submitted anywhere for the purpose acquiring degrees in International Relations or any other program under the guidance and supervision of DR IFEDI FRANSISCA

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APPROVAL PAGE

This project has been examined and approved by the Department of International Relations, Godfrey Okoye University for the award of Bachelor of Science (B. Sc.) in International Relations

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DEAN, FMSS

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EXTERNAL EXAMINER

DATE

DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to God

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It is with deep sense of humility that I wish to express my profound gratitude to God almighty who have seen me throughout this journey.

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on the role of the United Nations in conflict resolution in Africa with South Sudan as a case study. The study took a qualitative case study approach and relied on secondary data sources to evaluate the success of UN peacekeeping, diplomatic mediation, and peacebuilding efforts, as well as the obstacles that could arise to these interventions. The findings indicated that UN operations in the region, based on Collective Security Theory, had created a positive impact on the protection of civil lives, humanitarian support, ceasefire monitoring and dialogue with the relevant regional organizations. But these efforts were hampered by the overall success of these efforts owing to persistent political rivalries, ethnic tensions, weak governance, insecurity and delays in enacting peace agreements. The study found that although the UN's conflict resolution efforts in South Sudan have not adequately ended the conflict, they have contributed significantly to the management of conflict, humanitarian stability and peacebuilding in the country, suggesting a more robust support to operations and more community-based reconciliation processes to include all stakeholders.

Keywords: United Nations, Conflict Resolution, South Sudan, Peacekeeping Operations, Peacebuilding, Diplomatic Mediation, Humanitarian Assistance, Collective Security Theory, Regional Cooperation, Political Stability.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

When conflict erupts in a given region, the international community often calls upon the multilateral organizations, in particular the United Nations, to prevent the escalating conflict from worsening and to ensure sustainable peace among conflicted groups, as the Cold War concluded. The United Nations' principal role in conflict resolution takes the form of peace-keeping, mediation, humanitarian aid, and reconstruction in conflict zones, operating under the mandate outlined in the UN Charter, calling on member states to preserve international peace and security through various measures of diplomacy and collective security (United Nations, 2021; Williams, 2023). It's important to highlight that the UN is a global actor that takes action toward settling conflicts in numerous African nations, such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and Mali, in sub-Saharan Africa, collaborating with regional organizations including the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union (AU) (Gowan, 2022; Tchie & Wiln, 2021).

Conflict, since centuries past, has brought with itself widespread destruction to a multitude of African countries resulting from inter-ethnic animosity, political unrest, the fight over valuable natural resources, poor governance and the legacy of colonialism; these Conflicts have brought untold devastation to regions that include the emergence of an entire series of Humanitarian issues, displacement and numerous loss of lives.

Because of this, regional and international organisations increasingly have intervention to bring to fruition ceased fires and post-conflict peace, as the UN organized several peacekeeping

missions in numerous regions of Africa like the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan to restore stability and promote peacekeeping activities. The largest UN peacekeeping presence in the world is found in Africa, due to the complex, ongoing and extensive protracted conflict throughout the region (United Nations, 2022). The global security level of the region of Africa, as well as an ambition on the part of the international community to prevent future Humanitarian disasters and regional instability (Williams, 2023; Bove & Ruggeri, 2020) are the reason for the UN's considerable presence in the region. One example of the UN involvement in the settlement of conflict within Africa which stands out most vividly is that of South Sudan.

Prior to South Sudan's emergence on July 9, 2011, as Africa's newest nation, conflict had been occurring for decades between Sudanese liberation movements of the south and the government of Khartoum over decades, though it culminated in a civil war prior to its separation.

Through the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, negotiated and finalized in 2005, it helped the parties achieve a negotiated settlement to the Second Sudanese Civil War and pave the way for a vote of referendum on South Sudan independence (Johnson, 2016; Rolandsen & Kindersley, 2017). The role of the international community and its engagement with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was absolutely essential; with the backing of UN's assistance throughout peace process. However, soon after the declaration of its independence in 2011, South Sudan was again engulfed by an outbreak of a violent civil war between the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA) and Sudanese peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM) leadership factions based in intraparty politics, led by president Salva Kiir and the former vice-president Riek Machar, reignited a new cycle of fighting in December 2013 and that had an ethnically based division primarily between the Dinka and Nuer tribes leading to increased

violence and human rights abuses, displacement and a Humanitarian crises (de Waal, 2015; International Crisis Group, 2019).

The violence since 2013 has caused the death of hundreds of thousands of people and has displaced millions from their homes internally, leading to displacement across borders and making it a major crisis of our time, if not one of the worst to afflict 21st century Africa (Human Rights Watch, 2020; United Nations, 2022).

The UN Security Council created the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in 2011. It was expanded as the conflict grew to become one of the largest UN operations and mandated to protect civilians, support the implementation of the peace agreements and promote the peace process and state building.¹UNMISS also set up protected civilian (PoC) camps, to protect thousands of civilians. When the UN introduced these camps,²they had become central to the mission and the humanitarian work of the organization in South Sudan.

However, concerns are widely shared on the ability of the UN to deliver lasting peace.

Researchers and policymakers agree that peacekeeping missions often have many problems, including narrow mandates, poor funding, or political limitations set by member states.³In South Sudan the UN failed to stop violence from reoccurring, enforce ceasefires, hold perpetrators of human rights violations accountable, or reconcile the various groups involved in the conflict; ethnicity⁴and low state capacity and conflict over political control were major hinderances for the international brokers.⁴ Notwithstanding the difficulties of such task, UN has proven to be important actor in negotiations of the R-ARCSS (Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan), which aims at reforming security sector and establishing a transitional

government. Even if it seems slow to progress, the UN's continuing engagement in the country could still avert another war and bring peace and stability in the region.⁵ Given the ongoing issues concerning conflict resolution in South Sudan, there is need for a critical analysis on the work carried out by UN in mediation and civilian protection. It is believed that the analysis of successes and failures of UN mission could offer important indications concerning the driving forces in the conflict resolution in Africa, and on the effectiveness of the UN in such complex situations, including the intra-state conflicts, the peacekeeping and mediation strategies and on how to establish peace and the state at long term in Africa.¹ United Nations Security Council, resolution 1996, S/RES/1996 (2011) of July 8, 2011, UN, New York.² UN News Centre, "South Sudan: thousands seek shelter at UN camp, despite threat of violence," May 29, 2014.³ Gowan R., "The UN's Crisis of Management and Organization: South Sudan as a Cautionary Case." (New York: CFR, 2017). ⁴ de Waal A., "The new state of south sudan's conflicts" (African Center for Peace and Democracy, 2015), <http://www.africaforsale.us/wpcontent/uploads/2016/06/NewStateofSouthSudan.pdf> (accessed March 10, 2024).⁵ International Crisis Group, "South Sudan's Peace Roadmap, Towards the 2024 elections", September 5, 2023.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The challenges faced by most international organization intervention on political stability, economic growth and human security in Africa have been a subject in wars across the continent, in this regard the UN intervention in Africa continent on issues related to conflicts is no new concept. UN has played role of Mediator, Peacekeepers and facilitator of the peace agreement on Conflict zone; The peacekeeping mechanism of the UN, mediation in conflict area with any

party involved aims at, for instance to avoid deaths of conflict. And to facilitate post-conflict reconciliation through bringing conflicting sides together. The mission of the UN in most conflict area including Africa is thus to prevent conflict and restore peace, ensure the security and save the lives of civilian, and facilitate post-conflict reconstruction but as observed many conflicts on continent are still unresolved. UN intervention continues to face criticism and question its effectiveness and durability in resolution of conflicts, especially when it fails to solve fundamental root causes of the conflicts (Williams, 2023; Gowan, 2022).

South Sudan is one example of that challenge that has challenged international intervention. It was believed to be politically peaceful and wealthy in coming years since its independence in 2011 following the protracted struggle against the Sudan. However, rivalry and frailty of institution's deflated these hopes in a relatively short period of time. The differences between President Salva Kiir and his ex-vice president Riek Machar led to the civil war in December, 2013. Consequently, the war led to devastating humanitarian situation that characterized by, the large displacement of population, widespread insecurity, food insecurity and destruction of infrastructure, and human right abuses throughout the conflict period (de Waal, 2015; International Crisis Group, 2019).

In response to the war UN created United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), to protect civilians, promote peace building activities, support human aid operation and to address the crisis. Its functions involve assisting civilians in situations of displacement; verifying compliance with ceasingfire agreement; helping provide humanitarian aid; and facilitating in the peace-making and negotiating process of the conflicting parties in the region(United Nations Security Council, 2011; United Nations, 2023) However; some parts of the region still experience outbreak of conflict, violence and protracted and shaky peace negotiations.

The persistent conflict and instability in South Sudan raises significant issues in terms of the efficacy of the UN's approaches to conflict resolution. Various initiatives to bring peace to South Sudan, with UN participation, have resulted in a political stalemate, fragmented governance and a precarious peace accord. UN effectiveness has been undermined by factors ranging from the extent of UN authority, the need for coordinated action by local stakeholders, and the ground realities of the political situation in South Sudan (Bove & Ruggeri, 2020; Tchie & Wiln, 2021).

Furthermore, the crisis in South Sudan illustrates some systemic challenges to international peacekeeping in Africa such as resource constraints, coordination issues with regional organizations, local elites' pressure, the depth and complexity of ethnic and political divisions in zones of conflict.

While South Sudan received significant international attention, its prospects for lasting peace and political stability remain a complex challenge. The central issue in this research is therefore the enduring conflict and political instability in South Sudan alongside the sustained engagement of the UN. This situation raises questions about the efficacy of UN peacekeeping and mediation in conflict resolution and the establishment of peace and political stability in Africa. The overall goal of this study is to examine the involvement of the United Nations in conflict resolution in Africa by focusing on South Sudan, as an illustrative case, to determine the effectiveness of the UN interventions in managing complex intra-state conflict in Africa, along with challenges and implications.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the contribution of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to resolving the conflict in South Sudan?
2. To what extent has United Nations peacekeeping activities been instrumental in building peace and ensuring security in South Sudan?

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To appraise the UNMISS's efforts in managing and resolving the conflict
2. To gauge the effectiveness of peacekeeping and mediation by the United Nations in restoring peace and security in South Sudan.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study's importance can be evaluated from both the academic and practical perspectives.

Theoretically, the study aims to address the literature gap concerning international conflict resolution and peacekeeping operations in Africa. This is done through an analysis of the United Nations' role in South Sudan to better understand its involvement in complicated intrastate conflict, and its effects on lasting peace.

In addition, it could assist political scientists, international relation scholars, researchers in the area of peace and conflict studies, as well as scholars interested in African studies and who seek a greater insight into African conflict resolution mechanisms. It also offers empirical data about both the successful and the failures of UN peacekeeping missions on the continent. The study findings could provide a relevant policy, diplomacy, and operational framework that could

inform the decision-making processes of international organizations in the formulation of peacebuilding and conflict management strategies in fragile states. It can also suggest measures to be adopted to empower the United Nations, and the regional bodies such as the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to cooperate better in the context of conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. Finally, it helps the international community to understand the humanitarian and development costs of non-resolved conflicts. A good knowledge of how the United Nations can operate effectively as peacekeepers could lead to future effective operations geared towards ensuring political stability, protecting civilians, and building lasting peace in war torn societies.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The present study is designed to look into the United Nations' role in conflict resolution in Africa particularly the Republic of South Sudan as a case study. It focus on three specific areas of involvement for the United Nations: its engagement in the peace process, its peacekeeping mandate and post conflict reconstruction activities. It constitutes a detailed analysis of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) activities with a view to understanding its role in the protection of civilians, humanitarian assistance and in facilitating peace among warring parties.

This study begins from the independence of South Sudan in 2011 up until recent years, when the country is still facing various political and security issues, the management of which is left to international community led peace initiatives.

This perspective enables a longitudinal study of the conflict's evolution and the response of the international community through the UN in addressing its causes and effects.

1.7 Area of the Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the position of the United Nations in Africa as a conflict resolution institution, by considering the specific case of South Sudan. A country in East-Central Africa, South Sudan attained its independence from Sudan on July 9, 2011. It is known that since independence, South Sudan has been engulfed by political instability and civil unrest, with a major conflict in form of civil war ongoing since 2013.

During these crises, there has been considerable international engagement, mostly through the involvement of the United Nations and its contingent in the form of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

Therefore, the case of South Sudan is considered to be an appropriate case study for the assessment of the successful impact of the United Nations' peacekeeping operations and conflict resolution processes in Africa.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

Conflict Resolution: This refers to the processes by which two or more parties come to an agreement or resolution to disputes that occurs when they have some interests that are incompatible or in opposition. This involves mediation, negotiation, and conciliation.

Peacekeeping: This involves the deployment of international observers and troops in troubled areas by international organizations like the United Nations, with the consent of the parties to the conflict, for the purposes of observing and reporting on ceasefire agreements and mediating negotiations, among other things.

United Nations: This is a specialized agency of the world community, founded in 1945 for the

purpose of developing friendly relations among nations and for the promotion of the welfare of the peoples of the world. The organization plays a prominent role in conflict resolution activities globally through diplomatic negotiations and UN peacekeeping.

Civil War: This is a type of armed conflict that is characterized by a violent struggle between warring factions or groups within the same country.

Peace Agreement: This is an accord or settlement in writing signed by the parties in a conflict, in terms of which they agree to terminate the hostilities.

Peace building: This term encompasses all measures aimed at, and measures to prevent reoccurrences of conflict after it has been successfully terminated, with the goal to establishing conditions in which peaceful and normal functioning of the society can emerge.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of a literature review is to review the view of author as to research question with aim of locating the gap in literature. Therefore, the study adopted the conceptual review, thematic review, empirical review, theoretical review and gap in literature in reviewing literature.

2.1 Conceptual Review:

2.1.1 Conflict:

Conflict is ubiquitous and inescapable feature of human social existence and organizations, conflict occurs when individual, groups, organizations or nations are in pursuit of incompatible

interests, goals, values, or objectives. Political scientist and international relation scholars define conflict as a situation where two or more parties contest, argue over or struggle about some issue- resources, territory, power or authority, identity or values. Conflict takes many forms, ranging from simple, nonviolent dispute to organized military warfare and civil war (Wallensteen, 2021; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2022). While most conflicts have violence associated with them and thus represent sources of instability, they also occur, unavoidably, as intrinsic aspects of all social relation since they stem from such relation as a source of creativity and innovation as well as conflict (Tschirgi, Lund & Mancini, 2021).

Conflict from the empirical point of view: At a theoretical level, conflict has long been explained in terms of incompatible goals of actors (Wallensteen, 2021). Wallensteen (2021) further defines conflict as a situation where two or more parties seek to achieve goals which can be realised by one or other party at a time only. The realization of an objective by one party automatically limits the possibilities of achievement of that objective by other party. It is this situation that compels each of the parties to struggle to maintain its interest which is regarded as an expression of tension, competition and confrontation. Similarly, Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall (2022) argues that conflict refers to a state in which there is dynamic interplay of actions by parties with goal, interest or identities that they perceive as incompatible. This interplay of action typically results from factors such as unresolved past issues, differences in relative power, and an atmosphere of distrust. For instance, the outbreak and escalation of many conflicts is triggered by the threat perceived by parties as their identity, their livelihood or their existence being at stake.

Conflict can manifest at different levels of social interaction. At interpersonal levels, conflict can exist among individuals due to their attitudes, beliefs and values. Group or societal conflicts typically occur among religious, ethnic, and social groups competing for economic or political

opportunities, social standing, and cultural or national identity. At international levels, conflicts between state regimes and organized political actors occur over territory, strategic advantages and access to resources (Gleditsch & Pickering, 2022; Wallensteen, 2021). These varying levels are crucial to understanding the nature and origins of many of today's disputes.

Intrastate vs Interstate conflict; Interstate conflict is conflict occurring between two states.

Intrastate conflicts occur within one state. Intrastate conflicts are typically called civil wars and have been common throughout human history, although interstate war became dominant between the World Wars I and II and throughout the Cold War, interstate conflict have remained common during the present era. Conflicts occurring within a single state usually result from internal divisions based on identity, political ideologies or economic inequalities. Most interstate conflicts are characterized by government forces fighting against rebel, insurgent, or military groups (Williams, 2023; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2022).

Conflicts that take place within a state, termed 'intrastate' conflicts, tend to be more complicated and difficult to resolve compared to those that take place between states. In intrastate conflicts, there are often many actors, each with their own agendas and grievances. These Conflicts usually involve a combination of the following: -Political marginalisation; -Economic inequality; -Ethnic tensions; -Poor governance structures The conflicts are sometimes made worse by external actors involved in offering financial, military or diplomatic aid to opposing parties.

This usually leads to prolonged conflicts and greater challenges in the achievement of a peace agreement (Tschirgi, Lund & Mancini, 2021; Gleditsch & Pickering, 2022).

This implies that there will be serious humanitarian consequences, including displacement, extensive destruction of public property, and prolonged socio-economic instability in countries

that face intrastate conflicts. It is important to distinguish between the concepts of latent conflict and manifest conflict. The latent form is the state of the conflicted issue where the grievances may be building up, but not yet escalated to visible forms of conflict, whereas in the manifest conflict, the grievances emerge and lead to open displays of confrontation and violence (Wallensteen, 2021). The distinction is crucial, particularly for the planning and implementation of measures that are required for conflict prevention because it is possible to address some of the underlying causes of the conflict before they erupt into violence.

The causes of conflict are many and interrelated.

Among these causes, political factors are arguably the most dominant factors of conflicts, especially in those states with the low level of political participation and weak democratic institutions. Where the concentration of power in the hands of a small group of elites or marginalization of particular groups from structures of political power prevails, political protests are likely to result in conflict if the system fails to accommodate and negotiate with such groups. Other political causes of conflict include electoral disputes, instability in the political arena, competition among political leaders, and the presence of an unfair political system.

The impact of the conflict, including, for instance, poor democratic institutions, can also be a cause of subsequent conflicts (Williams, 2023). The role of economic factors as causes of conflict is also very significant. Poverty, high rates of unemployment and inequality usually lead to a sense of disenfranchisement and grievance among segments of the population, particularly the poor.

Such disenfranchisement and sense of injustice may result in opposition or resistance against the elites and authorities and often develops into conflict situations (Gleditsch & Pickering, 2022).

Additionally, Competition for vital economic resources such as oil, minerals, and land, as well as, conflict over access to natural resources, particularly in those countries with weak governing structures may escalate into armed confrontation (Gleditsch & Pickering, 2022). Ethnic and identity-based causes of conflict is another prevalent issue in the contemporary world. This involves conflicts which stem from the desire to protect their group's identity, political representation, or socio-economic standing. Tensions, discrimination, and disparities of power between different ethnic or religious communities can also trigger and fuel such conflicts.

According to, colonial legacy, for example, contributed to several identity conflicts in African countries because European powers created boundaries that combined multiple ethnic groups in the same territory, ignoring pre-colonial arrangements and political traditions (Williams, 2023; Tschirgi, Lund & Mancini, 2021).

Weak governance and state institutions also increase the likelihood of conflict. States with inadequate governance are frequently unable to implement internal security measures, maintain the rule of law, or provide basic public services. In this environment, armed groups can arise to oppose state authority or exploit weaknesses in governance.

In a fragile state, political instability, corruption, and poor administrative systems can all undermine social cohesion and foster violent conflict (Wallensteen, 2021).

These weaknesses can make it difficult for governments to resolve disputes peacefully, thereby leading to a greater chance of violent escalation. The African continent has been the site of

numerous conflicts since the first wave of independence in the 1960s. Many of these conflicts have been attributed to political instability, ethnic tensions, military coups, and the competition for natural resources. The civil wars in countries like Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Sudan highlight how domestic political and socio-economic disputes can devolve into long and devastating wars.

These wars have resulted in large-scale humanitarian crises, including forced displacement, the destruction of infrastructure, and persistent economic underdevelopment across the continent (Williams, 2023).

A contemporary example of a domestic conflict can be found in South Sudan. Upon achieving independence from Sudan in 2011 following decades of struggle, the nation was expected to achieve stability and economic growth. However, the rivalries between the leaders of the ruling elite soon turned violent.

In 2013, the conflict between the leaders of the government escalated into a civil war that expanded to many parts of the country. The war soon became heavily characterized by ethnic overtones, sparking widespread violence, mass displacement of people, and a major humanitarian crisis (Williams, 2023; Tschirgi, Lund & Mancini, 2021). The conflict in South Sudan illustrates how fragile political structures, ethnic diversity, and the competition for power can transition a political disagreement into violent conflict.

It also illustrates the complexity of modern intra-state conflicts and the challenges to resolution.

Understanding conflict, therefore, is important for dissecting the causes, dynamics, and effects of political instability in various regions of the world. By examining the structural and immediate

factors that cause conflict, researchers and policymakers may be able to develop effective strategies for conflict prevention and lasting peace. The study's conceptual framework of conflict helps explore the function of the UN in resolving conflicts and fostering peace in Africa, especially South Sudan.

2.1.2 Conflict Resolution

The processes, methods and structural procedures utilised to resolve conflicts occurring between individuals, groups or nations in the attempt to alleviate hostility and ensure that peaceful relationships between these parties will resume is known as conflict resolution. Peacebuilding scholars consider this to be of great importance in politics as these problems if unresolved will lead to violence, disorder, a humanitarian disaster, and prolonged damage in the social and economic areas. Therefore, it is the issue of addressing the violence, as well as modifying beliefs in a country (political, social and economic) as to what has originally triggered conflict and violence, that researchers tend to notice (Wallensteen, 2021; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, 2022).

Conflict resolution is more and more viewed as the comprehensive procedures of addressing the appearance of conflicts and structural factors behind ongoing issues.

For the conflict resolution to take place, it is required that conflicting countries should achieve an accord to resolve key conflict issues to eliminate possibility of future conflicts, according to Wallensteen (2021). For their part, Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall (2022) consider it as the processes involving creation of settlements that are acceptable to both sides of the conflict which help turn antagonising groups into ones that can cooperate. These thinkers highlight the

significance of considering the interests, needs, and issues of all disputing parties. Most conflict resolution researchers draw a distinction between conflict resolution, conflict management, and conflict transformation.

Peacebuilding, for example, uses techniques such as ceasefire arrangements, diplomatic negotiations, peacekeeping forces, and confidence building actions that would stop the escalation of violence without necessarily tackling the origins of conflict (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2022).

Conflict transformation focuses, by contrast, on creating greater changes, including addressing the root causes of conflict and improving the relationship between parties involved. Peace, in their view, requires addressing social justice, reconciliation, and reforms to existing political and social structures (Wallenstein, 2021). The first step in most conflict resolutions involves conflict analysis and the identification of issues such as actors, interests, and root causes as well as the surrounding socio-economic and political environment.

Conflicts do not have just one cause; rather, they are often triggered by a mixture of socio-economic disparities, political exclusion, ethnic clashes, competition over natural resources and weak governments (Tschirgi, Lund & Mancini, 2021). The identification of these underlying factors allows researchers to formulate effective conflict resolution approaches which will address the causes and symptoms of conflict. Conflict negotiation is perhaps the most widely used method of conflict resolution.

It consists of face to face communication among the conflicting parties to find an agreement.

During this negotiation, disputing parties state their demands, make proposals, and explore options to compromise and accommodate the interests of one another. Negotiations may take place on an informal basis between parties to a dispute or within an official setting such as diplomacy at international organisations, requiring understanding, trust, and a spirit of compromise to achieve a peaceful settlement (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2022; Wallensteen, 2021).

Another mechanism for resolving disputes that deserves mention here is Mediation. mediation involves third-party intervention aimed at facilitating amicable resolution between parties in conflict. Mediators can be referred to as facilitators rather than authorities and work to facilitate discussions, foster co-operation and explore areas of common ground between the opposing groups. Mediators could be various international bodies or institutions, regional organizations, representatives of a country's diplomatic services, well-respected political figures, etc. Mediation is often particularly helpful in instances where tensions are so high or mistrust between disputing parties have eroded communication. Mediation is particularly useful in the case of conflict where negotiations may not have succeeded because of high levels of mistrust or hostility between parties. mediation works especially well in cases of failed communication and high hostility between conflicting parties (Tschirgi, Lund and Mancini, 2021).

For situations where negotiations and mediations fail to meet expectations, parties may opt for Arbitration. Arbitration is a dispute settlement mechanism by which the involved parties would agree to submit the matter to a neutral intermediary, hear all sides of the story and render a binding decision. Arbitration typically involves cases such as international legal conflicts and disputes between corporations, though it might also serve to help solve political conflicts where

the opposing factions were prepared to accept the ruling of a foreign judge or arbitrators(Wallenstein, 2021). It is a formalised dispute resolution in cases where other negotiations failed and no reasonable result could be attained.

It's influence in peace negotiations and operations, in addition to the power that they possess within international relations, render international organizations important participants in the peace process. In particular, the United Nations have been a central player in international security initiatives since their inception in 1945, a year in which world war ii came to a halt. The UN strives to stop the escalate of tensions as well as provide a venue for parties to resolve disputes through diplomacy, peacekeeping missions, sanctions and peacebuilding efforts (Williams, 2023).

Peacekeeping, arguably the most overt form of conflict resolution of the UN, requires multinational security forces, the civilian police force and civilians to be dispersed in troubled regions to maintain a safe atmosphere as well as to aid the negotiations of any peace accord. UN peacekeeping missions are performed by national troops, typically military units donated by various member states and mandate from the UN Security Council to maintain a ceasefire, and guarantee the protection of civilians.

In the past few decades, peacekeeping operations have expanded beyond their primary focus of enforcing ceasefire and establishing buffer zones between opposing groups. Today peacekeeping operations have broadened to encompass efforts such as: the reintegration and demobilization of formercombatants, the defense of the general population, support for democratic transitions and electoral processes and the reconstruction of state structures and their capacities to serve their people. Such expansion is founded upon an understanding of that sustainable peace necessitates addressing immediate and structural roots of conflict (Williams, 2023).

African countries often partner with international bodies to resolve disputes. The African Union, a regional bloc that consists of almost all of African states, will often work closely with the UN to facilitate peacekeeping missions and peace negotiations. This cooperation often results in greater success in conflict resolution endeavors due to regional organizations possessing better local knowledge.

You can see a classic example of international practices for conflict resolution in the South Sudan scenario. After its independence from Sudan in 2011, internal political tension brewed until it burst into a bloody civil war in 2013. A lot of death and human suffering, including displacement and famine occurred in the country due to the conflict. The United Nations intervened by deploying troops, peacekeeping operations of the UNMISS (United Nations mission in South Sudan), aimed at protecting civilians and bringing the factions to talks to resolve the war.

Another mechanism of resolving conflict is diplomacy, and UN again played a crucial role to spearhead a diplomatic push, working alongside other regional bodies and international actors which resulted in a revised agreement being adopted to resolve the crisis in South Sudan. It sought to establish an interim administration, reform the security sector and promote reconciliation between various ethnic groups. Although the peace process implementation process experienced numerous difficulties, it shows how seriously the international community takes to resolve this conflict (Williams, 2023; Tschirgi, Lund & Mancini, 2021).

However there are numerous available options for conflict resolution, peaceful and sustainable settlement is a complex and a difficult process. Wars usually entail several interrelated grievances, systemic inequalities and very high degrees of mistrust between conflicting entities.

Further, state limitations, the availability of poor resources, or non-cooperative attitudes of local stakeholders are at times a restraint for intervention by outsiders. Thus resolving wars may include working over long periods of time to ensure continued diplomacy and engagement of local and international stakeholders (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2022).

Therefore learning about the concept of conflict resolution will be important to understanding how conflicts in the international world are being addressed and resolved. It will provide a framework within which I may analyse conflict resolution strategies of international actors on the verge of avoiding violence, helping dialogue, and building sustainable peace. In analyzing this study, this chapter on conflict resolution will serve as a foundation to examining the United Nations' role in conflict management in Africa and how effective its intervention methods in South Sudan have been.

2.1.3 Peacekeeping operations

Peacekeeping operation have emerged as an important tools the international society relies upon for promoting peace and security in areas riddled with conflict. International peacekeeping can be broadly defined as "the deployment of international military, police and civilians in regions experiencing, or emerging from, violent conflict for the purposes of preventing recurrence of hostilities, protect civilians and to assist with implementation of peace agreements". The peacekeeping mission is a broadly recognized practice in international relations that now is a widely accepted tool of the international community, a tool that can serve to mediate and regulate conflicts and to stabilize situations in post conflict societies when the state structures are too weak to provide security (Williams, 2023; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2022).

Despite the fact that the United Nations charter does not make a mention of the concept of

peacekeeping, this tool has become a necessary, adaptable tool for maintaining international peace and security. United Nations Security Council sanction these missions that typically are comprised of troops from different member states. These are used to prevent escalation, ensure the separation of opposing sides, and create a situation in which the peaceful resolution of issues can take place (Bellamy and Williams, 2021; Williams, 2023). Overtime, the mission has developed into one of the most recognisable, as well as one of the most extensively used, means for international dispute resolution.

Peacekeeping, for example became a common practice within the UN early years due to increased need for international neutral intervention in conflict situations. The concept was intended to be temporary; to stabilize an unstable environment until a resolution could be found. In its early forms peacekeeping was a primarily military activity focused on monitoring ceasefires and separating rival forces. These classic peacekeeping missions possessed narrow mandates, which often require consent of warring parties for intervention (Bellamy and Williams, 2021).

As conflicts evolve across time, especially with regard to post-Cold War conflicts where many countries faced numerous internal challenges rather than the interstate wars which was typical before. It is common now that civil and ethnic conflicts emerge when governmental forces clash with armed groups, rebel organizations, or militias seeking for power and political authority, or for territorial claims. Therefore peacekeeping missions evolved to address conflicts where complex interactions among several actors, where institutional weaknesses or a humanitarian crisis coexist (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2022; Williams, 2023).

Three principles dictate how modern peacekeeping missions should operate. The first principle requires the consent of the belligerent parties to the conflict. Peacekeeping forces are usually

deployed with the assent of key players in a dispute to ensure the legitimacy of their presence and to reduce the potential of conflict between peacekeepers and the host population. The second principle is impartiality, which implies neutrality for the peacekeepers in a dispute without favoritism for any of the warring parties. The third principle of minimal use of force, states that peacekeepers should only employ the use of force to protect their personnel and their mandates, or where civilians are facing an immediate danger (Williams, 2023). These are important principles for effective and reliable peacekeeping missions.

Today, modern peacekeeping operations have expanded beyond the traditional mandate of observing cease-fire. Modern peace operations often span beyond military operations to include humanitarian, developmental, and political operations; thus they become multi-dimensional operations. Some peacekeeping operations focus on defending civilians against violent armed actors, others on delivering humanitarian aid to displace persons, while others on the process of democracy, human rights monitoring, and security reform (Bellamy & Williams, 2021; Ramsbotham et al., 2022). These multidimensional missions endeavor not only to maintain the peace but also to address underlying conflicts, in pursuit of a lasting political stability.

For regions characterized by persistent political instability and ongoing violent conflict, peacekeeping operations have proved invaluable. Numerous United Nations peacekeeping operations are underway on the African continent, necessitated by internal conflicts, fragile political institutions and human rights and humanitarian crises. Indeed, as observed by Williams (2023), “Africa is indeed the largest theater for the operations of United Nations peacekeeping” operations, in countries like the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Mali. The operations are usually intended to de-escalate tense political situations, and promote peacebuilding in societies suffering from prolonged violence.

The existence of certain factors forms the foundation of every peacekeeping operation. These elements are as essential to the successful completion of a peace mission as the mandate it receives. A robust, evident, and achievable peacekeeping mandate is one element. United Nations Security Council has mandated peacekeeping operations with specific objective and role which peacekeepers must follow to attain certain level of peace, with established limitations of their operation (Bellamy and Williams, 2021). Logistical, Military, and financial requirements of any peacekeeping operation constitute another key factor. Often peacekeeping missions find themselves operating in challenging terrain and circumstances with security threats from armed group(Bellamy & Williams, 2021).

Finally, the will of the local parties in the host country also determines success of the peacekeeping activities. It often seems to be impossible for the peacekeeping force to ensure and preserve the peace in a given territory and prevent subsequent violence when the local leaders refuse to cooperate, actively undermine the agreement and prevent their own population and forces to abide by the peace agreement Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2022. These kinds of limitations show that the peacekeeping should work along with the comprehensive diplomacy, political and economic approach in order to resolve the conflict's root causes.

The peacekeeping operations has played significant role in Conflict management and peacebuilding around the globe. The peacekeeping operations have proven that they reduce the chance of a new wave of violence and assure the adherence to the peace agreements. The peacekeeping troops offer the security environment needed for the operations to be undertaken. The peacekeeping activities are also part of the international agenda for constructing durable peace in post-conflict states through their roles in reducing conflict and fostering political dialog Williams, 2023.

Usually United Nations operations in Africa are conducted in conjunction with regional organizations, such as African Union and Intergovernmental Authority on Development, that have a strong understanding of local issues and concerns, with particular expertise in mediation and conflict resolution as well as experience in post-conflict reconciliation and development. Collaborative operations between the UN and regional partners improve their overall effectiveness and lend them greater legitimacy by leveraging complementary strengths, resources, and experience(Williams, 2023; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2022).

One of the most exemplary cases of United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa was carried out in South Sudan, one of the latest independent states of the world. The United Nations deployed UNMISS in South Sudan in 2011, to support the country's consolidation of peace and stability in its early stages of independence. However, due to the emergence of civil conflict in 2013, UNMISS mission was reformed to address protection of civilians, human rights violations and to mediate peace processes between the opposing groups.

UNMISS has greatly succeeded in protecting thousands of civilians who were victims of the violence and in need of protection in South Sudan by establishing safe sites where they were kept from harm's way. Additionally, the peacekeeping operation has played vital roles in promoting human rights dialogues, supporting mediation processes and assisting with the implementation of peace agreements to cease conflict. It is clear from these operations that peacekeeping can have a crucial impact in the effective management of complex conflict and in the consolidation of weak states Williams, 2023; Ramsbotham et al, 2022).

Regardless of the successes of peacekeeping operations in promoting peace and conflict resolution, there are some serious limitations that cannot be overlooked. These are that the mandate of peacekeeping operations is often too limited and their capabilities are insufficient.

Furthermore, political limitations imposed by the member states limit the effectiveness of the operations. If the groups fighting are too active or the leaders of the country cannot ensure the enforceability of peace agreements, peacekeeping operations are often unable to achieve the desired objectives, meaning that they should not be treated as sole solution and need to be combined with political reforms and economic reconstruction(Bellamy and Williams, 2021).

Typically, peacekeeping missions have been part of international efforts to guarantee world peace and security. Peacekeeping missions provide a framework through which the international community can interfere with conflicts and rescue victims of a war, strengthen the situation of a fragile country and bring about peaceful negotiations to end the conflict. This paper aims to assess the contribution of peacekeeping missions in the field of conflict management in Africa by specifically looking at the role played by peacekeeping missions of the United Nations in the intervention of South Sudan. Through analysis of the roles, successes and failures of peacekeeping missions, one will be able to estimate the efficiency of peacekeeping efforts for achieving stability in conflict-ridden areas.

2.1.4 Role of the United Nations in Conflict Resolution

in Africa The United Nations plays a pivotal role in fostering international peace and security in conflict prone states. Created following the Second World War which caused devastation around the world, the United Nations' overarching objective was to eliminate the risk of conflict between states. Since its establishment in 1945, it has devised numerous mechanisms to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts worldwide. These are mechanisms such as diplomacy, peacekeeping missions, imposition of sanctions, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding efforts after conflict for post-conflict stability (Williams, 2023; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2022). In

the context of Africa, the UN's conflict resolution role has increased significantly owing to protracted conflicts, unstable political institutions, and humanitarian crises in various states across the continent. To a considerable degree, the UN's peacekeeping forces in Africa accounted for the preponderance of international security initiatives and the commitment to preventing widespread human atrocities following the Cold War. Hence, the UN has emerged as a crucial actor in post-conflict stabilization, rehabilitation, and negotiation processes in Africa (Williams, 2023). Diplomacy is another primary mechanism used by the United Nations to help resolve conflicts. It refers to a process involving dialogue between the disputing parties aimed at finding peaceful settlements to disputes. This is generally done by Special Representatives or Mediators of the Secretary General of the UN appointed by him to negotiate a peace agreement between rival factions of conflicts. These intermediaries, through engagement with political figures, armed factions and regional bodies aim at creating compromise and achieving a peaceful outcome. Diplomatic engagement might be of assistance where there is lack of communication between conflicting parties due to mistrust or hostility between them (Wallenstein, 2021; Tschirgi, Lund and Mancini, 2021). In many instances, the effectiveness of mediation endeavors depends on the ability of the mediator to grasp political developments within the conflict and involve all conflicting parties in an inclusive dialogue. Traditional forms of mediation processes tend to require long-term diplomatic efforts, confidence-building measures, and support from the international community in order to implement effectively any peace accords that may be negotiated (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2022). Peacekeeping operations have been yet another notable contribution of the United Nations to resolving conflicts in Africa. Peacekeeping operations consist of military operations that mandate the deployment of multinational armed forces, police personnel, and civilian specialists into areas of violent conflict to maintain peace

and security. Authorized by the United Nations Security Council and implemented by member state forces, these operations have often tasked with securing cease-fires, establishing separation between warring groups, protecting civilians, and helping to enforce agreements on peace (Bellamy and Williams, 2021; Williams, 2023). However, the peacekeeping landscape has undergone a paradigm shift in response to the changing dynamics of conflict. Unlike the early days, when peacekeeping primarily revolved around observing cease-fires among conflicting state forces, contemporary wars are more complex and characterized by numerous armed actors, such as rebel groups and militias, as well as the direct involvement of civilian populations. Thus, present-day peacekeeping missions have assumed a multidimensional character, integrating military, political, and humanitarian components with a view to stabilize volatile environments and foster long-term peacebuilding (Williams, 2023). A multifaceted approach to peacekeeping operations, such missions are empowered to perform a range of duties beyond the military scope, such as protecting civilians from violence, facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid, monitoring the human rights situation, supporting election processes, and assisting in the reform of security sector institutions. The main goal is to create conditions conducive to enduring peace and political stability within post-conflict societies through the linkage of security policies with political and developmental initiatives (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, 2022). Finally, the role of the UN in resolving conflicts through humanitarian aid is very significant. Violent conflicts are characterized by a broad scale humanitarian catastrophe, including forced displacement, starvation, and destruction of critical infrastructure. Humanitarian assistance provided by the United Nations to populations affected by conflict, through organizations such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Food Programme, helps alleviate

human suffering and facilitates the recovery and regeneration of devastated communities (Williams, 2023).

Another major function of the United Nations in solving conflicts in Africa is the process of peacebuilding. Peacebuilding activities are those efforts that go into remedying the structural causes of the conflict in the longer term as well as enhancing institutions that support social cohesion and political stability, such as promoting democratic governance, strengthening the judicial sector, reforming security institutions and stimulating economic growth (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, 2022; Wallensteen, 2021). Such activities aim to maintain the peace agreed upon in settlements and prevent conflict from resurfacing by addressing the root causes of the dispute (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, 2022; Wallensteen, 2021). The U.N. Peacebuilding activities are essential for post-conflict societies to ensure peace.

Intervention of the UN in conflict resolution is also viewed in several states in Africa that have experienced continued conflict. In countries such as Sudan, Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic, the UN has had extensive interventions. The organization used its peacekeeping operations to stabilize the warring factions, protect civilians and influence political transitions in the post conflict situations. The contributions in peacekeeping are often a success even when mixed with certain challenges, which highlight the importance of the U.N. In regulating the conflict in the region.

Peacebuilding is a set of strategies implemented for the long-term correction of the structural root causes of conflict and enhancement of social stability and social cohesion (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, 2022). Activities such as promoting democracy, strengthening the legal and judicial sectors, changing the security architecture, and achieving economic progress may constitute these strategies. Such initiatives are crucial for preventing the recurrence of violence

and for creating sustainable peace agreements to avoid any further violence as the goal is to address the roots of the problem (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, 2022; Wallensteen, 2021).

Another crucial collaboration method between the U.N and African regional organisations in improving conflict resolutions is to strengthen collaboration efforts for the mediation and brokering of the Conflicts. Such organizations, which include Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the African Union have been working with UN on conflicts resolution, the mediation processes and deployment of peacekeeping missions, while also supporting the peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations, these partnerships have often yielded better outcomes. This stems from the fact that the regional institutions tend to have greater understanding of the local politics and cultures which have proved vital when partnering with the UN in bringing about conflict solutions (Williams, 2023; Tschirgi, Lund and Mancini, 2021). South Sudan represents the obvious illustration of UN intervention in conflicts in Africa. Since its inception as an independent nation in 2011, political wrangles in the ruling political factions escalated into an open war by 2013. The conflict in the region has caused massive displacement of the civilian population, increased suffering, and dire humanitarian situations. The UN deployed its troops as peacekeeping force UNMISS to protect the civilians and provide assistance for the stalled mediation process of peace talks between the warring elements of South Sudan.

The U.N. Was indispensable in bringing the warring factions together to talk through mediated political settlements for peace. UN's involvement has facilitated peacebuilding process through supporting regional organisations and international partners; leading to Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan to establish a transitional government, reform

the security sector, and promote reconciliation between various factions. The execution of the peace accord faced many impediments, it remains an important move by the global community toward peace establishment (Williams, 2023; Tschirgi, Lund and Mancini, 2021).

Despite its tremendous involvement in conflicts in Africa, the UN faces a multitude of challenges in its peace operations. Some of these issues have emanated from the complexities of modern wars with many competing armed forces, political tensions, weak governing structures. These contribute to difficulties in negotiating comprehensive and enforceable peace accords. In addition, peacekeeping operations often unfold under precarious circumstances characterised by poor logistics, security concerns, and inadequate financial resources (Bellamy and Williams, 2021).

Additional constraints derive from the political limitations imposed by the member states of the United Nations. In the last resort, the efficacy of United Nations' actions is contingent on the willingness of member states to commit adequate funds, troop contributions, and political support to the various peacekeeping and peace operations. Operations conducted under operational constraints limit the effectiveness of the UN's operations as there are disagreements between the member states or when member states show no political will to support any peace missions (Williams, 2023).

Nonetheless, the United Nations remains the strongest international organization actively involved in Africa conflict resolutions. The organization plays a key role in conflict resolution, maintaining stability, peacekeeping operations, aid to civilians and peacebuilding activities in the region. This paper provides an overview on how the UN in Africa works in conflict resolution and provides valuable lessons on how the international organizations might deal with issues relating to conflicts in various African countries, more notably South Sudan whose conflicts have

resulted in catastrophic humanitarian and political crises (Williams, 2023; Tschirgi, Lund and Mancini, 2021).

The thematic analysis is intended to investigate the themes discussed in the study in order to obtain further clarity on the topic relating to conflict resolution in Africa and international organisations. The study focuses on themes relating to conflict nature and regional security in Africa and the part of international organizations in conflicts in Africa. The thematic review will help to integrate the current academic debate in this subject and will highlight the functions performed by the UN in resolving conflict in the African continent, and South Sudan particularly (Williams, 2023).

2.2.1 United Nations Peacekeeping Operations in Africa

War has plagued Africa for years now and the war itself has been the cause of the hindering of politics, economic development and human security within the continent. There is widespread consensus amongst scholars of the opinion that the cause of conflicts within Africa are far from one sided. Indeed, a more common argument is that causal factors leading to conflict in Africa are a complex interwoven mesh of political, social and economic factors in conjunction with the historical backgrounds of most nations within the African continent. These aspects have a tendency to reinforce themselves in turn provide an environment in which violent conflict is far more likely to be the outcome, especially when the governmental structures of that country or those of the whole political system are considered weak (Walensteen, 2021; Williams, 2023). One of the leading factors contributing to conflict within Africa is political instability and the struggles over power that exist amongst the elites of many African states. The political systems within much of the African continent can be characterised by weak institutions of democracy,

low levels of political participation and the hoarding of power by either individuals or small groups within society. Perhaps it is as a direct consequence of this lack of inclusivity in the political distribution of power that Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall (2022) note that grievances are likely to build up amongst marginalized communities that can quickly develop into violent conflict. The unconstitutional change of a country's regime, disputes concerning elections and authoritarian leadership style can further exacerbate a country's political fragility due to the erosive nature that such practices have on public faith in political institutions, often resulting in opposition groups turning to violence to achieve their objectives.

Economic factors are another substantial driver of conflict dynamics within Africa. Mass unemployment, high rates of poverty and extensive inequality create a climate of frustration and discontent across the masses of the population, leading to a ripe ground for the manipulation of these social-economic grievances by those involved in politics, or by those involved in the military seeking to gain the backing of masses to support a violent agenda. Moreover it has been concluded that, many African states have found themselves in the middle of wars that arise out of competition over resources such as oil, minerals, and land. According to Williams (2023), many conflict countries of Africa are resource-abundant and institutionally weak and prone to armed conflict over valuable resources and in such conflicts political elites and armed factions frequently manipulate and exploit natural resources in an effort to expand their scope of the war making it complex to solve.

Social issues like ethnic and identity have a great contribution in many conflicts within Africa. Given that most African communities are made up of groups with varying ethnic, racial, religious, and cultural affiliations, there is potential for tension to arise when any particular group perceives political or economic marginalization. Wallenstein (2021) states that, identity-based

conflicts are typically born out of a community's feeling of exclusion from political power, resource denial and lack of opportunity; these feelings may intensify when the community has historical grievances, faces discrimination, or compete with other groups for control of state institutions. Many leaders often manipulate ethnicity division to mobilize their supporters and widen the rift within society leading to violence (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, 2022).

There are also historical context in Africa, like colonial legacies which have laid the foundations of conflict pattern within the continent. The boundaries demarcated by colonial power contained diverse ethnic groups without considering their prior historical relationship, their existing state systems of governance. Upon their achievement of independence these artificial boundaries resulted in political friction among different groups, causing post-colonial conflicts in African continent. According to Williams (2023), these structures legacies serve as roots to the majority of post-colonial conflicts within the continent by perpetuating weaker state institutions with limited ability to respond to internal diversity and political competition effectively.

The inadequate quality of governance and institutional failure also constitutes the causes of conflict in Africa. Such weak institutions lack capacity in terms of service provision and effective functioning of the rule of law, as well as domestic security. They provide environment in which political conflicts escalate to violent ones due to absence of effective non-violent means to address such disputes. According to Tschirgi, Lund, and Mancini (2021) the weakened state institutions provide a conducive environment for armed actors and militias to rise, usurp state power and potentially prolong the conflict.

The external environment, as well as its local context, could be another important contributing factor to conflict in Africa. International Actors and the region dynamics are playing crucial role to initiate, prolong or conclude conflict in a given state through providing external help to

different parties, creating enabling or hindering environment and/or by influencing international actors to play role in deescalating conflict. Conflicts within a particular state have external linkages that create greater risk for their internationalization or intervention by third party actors because external actors could offer support to different groups in terms of logistical support, financial aid and even through military assistance for political reasons. Therefore, external involvement complicates conflicts in an intractable manner. Furthermore, cross border implications such as trafficking of weapons and armed groups and displacement of refugees could spillover conflicts to regional levels (Wallensteen, 2021; Williams, 2023).

The political, economic, social, and historical issues are strongly associated as vividly evidenced by the South Sudan case. South Sudan, having achieved its independence in 2011, should have enjoyed relative peace and stability; instead, it descended into a violent conflict in 2013 following the political elites' internal disputes which was quickly morphed into violent conflict. It is an interweaving combination of factors such as political power struggles, ethnic tensions and struggles for the control of the country's resources that fuelled the South Sudan's conflict (Williams, 2023).

The South Sudan conflict also illustrates the interaction between African conflicts. Civilian displacement was caused by civil war, with millions of people fleeing to neighbouring countries like Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia and Kenya. International Aid Organization Refugee Aid Organisation International Aid Organization International Aid Organization Refugee Aid Organisation, with burdens of resources and security being borne by these refugees and their host countries.

This created more security issues in cross-border security between neighbouring countries such as Sudan as more of the armed groups operating in the borderlands expanded their activities in neighbouring areas and illustrated the relation between personal conflicts and regional security(Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, 2022).

The fact thatSouth Sudan remains to be under war implies that it is important to address both the short and long term causes of conflicts. Even though a ceasefire agreement and UN peacekeeping mission can bring down the rate of violence in the short run, real peace cannot be realised without solving the other factors of violence such as political marginalisation, poor governance institutions, economic inequalities. According to Tschirgi, Lund and Mancini (2021), sustainable conflict management needs to address the causes of violence through all-encompassing mechanisms which include political reforms, economic development and social reconciliation. Ultimately, the complicated nature of conflict in Africa as evidenced by this case study suggests the interplay of political, economic, social, historical and other factors which lead to far-reaching impacts on the regional stability, economic and humanitarian conditions.

Thus it is imperative to understand how conflict is caused in Africa in order to come up with the best solution.

This will also lay the foundation for future analyses on how UN peacekeeping works, as far as resolving the ongoing conflicts is concerned. In conclusion, UN peacekeeping operation played an indispensable role in mediating conflict and achieving peacebuilding in South Sudan and other areas in Africa, it reduced violence, protection of the population, humanitarian assistance, and advancement of political processes, however, there are challenges such as complexity of conflict, and resource limitations that affectsUN peacekeeping operations effectiveness.

Understanding these elements is essential in analysing how UN contributes to conflict management and developing strategies to overcome challenges of UN peacekeeping in Africa, particularly for countries with ongoing conflict such as South Sudan.

2.2.2 Diplomatic Mediation and Peacebuilding Efforts Diplomatic Mediation and Peacebuilding are the non-military means for conflict resolution, especially in regions such as Africa, plagued by conflict. These measures not only reduce immediate triggers of conflict but also address structural causes of conflict, as well as support peacekeeping efforts to achieve sustainable peace in the long run, by employing diplomacy and its institutional resources (Wallensteen, 2021; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, 2022). Diplomatic Mediation: the process where a disinterested third party assist in direct negotiations between warring parties so as to reach a peaceful conclusion of the dispute (Wallensteen, 2021).

It is considered an indispensable tool for conflict resolution, given that it is based on negotiation, persuasion and compromise, unlike coercion.

As Wallensteen (2021) explains, Mediation is effective for complex conflicts where parties cannot engage directly in negotiations due to high levels of distrust, hostility or years of conflict. The mediator aims to Restore trust, clarify misperceptions, and formulate viable options for both sides. The UN actively intervenes as mediators by appointing Special Envoys, Representatives of the Secretary-General, and establishing diplomatic missions tasked to mediate between warring parties, engaging with government authorities, opposition leaders, armed actors, and civil society groups. According to Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall (2022), mediations not only requires skills for negotiations, but also a good grasp of the political, historical, cultural contexts of a conflict to mediate effectively.

UN diplomacy in Africa often entails cooperation with local actors such as the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

This approach strengthens Mediation effectiveness since regional organizations are often knowledgeable about local dynamics and hold better credibility with stakeholders (Williams, 2023). A significant benefit of diplomatic mediation is that it can facilitate mutually agreeable outcomes for all parties. Nevertheless, it typically necessitates concessions such as power-sharing arrangements, security-sector reform, and compliance monitoring in exchange for peace agreements, and relies upon parties' willingness to comply and international support (Wallensteen, 2021).

Peacebuilding: an approach which focuses on eliminating the roots of conflict and on establishing a foundation for lasting peace, including the development of sustainable institutions of governance, economic growth, and social cohesion (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, 2022).

Unlike mediation whose goal is to end direct conflict, peacebuilding seeks to remove the underlying conditions that might precipitate future conflict. It usually comprises UN activities that provide assistance to the post-conflict environment through democratic governance reforms, reforming justice and security institutions, human rights promotions, and economic development, often in conjunction with national governments and international partners (Williams, 2023).

A key aspect of peacebuilding involves inclusivity and local ownership, with Scholars advocating for active involvement of local communities, civil society organizations, and marginalised groups in the process.

According to Tschirgi, Lund and Mancini (2021), peacebuilding interventions are more likely to be effective when they take into account local dynamics and grievances, as the causes of conflict may also be found at the local level. Diplomatic mediation and peacebuilding initiatives have been evident in the South Sudan conflict. The UN actively mediated negotiations between the warring factions, working closely with regional bodies, to reach the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, which outlined plans for a transitional government. Apart from the diplomatic interventions through mediation the UN also engages in several peacebuilding interventions in South Sudan so as to strengthen the governance institutions and promoting social cohesiveness. The efforts in the area include the assistance in elections process, fostering intercommunal dialogue and also helping to reform security sector agencies. The purpose is to address the structural drivers of conflict and create the context for lasting peace (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, 2022).

Despite their importance, diplomatic mediation and peacebuilding interventions have challenges. Failure by the warring parties to honour the peace agreements is a great challenge to all interventions aimed at fostering peace. Leaders often sign agreements at the behest of the international community, yet without an intent to implement, thus, they perpetuate further conflict. Long term investment and long term international support are generally needed in peace building interventions which is not usually feasible (Wallensteen, 2021).

Other issue of concerns are based on the complexities of current conflict which many involved have divergent interests. That challenges the formation of agreements that will satisfy all conflicting parties. Further poor administrative capacity of poor governance institutions can lead to unsuccessful implementation of interventions after conflict. (Tschirgi, Lund and Mancini, 2021).

Nonetheless, peacebuilding and diplomatic mediation remains relevant as critical interventions in the management of conflicts in the present day. While diplomatic mediation targets on how to bring hostilities to a halt through the creation of peace agreements, peacebuilding on the other hand focuses on underlying factors that drive conflicts and ensure long-term stability. Both can be incorporated as the overarching approach towards conflict resolution and prevention.

2.3 Theoretical Review

Theoretical review basically assesses appropriate theories that seek to provide explanation for a given phenomena being explored. This serves to set the academic foundation of a research project by identifying and describing those theories applicable to the problem under consideration. The study of international conflicts necessitates an engagement with international theory to comprehend causes, role of international organizations, and methods for fostering peace and stability.

The theories selected for this study on the role of the United Nations in conflict resolution in Africa, focusing on South Sudan are: Collective Security Theory, Liberal Institutional Theory and Conflict Transformation Theory. These frameworks offer diverse insights into international cooperation, peacekeeping, conflict management and peace building.

2.3.1 Collective Security Theory

The Collective Security Theory is among the widely recognized theories in International Relations and presents a strategy whereby peace and security can be maintained through collective action of member states. It posits that security in the international system consists of two components: one being individual security, intertwined with overall system security, and the

other, the linkage of a state's security with that of others. Aggression or conflict in a particular state is viewed as a threat to the entire international community, warranting a concerted response (Wallensteen, 2021).

This concept gained traction following World War I, seeking to prevent future conflicts. Initially embodied in the League of Nations and subsequently solidified by the United Nations in 1945, the Charter clearly defines the responsibility of member states in maintaining peace through coordinated diplomatic, economic, and military efforts (Williams, 2023).

The theory suggests that states cooperate through international organizations to maintain security, engage in conflict prevention, mediation, and deployment of peacekeeping missions in crisis regions. The underpinning of modern peacekeeping operations and methods of managing international conflict by the United Nations can thus be traced back to this theory (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, 2022).

This theory is highly relevant to this study, given the UN's participation in the South Sudan conflict, which highlights the importance of collective responsibility in maintaining peace and stability. The dispatch of UNMISS demonstrates international cooperation in response to conflict posing regional and international threats.

While relevant, this theory faces criticism for its dependency on the political will of its members. When major powers refrain from supporting collective security initiatives or prioritize conflicting interests, its efficacy is compromised (Wallensteen, 2021).

2.3.2 Liberal Institutional Theory

Liberal Institutional Theory emphasizes the significance of international institutions and cooperation as mechanisms to achieve peace and mitigate conflict among states. It asserts that

international bodies create an environment for dialogue, cooperation and peaceful dispute resolution by developing rules, norms and processes that reduce uncertainty and enhance predictability in international relations (Keohane, 2021).

According to Liberal Institutional Theory, states that work together through international organizations, like the United Nations, can effectively manage conflicts. The UN serves as a platform for diplomacy, peacekeeping, mediation and humanitarian aid, thereby minimizing the likelihood of armed conflicts. The theory also stresses the importance of international law and multilateral agreements for peace and stability worldwide (Keohane, 2021; Williams, 2023).

A key tenet of the theory is that states are motivated by not only power and self-interest but also by the gains that arise from cooperation. States can coordinate and cooperate towards shared goals (security, economic progress etc) through international institutions, thus the latter becomes vital actors in jointly constructing peace and stability (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2022). This theory is highly relevant because the UN's actions in South Sudan, working to resolve the conflict and foster peace in collaboration with its South Sudanese counterparts, reflects the underlying assumptions of Liberal Institutionalism. The UN has provided a structure for conflict management and stability promotion through its peacekeeping mandate, diplomatic interventions and humanitarian efforts.

Nonetheless, the theory has been criticized for overstating the impact of international institutions on the behavior of member states. The pursuit of national interest can take precedence over international cooperation, limiting the capacity of international organizations to resolve conflicts, particularly given the role of states like the US (Wallensteen, 2021).

security reforms, and national reconciliation (Williams, 2023).

2.3.3 Conflict Transformation Theory

Peace in Motion The Need for Conflict Transformation Theory in the study The theory provides an insight into why many peace processes failed or led to superficial agreements, with a key argument being that the superficial approaches do not engage with the roots and structures of violent conflict, which tend to be embedded in social, political, and economic inequalities.

Conflict transformation (as compared to conflict resolution) tries to find the deeper reasons of conflict and transform these social structures into those that create lasting peace. Conflict

Transformation theory is of use to the study because it challenges static and superficial definitions of peace as ‘the absence of war’ and instead presents peace as an ongoing process, which can be understood as creating a society that addresses the structural inequalities of the past to achieve a more inclusive and sustainable social order.

According to Lederach (2021), as noted above, conflicts can even be positive in that they are a catalyst for change in society if managed properly through the processes of reconciliation, social justice and the creation of new institutions to mediate the disputes between the conflict actors.

The relevance of Conflict Transformation Theory for the study is therefore rooted in its capacity to explain why much of the international effort has been expended on superficial approaches to resolving the crisis in South Sudan. Much has been done in South Sudan to promote and consolidate peace and in line with the UN in which, “the use of Conflict transformation (CT) is to address deep-rooted causes of conflict, transformation of attitudes of people, change of institutions and structural factors within society and promotion of justice for reconciliation” (UN as cited in the report, p1). Conflict Transformation Theory as opposed to traditional conflict resolution processes the, “primary goal is to challenge and transform violent structures and social

systems, which produce and perpetuate conflicts” (Lederach, 2021). This theory helps in understanding the enduring nature of the conflict because it “proposes that conflict transformation should occur through the processes of reconciliation, social justice, institution-building, dialogue, and changing of attitudes” (Lederach, 2021).

Conflict transformation theory helps in challenging the existing frameworks by advocating that "we must challenge all assumptions that conflict inherently leads to destructive outcomes" (Lederach, 2021, p30).

The theory suggests that peace should aim for an "uncovering of structural injustice" and "changing in people attitudes", which must be based on "real structural changes in social relations, institutions and power relations". The application of the Conflict Transformation Theory in the case study will provide an understanding of the failure to attain peace due to failure to transform the underlying causes. This means, it will enable us to evaluate the extent to which interventions in South Sudan may have successfully transformed the structure and root causes of violent conflict and created a framework for sustainable peace.

One critical advantage of CT theory is its focus on non-state actors. CT acknowledges that peace cannot be brought about by leaders alone. Instead, it is up to civil society activists, religious leaders, women groups and ethnic minority groups to come up with peace strategies, which reflect the diverse nature of society (Lederach, 2021).

Therefore, in an ethnically diverse society like South Sudan where, “The dominant politics are defined by identity,” (Mane, 2021), Conflict Transformation theory suggests that for peace to thrive, the local communities needs to be at the centre of peace process and therefore peace could

be possible if the issues of representation of marginalized communities and identity were dealt with in a constructive way.

However, Conflict transformation has its own critics, such as being impractical, that structural change cannot take place through conflict. Moreover, structural transformation require a lot of resource and a sustained commitment over a longer period. Thus Conflict transformation may be not a realistic solution in all conflict circumstances.

2.4 Empirical Review

There is an increasing number of empirical studies examining the various international approaches to conflict resolution and peacekeeping operations in volatile states across the world. The United Nations, various regional organizations, and international NGOs have been engaged in complex efforts to promote sustainable peace and stability in regions experiencing persistent conflict, particularly in Africa.

This literature has explored the efficacy of international interventions, such as peacekeeping deployments, mediated negotiations, and post-conflict reconstruction programs, in mitigating violence, fostering dialogue, and establishing robust institutional frameworks for peace.

Special attention has been given to analyzing the challenges and successes of these efforts in diverse African contexts and, in particular, the case of South Sudan, where a series of attempted peace processes have yet to yield enduring stability. The research reviewed focuses on empirical investigations between 2021 and 2025 and provides critical insights into the role of international bodies in mediating and building peace. Studies on UN Peacekeeping operations and the creation of secure spaces have noted the positive impact on lowering the frequency of clashes.

Williams (2023) undertook a qualitative examination of United Nations peacekeeping missions in African nations such as the DRC, Mali, and South Sudan using field observations and operational reports. His work confirms that the presence of peacekeepers aids in de-escalation by facilitating the safe conditions necessary for political negotiations and humanitarian aid distribution. The research also highlighted the protective function of UN peacekeepers in shielding civilians from widespread assault.

Conversely, the study pointed out obstacles like logistical difficulties, resource shortages, and the complexity of operating in multifactional settings, concluding that peacekeeping operations are vital for state stabilization but not alone for resolving civil conflicts.

Comparative analysis of global conflict resolution strategies has also been prevalent, emphasizing the significance of mediation. Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall (2022) employed a mixed-methods approach in a study comparing conflict resolution strategies, particularly concerning international mediation and peacebuilding efforts in civil conflicts. By analyzing peace negotiations alongside conflict data, their study provided substantial evidence that mediation led by international entities significantly increases the likelihood of reaching mediated settlements. This research also concluded that peace agreements supported by the international community tend to be better implemented, due to the provision of monitoring mechanisms and guarantees to the conflicting parties, ultimately reducing the risk of continued hostilities.

The United Nations' role in post-conflict peacebuilding in African states has also been a subject of significant research.

De Coning (2022) carried out a qualitative study focusing on UN peacebuilding interventions in African states post-conflict. The methodology involved examining policy documents and interviewing practitioners. Findings from his research suggested that peacebuilding initiatives focused on improving governance, promoting political inclusion, and strengthening local ownership of the peace process were the most effective for achieving lasting stability.

De Coning's study also revealed the inadequacy of externally driven initiatives that lack the inclusion of local stakeholders. His conclusion indicated the need to strike a balance between international support and the active engagement of local communities in peace processes.

Along these lines, Autesserre (2021) provided an empirical research on the international peace interventions and their influence on the conflict processes at the local level. The paper has used a qualitative research method of field based research and case analysis of peacekeeping and humanitarian interventions in conflict prone areas. The information was gained by interviewing the international peace workers, the local communities, and examining the operational reports. The results of the findings showed that international interventions, even that of the United Nations, help to reduce large-scale violence, but however, they fail to pay much attention to the local-level violence and community interactions that could jeopardize the peaceful state in the long-run. The paper underpinned the role of grassroots mobilization and local conflict management strategies in attaining sustainable peace. It came to the conclusion that involving local views in the international peacekeeping and mediation processes positively influences the efficiency of the conflict resolving strategies.

Wallenstein (2021) conducted a global empirical analysis focusing on the effectiveness of peace agreements and international conflict resolution mechanisms in resolving armed conflicts. The

study used quantitative data drawn from international conflict databases covering several decades of peace negotiations and agreements. Through statistical analysis, the study found that peace agreements supported by international organizations tend to produce more stable outcomes compared to agreements negotiated without international involvement. The research also demonstrated that the presence of peacekeeping missions significantly increases the durability of peace agreements by monitoring compliance and deterring violations. However, the study emphasized that peace agreements alone are not sufficient to ensure sustainable peace unless they are accompanied by broader political reforms, economic recovery programs, and efforts to address the root causes of conflict.

Tschirgi, Lund, and Mancini (2021) conducted an empirical study examining the role of preventive diplomacy and international conflict prevention initiatives in fragile states. The research adopted a qualitative methodology that analyzed case studies of conflict prevention programs implemented by international organizations across several regions, including Africa. Data were collected from policy reports, field studies, and interviews with policymakers involved in conflict prevention initiatives. The findings revealed that early diplomatic intervention and preventive diplomacy can significantly reduce the likelihood of violent conflicts escalating into full-scale civil wars. The study also highlighted the importance of collaboration between international organizations and regional institutions in implementing effective conflict prevention strategies. According to the researchers, coordinated international engagement is essential for addressing the structural conditions that often lead to violent conflict, including political exclusion, economic inequality, and weak governance institutions.

Bellamy and Williams (2021) conducted a comprehensive empirical assessment of modern peacekeeping operations and their impact on conflict management and civilian protection. The

study adopted a mixed-method research design that combined statistical analysis of peacekeeping deployments with qualitative case studies of several United Nations missions. The findings showed that the presence of peacekeeping forces significantly reduces the likelihood of renewed violence in post-conflict environments by providing security guarantees and monitoring ceasefire agreements. The research further indicated that multidimensional peacekeeping missions that integrate military, political, and humanitarian components are more effective in stabilizing conflict environments compared to traditional ceasefire monitoring missions. The study concluded that peacekeeping operations remain a critical instrument for international conflict management, particularly in regions experiencing prolonged instability.

An empirical study focusing specifically on the conflict in South Sudan was conducted by Williams (2023), which examined the role of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in protecting civilians and supporting peace negotiations. The study employed a case study research design and analyzed reports from United Nations agencies, humanitarian organizations, and policy institutions involved in the South Sudan peace process. The findings revealed that UNMISS played a crucial role in protecting thousands of civilians displaced by violence by establishing protection sites where internally displaced persons could seek refuge. These protection sites provided safe environments for civilians who were at risk of attacks from armed groups. The study also found that the mission contributed to facilitating diplomatic negotiations among conflicting parties and supported the implementation of peace agreements aimed at ending the civil war. However, the research also identified several challenges faced by the mission, including security risks, logistical difficulties, and limited cooperation from political actors involved in the conflict.

Another empirical study conducted by Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall (2022) examined

the broader effectiveness of international peacebuilding initiatives in post-conflict societies. The study analyzed several peacebuilding programs implemented by international organizations in conflict-affected countries. Data were collected from program evaluations, policy reports, and interviews with international peacebuilding practitioners. The findings indicated that peacebuilding initiatives that focus on strengthening governance institutions, promoting economic recovery, and fostering social reconciliation significantly contribute to long-term political stability. However, the study also emphasized that peacebuilding programs require sustained political commitment and long-term financial investment in order to achieve meaningful results.

Consistent across all empirical literature, international involvement is a critical component in addressing and mediating conflict in fragile environments. Peacekeeping operations, mediation efforts, and peacebuilding programs executed by UN and other international actors have made a significant contribution to conflict management, especially in the African context in which numerous internal wars have been occurring and peace initiatives launched have worked at reducing violence and aiding the path to peace (Williams 2023, Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall 2022). However, such interventions have faced a wide range of hindrances such as lack of funds, complex nature of conflict dynamics, and lack of support from domestic actors that undermine their effectiveness. Nevertheless, international mechanisms of conflict resolution have played an indispensable role in consolidating peace and stability in conflict ravaged regions as peacekeepers have protected civilians and have enabled the establishment of environments for negotiations whereas mediation has mediated dialogues between warring parties. Further efforts towards consolidating peace by addressing root causes and supporting governance structures have been the remit of peacebuilding mechanisms.

As a whole, empirical literature emphasizes the relevance and centrality of international engagement in present-day conflict resolution endeavors. These research works shed some light into the processes through which international entities engage in peacekeeping and conflict management in Africa, which are of crucial relevance to this study and thus requires examination into how effective the UN has been in conflict resolution, with particular reference to the conflict in South Sudan.

2.5 Gaps in the literature

While a vast body of work on conflict resolution and peacekeeping exists and offers many valuable insights on the nature and causes of conflicts and how international organizations can contain them, several gaps remain. The literature has largely addressed conflict dynamics, reasons for civil wars, peacekeeping success and failure, and mediation strategies (Wallensteen, 2021). Researchers have addressed peacebuilding strategies and assessed the effectiveness of the United Nations in mediating various international conflicts and assisting in the maintenance of peace, especially in regions such as Africa (Williams, 2023; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2022). However, even though the scholarship in this area has proliferated over the years, some areas of research remain underdeveloped. Numerous studies have taken place which in general terms focus on how global peacekeeping operations have been or not been effective and also comparative research which has examined the effectiveness of international intervention mechanisms in several countries/regions (Wallensteen, 2021; Tschirgi, Lund and Mancini, 2021). Such works provide useful general information, but they overlook the context of socio-political dynamics, which affect the specific nature of a conflict, thereby necessitating further country-specific research that highlights the functioning of international interventions in

particular contexts.

Another area of research not fully covered by existing literature is the interaction between international intervention and regional security dynamics. Extensive research on peacekeeping interventions has discussed this issue, predominantly in terms of the conflict management aspect in national states. Nonetheless, civil wars often extend their impact beyond borders by sparking refugee flows and rebel spillover, which could ultimately become regional security threats (Tschirgi, Lund and Mancini, 2021; Wallenstein, 2021). Although a number of scholars acknowledge the regional repercussions of internal wars, further research is needed on how the effective functioning of international peacekeeping initiatives contribute in managing the regional dimensions of these conflicts.

Additionally, although many studies examine peacekeeping operations in Africa, few concentrate on the specific success and failures of particular United Nations peacekeeping missions in mediating protracted civil wars. There is particularly limited research that looks into the long term impact of UN peacekeeping operations on political stability, governance and post-conflict recovery in African states. Such a need is evident especially with regards to the conflict in South Sudan that began in December 2013 and has thus continued to create immense challenges for the country and security in the region. While several issues surrounding the conflict in South Sudan have been considered in the literature, only a limited in-depth analysis has been undertaken of the role of UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in mediating and contributing to the peacebuilding process.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Theoretical Framework

For this study, we will utilize the theory of Collective Security. The theory of Collective Security
The concept of Collective Security was proposed first by Woodrow Wilson following World War I, and the idea of Collective Security became widespread when the League of Nations was formed in 1919. Later on, in 1945, the concept of Collective Security was consolidated worldwide with the advent of the United Nations.

Collective security theory is part of International Relations theory and it offers a conceptual framework for establishing and maintaining peace and security by taking collective actions by states to ensure international peace.

In simple terms, it's the idea that an attack against one state should be seen as an attack against all and thus should trigger a joint, coordinated international response to security threats.

Wallenstein (2021) define Collective Security as “a strategy by states, or a group of states, by which they pledge to take appropriate collective measures, including the use of armed force when necessary, against any state threatening or initiating use of aggression. The theory is based on some key principles: The principle of collective responsibility for security. Collective security theory maintains that peace and security should not solely lie with individual states, but rather with the international community.

In essence, states are supposed to combine to uphold and preserve international security and stability, particularly when one or more states resort to the use of force or other acts of aggression.

The principle of joint action against aggression. According to collective security, states are expected to cooperate and unite their efforts diplomatically, economically and militarily against any states threatening the peace of the international system by resort to force. It was precisely this idea of joint action against aggressor states that led to the creation of international organizations like the League of Nations and, more importantly, the United Nations.

International cooperation and Multilateralism The Collective security theory places emphasis on international cooperation and multilateralism to achieve international peace and security.

According to this theory, states need to cooperate and rely on international institutions rather than their national self-interests, if peace is to be achieved and maintained in the international system. When a conflict breaks out, international institutions such as the United Nations resort to peacekeeping operations, negotiations, mediation, economic and political sanctions and provision of humanitarian aid to address such conflicts and restore peace.

The use of peacekeeping and peacebuilding mechanisms to ensure global stability Collective security theory holds that the use of peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations can ensure global stability.

Peacekeeping missions and other mechanisms that include negotiation, deployment of peacekeeping forces, use of sanctions, military intervention, peacebuilding initiatives, and reconstruction programmes post-conflict, are employed by the United Nations to address the root

causes of conflicts and establish lasting peace and stability in the conflict affected areas.

According to Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall (2022), "collective security means that a threat to one state constitutes a threat to all states, which should then respond with appropriate measures to contain, deter, and/or defeat the threat thereby upholding collective international norms, laws, and values." The importance of international organizations in maintaining peace and stability It is important to mention that, international organizations such as the United Nations play an indispensable role in implementing collective security principles. The UN provides an umbrella for member states to collaborate towards solving various conflictual issues around the world by the protection of vulnerable populations and the restoration of peace.

Relevance to this Study The Collective Security theory is very significant for this research since it explains how the United Nations contributes to conflict resolution and peacekeeping operations in Africa and in particular in South Sudan.

Furthermore, the theory sheds light on the mechanisms through which the United Nations intervene in conflict and how collective international actions are undertaken by states to promote peace, security and political stability in conflict-torn areas.

3.1.1 Basic Assumptions of the Theory

The theory of Collective Security relies on certain fundamental assumptions to be effective in the prevention and resolution of conflict. The first of these is the notion of an indivisible security which means that the security of one country is inextricably linked to the security of other states. If one state is subjected to violence or aggression, it will undoubtedly affect the peace in other

surrounding countries thereby threatening the security of a particular region and, at large, of the whole world.

For these reasons, global stakeholders must coordinate their efforts to avert the escalating of any crisis (Wallensteen, 2021).

The second hypothesis states that there is a collective responsibility amongst states to guarantee world security and peace. This suggests that states have to forgo the settlement of disputes in a bilateral manner and collaborate through the agency of various international bodies to tackle threats. International efforts may entail negotiation sessions, the implementation of economic sanctions, or the employment of armed troops for peace restoration. In his opinion, Williams (2023) considers international bodies like the UN as avenues where states strategize their responses to security threats and crises.

The third of the principal assumptions underlying the theory is the fact that international bodies may play a neutral role in conflict areas.

These organizations serve as meeting points for conflicting parties to initiate discussions, mediate for an end to violence and monitor peacekeeping efforts. Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall (2022) highlight the indispensability of international organizations to foster collaboration among nations and establish security systems for them to function. Finally, it is assumed that joint action can successfully contain aggression and preclude the further expansion of conflict.

States will be reluctant to use violent means against any individual state when they realize that such actions would provoke joint global response. This is among the crucial benefits of collective security systems, i.e., enabling nations to settle disputes without escalating them into

warfare (Wallensteen, 2021). 3.1.2 Application of the Theory The Collective Security Theory is relevant to explaining the operations and conflict resolution mechanisms of international organizations worldwide.

Collective security as a theory finds expression in international organizations that promote collective action for threat resistance.

A prominent manifestation of this theory in the contemporary international system is the United Nations. The organization's endeavors to deter the exacerbation of conflict, to preserve peace and promote the stability of volatile regions through peacekeeping operations, diplomatic negotiations, and humanitarian aid are exemplary (Williams, 2023). One of the most obvious practical illustrations of Collective Security is the use of United Nations Peacekeeping operations. Peacekeeping missions usually involve deploying international military personnel into conflict zones in an attempt to ensure that the peace is kept and protected, assist civilians, and facilitate negotiations for a settlement.

These activities align with the tenet of the theory, which posits that peacekeeping must be done in the entire international system to maintain stability (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2022).

As a case of its application, Collective security Theory was brought into play to deal with the conflict in South Sudan. Political tensions in South Sudan erupted into civil war in 2013, just two years after the nation declared independence. The ensuing war devastated communities, led to immense loss of life and massive displacement of people.

After the war escalated, threatening not only the stability within South Sudan but also in the region of Eastern Africa, the global community deployed peacekeepers to the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). UNMISS mission was tasked with defending citizens, providing assistance for the provision of humanitarian aid, and enabling peace negotiations. UNMISS succeeded in pacifying the conflict in the country by safeguarding citizens in designated safe zones, enforcing cease-fire agreements, and mitigating the growth of conflict.

The actions of UNMISS are clear demonstration of how collective security principles can be implemented to address the conflicts that pose risks to both domestic and regional peace (Williams, 2023).

Cooperation was established at the global and regional levels as well as in the context of the utilization of principles of collective security in the case of South Sudan. African Union, IGAD and other organizations were assisting the UN in mediating the conflict and providing space for political discussions among different parties engaged in war. This cooperative approach also represents the broader notion of collective security with its reliance on common efforts of states and institutions to address threats against the world order.

But although collective security theory can play very important roles, it does face various practical challenges too. Among the major concerns there should be the efficiency of collective security mechanisms as the political will of member countries is sometimes very crucial for consenting to global interventions. The states sometimes share no common interests and no will to invest on peacekeeping operation which diminishes the potential effectiveness of the institutions.

Logistical and operative stress that may encounter in complex war scenarios is another concern for peacekeeping missions.

Nevertheless, Collective Security Theory remain to provide a relevant Framework For Analyzing the Impact of IOs on conflict resolution. This approach can show a pragmatic vision about how states working with each other can contribute to resolving conflicts and maintain a worldwide peace. In this work, collective security can serve to explain what UN can do to bring about peace in Africa and the necessity of global attention over conflicts such as that one existing in the south of the Sudan.

3.2 Hypotheses

A hypothesis is an educated guess about the relationship between a dependent variable and an independent variable, and is developed in a form to be testable by means of empirical research. A hypothesis provides a clear road map to a research process by translating the objectives into testable propositions that will be either refuted or confirmed with the assistance of data analysis.

Null Hypotheses

H0: UN peacekeeping missions in South Sudan haven't played a crucial role in solving the conflict in the country.

H2: UN diplomatic mediation and peace-building efforts in South Sudan have failed to contribute significantly to the establishment of peace in the country.

3.3 Research Design

Research design is a systematic blueprint which a researcher devises to conduct research in order to achieve his objectives, as well as to provide answers to research questions. Research Design defines the steps for gathering information to analyze and to make informed decisions about a subject. It's defined as the strategy by which the researcher will address the research problem and answer specific questions by "delineating a systematic plan to collect, analyse and interpret a data. According to Creswell, (2021). Therefore, this research will be a qualitative case study research. The qualitative research approach is most suitable as the aim of this study is to investigate UN's role in conflict resolution in Africa using South Sudan as a case study. The case study approach would permit detailed investigation of a given case. Such method can be extremely effective in cases of the kind relevant here and to international studies and conflict resolution studies, in that, the relevant processes and complexities of political and institutional dimensions can be illustrated well in a case study approach.

Secondary sources of data primarily used for the purpose of this research includes: scholarly journals, books, policy documents and international institutional reports. More specifically, documentation on the activity of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) was consulted to examine the contribution of the organization in addressing the conflict in South Sudan.

3.4 Method of Data Collection

Method of data collection is the process whereby researcher uses specific tools or strategies to gather necessary data from existing or potential participants or sources. These methods also allow researcher to test theories and hypothesis, determine which theories are most plausible. Therefore, a method of collecting data defines procedures used for collection of data, whether

quantitative or qualitative, in an effective way.

As explained in the previous section, the study follows qualitative approach which requires secondary sources of data. These data refer to sources previously collected by other institutions or scholars. In order to acquire these sources of data, an extensive research based on sources such as journals articles, books, official reports, and policy documents of international organization was used. The literature, for example, provides evidence on processes that leads to political crisis in Africa and policies taken to tackle them and particularly, the activities of international institutions such as the United Nations, which has played a crucial role in conflict resolution and peacekeeping in the continent (Creswell, 2021). In relation to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, specific attention was paid to the reports of the organization describing UNMISS's role in the peace building and political development process in the country. In addition, policy reports, conference papers, and publications of regional organizations in charge of peace building in Africa were useful in order to comprehend approaches to peacekeeping, the role of different international institutions and political dynamics in the concerned areas.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

In this study, the technique used for data analysis was the content analysis technique. The content analysis method is a qualitative research technique that entails the researcher analyzing, interpreting and systematically investigating the information gained from documental and secondary sources of information. Krippendorff (2018) asserts that content analysis is an analysis method that can enable the researcher to detect patterns, themes, meanings, and relationships among text in order to reach informed and understandable conclusions.

Content analysis was appropriate for this study as it was mainly of qualitative nature, and mainly involved the use of secondary data such as; textbooks, academic journal articles, United Nations official documents, governmental reports and policies, internet sites, and scholarly publications on conflict resolution and peacekeeping in South Sudan.

Content analysis was thus used to closely study and examine relevant documents and resources to establish common patterns, institutional approaches, setbacks, and successes concerning the role of the United Nations in conflict resolution in South Sudan. This method also helped the researchers to investigate and correlate different perspectives offered by the experts and to correlate the conclusions drawn to the hypotheses and goals of the study.

The analyzed data have thus been discussed using descriptive and narratorial themes which facilitate the understanding and comprehension of the matter discussed, thereby, providing content analysis with a reliable framework to investigate the part played by the United Nations in conflict resolution in South Sudan for peace and security.

3.6 Logical Data Framework Table

Research Questions	Hypotheses	Major Variables	Empirical Indicators	Method of Data Collection	Sources of Data	Method of Data Analysis
1. How effective are UN peacekeeping operations in resolving conflict in South Sudan?	H ₀₂ : UN peacekeeping operations have not significantly contributed to conflict resolution in South Sudan.	Independent: Peacekeeping operations Dependent: Conflict reduction	Reduction in violence, protection of civilians, ceasefire monitoring	Secondary data	UNMISS reports, academic literature, policy briefs	Descriptive analysis
2. What role does diplomatic mediation play in conflict	H ₀₃ : UN mediation has not significantly enhanced conflict	Independent: Mediation efforts Dependent:	Peace agreements, dialogue processes, negotiation outcomes	Secondary data	UN documents, AU/IGAD reports, journals	Content analysis

resolution	resolution	Political
in South	in South	stability
Sudan?	Sudan.	

As clearly depicted by the table above, it clearly illustrates the inclusion of the research questions, hypothesis and variables used in the study systematically. Each research question is related to the hypothesis to be tested and involves the usage of a qualitative examination of available secondary sources of data. Variables are those factors that are used in the study in the cause-and-effect analysis while, empirical indicators are the factual manifestations which have been taken to gauge those variables.

Data collected as indicated in the table shows reliance on sources of information from documentary resources like reports, literature and other documents from the UN.

The collected data is finally analyzed by use of descriptive content and content analysis method which aims to find trends that would facilitate the drawing of a conclusion on the involvement of the United Nations in peace settlement, particularly South Sudan.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, analysis of the secondary data relating to the role of the UN in the resolution of the African continent, through the case of South Sudan. It is informed by United Nations' publications, policy papers, journal articles, humanitarian reports, books, publications of regional and international organisations engaged in peacekeeping and conflict resolution activities. This chapter will follow a qualitative research approach in analysing the data, using the thematic research design which is in keeping with the research design and logical framework of data presentation laid out in chapter three. Data in this chapter analysed under specific sub-topics to illustrate how effective UN peacekeeping, diplomacy and peace building activities and humanitarian intervention operations in South Sudan, in the period of 2019-2024. To substantiate the hypothesis of this study, the chapter analyses some of the most essential features of the conflict along with UNMISS, as well as UN other organisations or institutions involved in peace-making in South Sudan. Civilian Protection; humanitarian aid; Mediation; Institutional Reforms and issues that influence South Sudan's conflict resolution programmes have been specifically examined.

4.1 The peacekeeping operations

of the UN have had no significant impact in the resolution of the conflicts in South Sudan. In an effort to investigate the hypothesis of the research, this chapter analysed the main United Nations' peacekeeping and humanitarian operations and their respective contributions to South Sudan, in the period of 2019 to 2024, highlighting the impact in the areas of civil population protection, conflict prevention, provision of humanitarian support, and advancement of political processes in the peace process.

4.1.1 Civilian Protection and Humanitarian assistance

One of the primary and significant responsibilities of the United Nations in South Sudan

(UNMISS), has been the Protection of Civilians (PoC). More millions displaced internally and from their ethnic group communities due to ethnic conflicts, and political unrest following the start of civil war in December 2013, has brought ethnic conflicts and civilian deaths due to inter-communal and inter-state conflicts across the country. UNMISS implemented Protection of Civilians (PoC) sites across different locations in the country between 2019 to 2024, where people seeking protection were able to go to these sites.

The protection sites, serve as areas where the displaced person can seek physical protection and human rights aid. During the recent clashes between government forces and armed group leaders in the country, thousands of internally displaced persons had left the camps, or had been living outside the camps due to displacement. However in some parts of South Sudan, with high risks of conflict between armed groups, the risk to the general public from attacks from armed groups has reduced.

The UN also undertook humanitarian interventions, including support for food assistance, medical services and water supply through its specialised agencies such as WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF. These interventions helped to mitigate the effects of malnutrition and famine, reduce mortality rates, and increase living standards of various groups in South Sudan. They prevented widespread epidemic outbreaks and supported in rebuilding communities infrastructure and agricultural sector.

In many instances, however, insecurity, weak infrastructure, and flooding and attacks on aid workers all complicated humanitarian operations. In some instances, humanitarian organizations faced challenges to entering remote conflict zones because of insecurity and logistical issues.

However, despite these limitations, the United Nations was one of the main humanitarian relief organisations in South Sudan during this reporting period.

Implications for Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Assistance

As the United Nations plays its part to ensure that the security of South Sudanese civilians is upheld, so that humanitarian needs can be addressed, it also supports the overall aim of preventing conflict and providing assistance in this war torn region. Therefore it clearly goes against Hypothesis One that the peace keeping operations has no significant impact on the conflict in South Sudan, as the above points indicate it has a clear and important function, particularly where civilian and humanitarian concerns are relevant.

4.1.2 Peace keeping Operations and ceasefire Monitoring

The United Nations is helping to resolve the conflict in South Sudan not only in relation to its civilian and humanitarian activities but also in relation to peacekeeping operations and the monitoring of ceasefires. UNMISS is attempting to reduce armed violence by deploying its own peace keepers; civilian and military staff, to observe events and diffuse the tensions in places at a higher risk of conflict. In relation to this, the peace keeping operations have patrolled actively in conflict areas; to reduce armed group activity and encourage people in the conflict ridden zones to support the peace agreement. The missions have improved the dialogue between communities and peace keeping personnel thereby relieving anxieties and concerns for residents living in such zones. The UN has assisted the various parties in conflict with putting their ceasefire agreements into action, and their personnel have been observing these agreements closely and reporting any infringements by armed groups. In so doing the UN peacekeeping operations has reduced severe conflicts occurring within South Sudan.

The actions of peacekeeping personnel have dissuaded armed group activity on a number of

occasions, preventing violence against civilians and against one another. Additionally the presence of peace keepers in conflict areas has provided safe operating spaces for humanitarian organizations and peace makers. However, such interventions in South Sudan have been seriously hindered by the nature of the war, with its complex web of political divisions and ethnic factions and the number of armed groups. Many practical problems exist too; for instance roads and infrastructure were poor and seasonal floods would cause areas to become impassable which impeded the work of peacekeepers. There are also instances of armed groups breaching ceasefire agreements even with peace keepers on the ground; this highlights the short comings of peace keeping when a political consensus is not on the agenda.

Impact on Peace Keeping Operations and Ceasefire Monitoring The peacekeeping missions to the country have undeniably played an important role in calming conflict and securing civilians against violence. Despite setbacks the evidence shows that UN peacekeeping forces in the areas of ceasefire monitoring and violence reduction has had an positive effect in mitigating the conflict. Even despite the continued challenges the evidence points to peacekeeping operations playing a significant role in the process of conflict stabilization. Therefore Hypothesis one is contradicted.

4.The conflict in South Sudan gave rise to one of the largest and most challenging refugee responses in Africa, displacing many millions between 2019 and 2024. This mass movement of people is a direct result of years of conflict, ongoing political instability, tribal conflicts, economic problems and in the case of economic challenges – caused by prolonged conflicts - were the main factors in driving ongoing displacements. Those displaced, primarily to neighboring Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda – although many also remain internally displaced.

The UN, with assistance from its High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), had a central role to play in the humanitarian aspects of the refugee crisis, by supporting initiatives inside and outside of the country in the form of refugee protection and humanitarian relief such as food assistance, temporary shelters, primary health care services, access to potable water, and education for children of those displaced by conflict. By offering protection, food assistance, shelter, primary healthcare services and by helping neighbors accommodate refugees, the UN was able to curb a further exacerbation of a worsening humanitarian situation. UNHCR partnered with other regional organisations to reduce the impacts of these large numbers of refugees entering neighboring states.

Despite this effort, the UN also took steps to create security protocols for those in displaced persons' camps including the safety and protection of women and children who are the most vulnerable and faced high levels of sexual violence and malnutrition, limited access to healthcare and education. These humanitarian interventions, including women and child safety measures, gender protection and mental health counselling helped protect women and children from numerous threats.

Another aspect of UN operations was providing humanitarian aid during times of natural disasters or outbreaks of diseases. South Sudan was severely impacted by massive floods during the reporting period and had a dire humanitarian impact on affected communities and contributed to widespread food insecurity. UN agencies helped address the issue by increased their assistance to affected communities through providing food assistance, emergency relief and healthcare services.

Nonetheless, humanitarian conditions continued to be problematic, with widespread lack of security for humanitarian aid workers as well as frequent attacks and restricted access to areas

under conflict. Floodings and inadequate transport routes hindered relief deliveries in remote areas and funding gaps often created difficulties for humanitarian organisations to support all those displaced.

Yet, the engagement of UN in addressing the refugee issue contributed greatly to mitigate the humanitarian effects of the conflict. Without it the refugee situation could have had exacerbated to even higher death rates and more humanitarian crises.

Implications for Refugee Crisis and Humanitarian Stability

The United Nations' responses and actions on refugees, particularly through its support of humanitarian activities both within and outside of South Sudan helped protect and maintain humanitarian stability in the country. It can be concluded that peacekeeping operations have played a positive role in managing the conflict and stabilizing the situation. Therefore, hypothesis one, that UN peacekeeping has no significant impact on conflict management and humanitarian stabilization in South Sudan, is not supported by the data.

4.1.4 UNMISS and Political Stabilization

The involvement of UNMISS was another contribution towards political stability and peacekeeping efforts in South Sudan, alongside other UN agencies. UNMISS provided military peacekeeping support to South Sudan, as well as involved in political engagement with parties to the conflict and assisted in good governance to secure peace.

UN officials participated in political mediation between various groups and leaders in South Sudan to implement the agreement on the revitalization of a resolution to the conflict that aimed at establishing a transitional government and to reduce political tensions within the country. UN

peacekeeping efforts helped defuse tensions through talks between various ethnic groups and strengthened peaceful dialogue and community based conflict resolution processes.

In addition to the provision of political mediation services and peacebuilding processes, UNMISS has assisted South Sudan in its political, governance and security reforms aimed at strengthening the state institutions, democratic processes and the rule of law. These initiatives help reduce the structural causes of conflict caused by political exclusion of communities within the state. The UN also highlighted the issue of human rights violations and encouraged accountability for these actions by those involved in such incidents, thus increasing the international community's attention on the humanitarian situation in South Sudan and pressurizing the political parties to comply with the humanitarian principles.

Despite these efforts, the efforts toward establishing lasting peace were hampered by intra-elites competition and by the non-compliance with agreements for peace among parties, due to mutual distrust among groups. Some of these groups resorted to the perpetuation of violence even while the negotiations and international pressure continued. The governance structures were weak in South Sudan, making it challenging for the government to manage both governance reforms and peace building initiatives. Furthermore, corruption and lack of funds, along with pervasive insecurity and economic instability, made it difficult for effective state institutions to be established and maintain peace and development.

Even with these challenges, UNMISS was instrumental in keeping the political discussions alive and prevented a total breakdown of the peace process, by mediating between political factions and maintaining international engagement with the conflict in South Sudan.

Implications for UNMISS and Political Stabilization

Through its support of dialogue, peacebuilding, and political reforms, UNMISS contributed positively towards the stabilization and management of the conflict in South Sudan. In light of the information provided above, the United Nations peacekeeping mission in South Sudan has had a significant positive effect on peace and stability. Consequently, hypothesis one, that UN peacekeeping has no significant impact on conflict management and humanitarian stabilization in South Sudan, is not supported by the evidence.

The overall analysis demonstrated that the UN peacekeeping missions in South Sudan from 2019-2024 have had a positive impact on the resolution of the conflict and stability in the country. These efforts covered civilian protection, humanitarian aid, ceasefire monitoring, refugee management and political stabilization, as well as mediated between parties, facilitated peace and Reconciliation, and minimized human losses due to the conflict. Although peacekeeping missions were unsuccessful in certain areas and faced many challenges, the mission had a clear positive influence on conflict resolution and humanitarian stability in South Sudan.

Therefore, the UN peacekeeping has not greatly contributed to peace building in South Sudan, meaning that hypothesis one is rejected.

1.3 The refugee crisis and Humanitarian Stability

4.2 Diplomatic mediation and peacebuilding initiatives of the United Nations have not significantly enhanced political stability in South Sudan.

To test this hypothesis, the study examined the diplomatic mediation efforts, peacebuilding initiatives, institutional support programs, and collaborative peace processes implemented by the United Nations in South Sudan between 2019 and 2024. The analysis focused on the extent to

which these initiatives contributed to political dialogue, reconciliation, governance reforms, and long-term stability in the country.

4.2.1 United Nations Mediation and Peace Agreements

Diplomatic Mediation as a UN tool to help resolve the conflict in South Sudan. Diplomacy played a key role for South Sudan to end their civil war in 2013, the UN was constantly involved in political talks with opposing sides and even military regional talks. The role of Diplomacy between 2019-2024 was very central, it was used as a tool to end political tensions, and encourage reconciliation amongst the South Sudanese population.

With the help of the UN, they managed to get parties negotiating to follow the steps that were included in the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS), these plans had the intention to end hostilities, have an interim unity government and create a lasting peace.

This peace accord was considered a diplomatic success, as it set up structures for power to be shared between political opposition, and even govern-ing groups of the population. With an interim arrangement in the pipeline for a power-sharing plan, all parties including govern-ment and opposition had pledged to engage with all points of the deal. This plan, had provisions of a ceasefire, changes in constitution, institutional reforms and others, designed to secure stability. The United Nations lent a hand in this process of nego-tiation through diplom-atic and technical assistance.

Moreover, every time the situation seemed to flare up, officials would call leaders for discussions, with support of international parties, they continued negotiations, preventing civil war from breaking out on a mass level again during this study period.

The UN provided assistance with trans-itional justice, national reconciliation and national unity in addition to their negotiations, showing the need for a governing body that would serve all ethnic groups in the country and have inclusive politics for sustained peace, thereby resolving past enmities and encouraging future com-munication. However, these success-es were not without setbacks. Many parties to the accord lost their faith due to a lack of enforce-ment and concerns surrounding the peace treaty and power-sharing agreements.

Between each party to the war, conflicts ensued regarding security reforms, integration of forces and division of power. Some even managed to violate ceasefire and perpetrate violence during their diplomatic nego-tiations. The mistrust was also another challenge; because of the history of grievances and divisions within eth-nic groups it made compromise nearly impossible.

For ex-ample, some lead-ers prioritized personal gains over peace and stability, thus hinder-ing the success of diplo-macy.

Overall, these diplomatic efforts by the UN, while limited, were able to help alleviate and prevent further escalation of violence, as without them the politicized system may have degenerated to a worse, prolonged war. Implications for United Nations Mediation and Peace Agreements The UN was instrumental in achieving success in diplomacy in South Sudan. This evidence contradicts Hypothesis Two. 4.2.2 Peacebuilding and Institutional Reforms In addition to diplomacy, the UN employed other peacebuilding tactics to resolve issues in South Sudan.

One crucial strategy was strengthening governance institutions to foster long-term political stability and human rights.

In this, the UN aided the country by advising governmental bodies on judicial, legal and civil procedures and constitutional reform. The goal was to fortify the capacity of the nation's governmental framework in hopes of de-escalating tensions that could fuel future conflicts. Also supported was democratic government and inclusive political processes that incorporated various ethnicities and groups within society.

Peacebuilding initiatives from the UN also emphasize the importance of accountability, transparency and human rights, aiming to rebuild trust in institutions and their capacity to provide such fundamental rights and serve the public interest. Promotion of Human rights also played a vital role for peacebuilding in South Sudan. Security personnel and armed troops violated these rights throughout the conflict, recorded and reported by human rights teams and their reports increased awareness among political leaders as to human rights standards.

Moreover, reconciliation efforts at the community level have also had considerable influence on peacebuilding. In several regions of South Sudan, the communal and ethnic conflict continued to worsen the situation by escalating violent conflict. As a result, The United Nations intervened by supporting reconciliation processes between affected communities.

Such peacebuilding interventions with the participation of community elders and other stakeholders including the civil society, youth and women, were organized on preventing conflict and strengthening social cohesion.

The role played by the United Nations and African Union and IGAD have played by way of other interventions. The economic and developmental interventions have also contributed to peacebuilding process. The United Nations assisted in humanitarian interventions aimed at livelihood support, education, health care and food security in conflict areas. This intervention was of great importance given that social and economic instability, and poverty, among others have led to the existing social and political disturbances in South Sudan. However, while such efforts contributed to peacebuilding process, the interventions encountered some challenges.

For example, instability in South Sudan, weak governance institutions, and economic problems posed a continued threat to the state political stability.

Intercommunal violence continued despite some initiatives aimed at addressing reconciliation and resolving disputes among the communities. Furthermore, the United Nations and its partners were hampered by the administrative weakness, as well as political disagreements in their quest to implement institutional reforms in South Sudan. Operational and financial challenges resulted from the continued insecurity and humanitarian crisis.

Nevertheless, United Nations made substantial efforts to ensure peace and institutional development. The organization supported good governance, promote reconciliation and help in safeguarding human rights. The peacebuilding and institutional development activities conducted by the United Nations in South Sudan led to significant contributions to the process of political stabilization and long term peacebuilding process in South Sudan.

This contradicts Hypothesis 2.4.2.3 Cooperation among United Nations, African Union and IGAD The cooperation among the United Nations, AU and IGAD has been of great essence to the entire peace process and mediation effort in South Sudan.

For the years between 2019 and 2024, the coordinated engagement of these organizations played a pivotal role in the political dialogue, the promotion of peace monitoring, conflict resolution, and the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The intensity of the conflict in South Sudan, coupled with its spill over effect in East Africa as a whole made a co-ordinated international and regional intervention necessary. The flow of refugees across the borders into neighboring countries, insecurity at border regions, and a humanitarian crisis within and outside of South Sudan put many regional organization and countries at alert. Consequently, a coordinated response was needed to avert a wider destabilisation of the region.

In many ways, IGAD was the most active regional organizations in its mediation role in the country, including the organizing and coordinating rounds of peace talks between various stakeholders and in bringing about the Revitalized Peace Agreement between opposing groups in South Sudan in partnership with the United Nations.

The UN's contributions are demonstrated in its diplomatic, political, logistical, and peacekeeping role during this process. The AU has contributed in other aspects of the South Sudan's peace process. Its Peace and Security Council and conflict prevention mechanisms actively promote a framework that identifies political dialogue, national reconciliation, and democratic governance as cornerstones for lasting peace.

As a partner with The United Nations, the AU monitor developments in South Sudan and support the implementation of peace accords. This partnership also served to enhance the credibility of the international mediation process in that there was a better understanding of the region's political climate and culture and helped neighbors to be more invested in promoting the peace process and desist from action that can fuel conflict. One aspect of the cooperation that was also very instrumental was in monitoring and evaluating the progress made by parties involved in the peace process. joint monitoring teams and working groups established helped assess the compliance with ceasefire agreement, progress toward political reform and issues requiring a swift resolution.

In addition, cooperation between these institutions supported a more coordinated humanitarian response in areas such as displacement of persons, food scarcity, and emergencies in health services.

The partnership resulted in more effective humanitarian operations as the role and responsibility were divided amongst organizations thus, prevented the overlap in resources, effort, and strategy . However, there have been certain limitations that the partnership faces. In many instances, individual regional interests compromised the cohesiveness of diplomatic strategy and regional response. Neighbors were at time perceived to be favouring specific parties, which eventually derailed peace process . Institutional overlap and coordination difficulties sometimes hinder effectiveness.

There are various interveners that involved in peace process, thus making difficult the decision making process and agreement on policies .

Finally, Financial and other operational limitations contributed to difficulties for all the involved parties to successfully carry on peace building efforts. . Notwithstanding the above challenges the alliance between UN, AU and IGAD did much to boost the chances for resolving conflict in South Sudan through coherent diplomatic and regional stability efforts, as well as assisting in the long term peace and political stability.

Implications for Cooperation between the UN, AU, and IGAD The activities of the UN/African Union/IGAD partnership contributed significantly to diplomatic mediation, peacebuilding and political stability efforts in South Sudan. Evidence consequently weakens Hypothesis Two. 4.2.4 Challenges Facing United Nations Peacebuilding and Mediation Efforts Despite United Nations' (UN) interventions being vital to advancing the cause of conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts in South Sudan, there were a few challenges that diminished their efficiency between 2019 and 2024. These challenges were stemmed from political, institutional, economic and security challenges that posed a complicated factor in peace process and the movement toward sustained peace and stability.

Political squabbles between political elites and faction in the conflict was among the prominent obstacles.

The lack of political consensus over power-sharing arrangements, security sector reform and state resources allocation was common. These conflicts created delay in implementation of key clauses of the peace agreement and weakened the public confidence in the peace process.

Additionally, ethnic tensions and community-based violence were barriers in the peacebuilding activities. Ethnic divisions quickly emerged as an immediate issue of the conflict in South Sudan. Cycles of revenge attacks and communal conflicts took place in some regions. This complicated

the path to reconciliation and raised the risks of future violence. Among the ongoing efforts in this region. Also a huge challenge has been attributed to weakness of governance and fragility of institutions. In South Sudan, public institutions often lacked the administrative and management capacity needed for reform and service delivery. The effectiveness of institution in south sudan was undermined by lack of transparency, corruption, poor economic management and political instability. Economic factors did not ease the task of the peacebuilding process.

During the study period, South Sudan had faced economic crises, including inflation, unemployment, food insecurity, dependence on oil revenue and fiscal mismanagement.

These negative economic conditions caused increasing discontent and social unrest in several neighborhoods of the country. Security was among another issues that limited UN interventions in the region. In several areas, armed groups remained active and clashes often occurred but were sometimes not reported as part of the ceasefire agreements.

Humanitarian access has been obstructed by insecure areas and the access of peacekeepers and humanitarian aid workers to distant areas was constrained by risks to safety. There were also increased operational risks, with peacekeepers and aid workers coming under attacks while providing assistance. A serious challenge was insufficient infrastructural development.

Many roads in the country were poor or unmotorable due to weather and seasonal flooding, and poor road networks obstructed timely access for both peacekeepers and aid workers to affected areas.

Inadequate communication facilities and the flooding of homes also hampered humanitarian operations in many regions, forcing many people to abandon their houses. Besides the challenges

listed above, UN also faces funding and logistical problems which impacted on the nature and scope of the peacebuilding programs in the future. The requirements for sustaining peacekeeping operations and addressing humanitarian needs were large but the funding sometimes fell short of meeting the increasing need for humanitarian and development aid. Mutual distrust among many of the political elites was another factor hindering the implementation of peace agreements. Distrust over mutual intent and fear of exclusion and disempowerment, complicated efforts to achieve full political reconciliation and institutional reform. However, UN have maintained peacekeeping operations, humanitarian activities and diplomatic interventions despite such hurdles in South Sudan.

The UN actively promotes political engagement and efforts aimed at reducing violent conflict and achieving stability.

Implications for Challenges Facing United Nations Peacebuilding and Mediation Efforts

Peacebuilding and mediation in South Sudan were obstructed by several economic, institutional and political impediments. Nevertheless, the United Nations played a significant role in bringing about political communication and reconciliation, along with the stabilisation of the country. Consequently, evidence lends support to Hypothesis Two to a lesser degree.

Above analysis shows that UN has played an important role in stabilising and peacebuilding process in South Sudan through mediation and peace-making in period of study (2019-2024). The UN facilitated political dialogue and conflict resolution through mediation, reforms of public institutions, reconciliation processes and regional cooperation (AU & IGAD). UN also engaged in governance reform, coordinated humanitarian assistance, and community-level efforts in addressing structural causes of conflicts.

Challenges such as political rivalry, ethnicity divisions, institution failure, security risks and economic shocks in South Sudan have negatively impacted its effectiveness.

However, UN efforts had positive impacts on the country's stability and reconciliation processes. Thus, the hypothesis that the diplomatic intervention and peace building efforts of the UN did not improve the political stability in South Sudan, is disproved.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of findings

This study focuses on the involvement of the UN in the resolution of conflicts in Africa, specifically with South Sudan as a case. This interest is driven by the continued prevalence of violent conflicts in Africa and the increased participation of international bodies in peacekeeping, negotiation, humanitarian relief efforts, and peacebuilding. South Sudan was selected due to it being one of the most significant contemporary conflicts and due to its illustrative demonstration of the correlation between internal political volatility and international peace efforts.

The study sought to: describe the engagement of UN peacekeeping operations in South Sudan; assess the efficacy and difficulties associated with UN diplomatic mediation and peacebuilding initiatives; identify challenges hindering UN involvement; and evaluate the influence of

international cooperation in bolstering regional peace and security. This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study methodology utilizing secondary data, to achieve its objectives. Information was gathered from various sources including books, academic articles, UN reports, policy papers, humanitarian publications, and documents from regional and international organizations.

A review of the literature provided conceptual understanding of concepts such as conflict resolution, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, negotiation, and regional security. Thematically, the study addressed the root causes of conflict in Africa, UN peacekeeping, the function of diplomatic mediation, the success of conflict resolution strategies, and obstacles faced by international interventions. Furthermore, empirical studies on conflict resolution and peacekeeping in Africa were reviewed.

The Collective Security Theory was selected as the primary framework for this study. This theory offered a framework for understanding how states could work collaboratively with the UN and other global players to establish peace and security in the international sphere. The theory proved to be appropriate, given the UN's role in South Sudan, which exemplifies the collective responsibility approach to managing threats to regional and global security.

Hypotheses were tested in Chapter Four using thematic and descriptive analysis. A key finding was that UN peacekeeping efforts contributed significantly to maintaining peace and humanitarian stability in South Sudan. The UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) monitored compliance with ceasefire agreements, protected civilians, and facilitated humanitarian efforts, thus easing tensions in multiple conflict zones.

The study further indicated that UN diplomatic mediation and peacebuilding activities in South Sudan positively influenced political stabilization. Working in partnership with the African

Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the UN mediated peace processes, supported reconciliation efforts, and encouraged the promotion of good governance aimed at establishing sustainable peace and stability.

However, the study also highlighted several issues impeding the effectiveness of UN interventions in South Sudan, including competition among elites, ethnic divisions, inadequate governance systems, insecurity, financial constraints, logistical challenges, and the slow pace of peace agreement negotiations. Ultimately, the study concluded that, despite certain limitations, the UN remained a crucial actor in facilitating peace, providing humanitarian protection, and promoting political dialogue in South Sudan throughout the period under review.

The United Nations peacekeeping missions were found to be instrumental in enhancing conflict management and humanitarian stability in South Sudan. Specifically, UNMISS provided effective protection for civilians, monitored ceasefire accords, facilitated the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and averted an escalation of violence in a multitude of affected communities. The provision of protection sites for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the coordination of humanitarian relief operations effectively mitigated the humanitarian consequences of the conflict and prevented further deterioration of the security situation in many regions.

Additionally, the study demonstrated that UN diplomacy and peacebuilding interventions had a beneficial impact on political dialogue and political stabilization in South Sudan. In collaboration with the African Union and Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the UN led peace negotiations, supported reconciliation initiatives, and advocated for good governance reforms to improve long-term peace and stability. However, the study identified numerous obstacles to

these initiatives, such as political rivalry, ethnic friction, weak institutional governance, insecurity, and non-adherence to peace agreements.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on this study, it is evident that the UN has made a substantial contribution to conflict resolution and peacebuilding in South Sudan. Over the period of 2019-2024, the organization played a vital role in protecting civilians, fostering political dialogue, enhancing humanitarian stability, and managing conflicts through peacekeeping operations, diplomatic mediation, UNMISS underscored the crucial requirement of international peacekeeping for minimizing violence and protecting populations and communities endangered by armed conflict. UNMISS has contributed not just peacekeeping, but also in assisting the South Sudanese with relief and humanitarian relief and creating awareness in how the situation of refugee crisis and displacement in the region would worsen. In addition, the report illustrates the effectiveness of UN diplomatic initiatives and peace-building endeavors in the nation by bringing back to the dialogue table various stakeholders in South Sudan and forging reconciliation. The partnership between AU, UN and IGAD has proven instrumental in bolstering international and regional efforts towards achieving peace in South Sudan.

But still, the report, coming at the end, reaches certain conclusions about the limitations faced by UN interventions due to political, economic and institutional challenges such as ethnic discord, lack of adequate governance, high level of insecurity, and economic instability, which have hampered efforts to build and implement agreements to bring lasting peace.

Such conditions are suggestive that achieving lasting peace requires broad domestic acceptance of peace proposals from leaders and strengthened domestic institutions with, as well,, significant participation by international community. In conclusion, while United Nations has not necessarily the factor that brought a definitive end to the conflict in South Sudan, it has had an undeniable contribution towards mitigating, preventing and establishing political stability over the conflict, and without UN intervention, the humanitarian crises and security situation could have exacerbated with an increased possibility of creating negative ripple effects in Africa continent.

5.3 Recommendations

1. Strengthen operational capabilities of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan by providing additional resources for logistical support, intelligence and surveillance, transportation systems and emergency response teams in potential conflict-prone zones to better protect civilians, facilitate humanitarian assistance and improve peace operations in the most isolated and precarious regions of South Sudan.

2.Ensure implementation of comprehensive community-based programs for peace-building and reconciliation among political leaders, traditional authorities, women groups, young people, and community activists, guided by African Union (AU), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and United Nations (UN) in order to combat ethnic tension and foster peaceful conflict resolution and realize lasting political stability in South Sudan in full respect of peace agreements.

humanitarian aid, and institutional support programs.

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