



**THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF ANKARA
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

The Role of Youth in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: South Sudan as a Case Study

Master's Thesis

Foday Justice Jalloh

Master of Arts in Peace and Conflict Studies

2023





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Primary Advisor's Name Surname

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Efser Rana COŞKUN TÜRKMEN

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PREFACE

Academic discussions around youth, conflict, and peacebuilding have increasingly gained prominence since the twenty-first century started. When it comes to Africa's youth and their contribution to peace and security, negative aspects, such as their engagement in violent conflicts, have received a lot of attention (Cihan and Ozerdem, 2022). Regardless, it does not deny the fact that there is also a positive aspect to this story. Africa's youth possess immense potential to make substantial contributions towards building sustainable peace in the continent. This study highlights the positive impact of South Sudanese youth on the country's ongoing peacebuilding process, providing valuable insights into the potential of Africa's youth in promoting peace on the continent. It argues that despite their political and economic circumstances, Africa's youth still have the potential to vehemently contribute to building sustainable peace in the continent.

The rationale for pursuing this study stems from very clear motivations. The author hails from an African country, Sierra Leone, which has experienced a deadly armed conflict, one of the brutal civil wars that erupted when the strong walls of the Cold War fell in 1989. Within the senseless and bloody armed conflict that only ended after a decade since its inception in 1991, the role of young people stood out. Young people made up the majority of armed combatants (Aning & Atta-ASAMOA, 2011). Having survived the conflict, himself as a passive victim, the author also clearly understands that young people were mainly victims of their political and economic predicaments. Also, as a youth who has contributed to peacebuilding in his country after the decade-long civil war through civil society organizations, he has always held the conviction that young people can be active drivers of peace in the African continent. Therefore, with the slightest opportunity offered to him through this dissertation, he wasted no time in proving this positive potential, using South Sudan, a culturally distinct society, as a case study.

The author argues that while the youth who have participated in conflicts, violence, and extremism, as portrayed by the literature, were victims, they can also be active agents of peace. He hopes that the relevant authorities will see this positive potential as a point of intervention for the full inclusion of Africa's youths at every stage of decision-making in building sustainable peace on the continent including civil society youth organizations such as the South Sudan Youth for Peace and Development Organization, I Can South Sudan, Active Youth Agency, and Smile Again Africa Development Organization.

DEDICATION

To my mom who never had the opportunity to acquire a formal education.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I cannot complete this dissertation without recognizing the contribution of certain people and institutions for making it possible to attain this milestone. First, I want to offer my strongest appreciation to the Turkish Government for giving me a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to secure a postgraduate education, through the Turkish Government Scholarships, to contribute to the development of my country. Human capital development is one of the greatest aids any country can provide to another in the 21st Century. This appreciation additionally goes to Ankara Social Sciences University, especially its Social Science Institute, which provided me with the academic space and mentorship to build my academic skills and confidence.

I would specifically like to single out my supervisor, Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Efser Rana COŞKUN TÜRKMEN, for her patience and unyielding support and guidance throughout my dissertation. It is rare to meet someone like her every day. I am very lucky to have had her as my supervisor. Without her genuine feedback and timely discussions, I would not have easily met this partial fulfillment on time. I must admit that the Ankara Social Sciences University must do all it can do to keep her.

I must also thank the various youths in South Sudan who offered their organizations to be used as case studies for my dissertation. Special thanks go to other active youths, such as Mansuk Milton, whose peacebuilding youth organization could not be included in my study for various reasons but provided valuable information about South Sudanese youths, South Sudan, the conflict, and the peacebuilding process. These informal discussions provided valuable insights into South Sudan's peacebuilding process for my research.

Let me also register my strongest gratitude to my family, friends, and loved ones for all their calls, and messages throughout my study. I will not complete this without singling out my friend in need, partner, and bosom, Dorcas Smith (D for short), for believing in me to achieve greater heights. Sometimes it is only this belief that one needs. As they say, it is hard to fight when no one believes in you.

Above all, it is God who has made this possible. Let no one tell you otherwise. Without His grace, we work, struggle, and propose for nothing. I give all the praise to him.

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ABSTRACT

Some scholars (Omeje, 2005; Urdal, 2006; Aning&Atta-ASAMOA, 2011; Paolo,2017) have portrayed Africa's youth (male and female between 15 and 35) as drivers of conflict and violence in Africa because they have participated in violence, armed conflicts, and extremist organizations (UNDP, 2016), as well as due to youth bulge—a demographic bomb or weak economic identity (Fuller & Pitts 1990; USAID, 2005). This dissertation holds that the young people who have participated in violence and conflict, as pointed out by the literature, were victims and not deliberate perpetrators. These youths were either brainwashed into fighting for a course other than theirs or victims of their political and economic circumstances. Research has it that most of Africa's youth are neither violent nor participate in violence regardless of the wrongs, discriminations, exploitation, etc., they encounter daily, especially within conflict environments (UNDP, 2016). Therefore, this thesis further argues that, despite their political and economic predicaments, they can still be active drivers of peace and non-violence. To examine this positive potential, the dissertation used South Sudan as a case study, the “local turn” theory, and a qualitative research approach to interview youth leaders and review project documents of four youth organizations actively building peace in South Sudan. This dissertation found that young people have immensely contributed to South Sudan's peacebuilding process in different roles through civil society organizations such as serving as mediators, thus, promoting conflict resolution through dialogue; improving livelihoods through relief services and entrepreneurial skills training and funds allocation; strengthening the culture of peace through peace education; and promoting inclusion by giving voice to other youth, women, and children. These active contributions imply that Africa's youth are increasingly becoming aware of their positive role in peacebuilding and that they are very active in peacebuilding despite the political and economic challenges that they face. This increasing awareness of their positive role and their actual participation fall heavily within the local turn debate which advocates for the role of local actors such as the youth in peacebuilding.

Keywords: youth, role, peacebuilding, conflict, violence, conflict drivers, South Sudan

ÖZET

Bazı bilim insanları (Omeje, 2005; Urdal, 2006; Aning&Atta-ASAMOA, 2011; Paalo,2017) şiddete, silahlı çatışmalara ve radikal gruplara katılımları (UNDP, 2016) ve demografik bir bomba niteliğindeki gençlik patlaması (youth bulge) veya zayıf finansal kimlik (Fuller & Pitts 1990; USAID, 2005) nedeniyle Afrika'daki gençleri (15-35 yaş arası kadın ve erkekler) Afrika'daki çatışmaların ve şiddetin kaynağı olarak tanımlamıştır. Bu tez, literatürün de işaret ettiği gibi, şiddet eylemleri ve çatışmalarda yer alan genç bireylerin kasıtlı failler değil, mağdurlar olduğunu savunmaktadır. Bu gençlerin ya beyinleri yıkanarak kendilerinininkinden farklı bir yol için savaşmaları sağlanmış ya da içinde bulundukları siyasi ve ekonomik koşulların kurbanı olmuşlardır. Araştırmalar sonucunda Afrika'daki gençlerin çoğunluğunun; her gün, özellikle de çatışma ortamlarının içinde karşılaşabilecekleri haksızlıklara, ayrımcılıklara, sömürülere vb. rağmen şiddete eğilimli olmadığı ve şiddet eylemleri içinde yer almadığı görülmüştür. Dolayısıyla bu tez, siyasi ve ekonomik çıkmazlara rağmen gençlerin barışın ve şiddetsiz bir ortamın öncüsü olabileceğini öne sürmektedir. Bu olumlu yöndeki potansiyeli incelemek için çalışmada "yerel dönüş" (local turn) teorisinden yararlanılarak niteliksel bir yaklaşımla Güney Sudan'da aktif olarak barışı inşa eden dört gençlik örgütüyle görüşmeler yapılmış ve proje belgeleri incelenmiştir. Bu tez, genç bireylerin sivil toplum kuruluşları aracılığıyla ara bulucu olarak diyalog yoluyla çatışma çözümünü teşvik etmek; yardım hizmetleri ve girişimcilik becerileri eğitimi ve fon tahsisi yoluyla geçim kaynaklarını geliştirmek; barış eğitimi yoluyla barış kültürünü güçlendirmek ve diğer gençlere, kadınlara ve çocuklara ses olarak kapsayıcılığa önayak olmak gibi farklı rollerde Güney Sudan'ın barış inşası sürecine büyük katkıda bulunduklarını ortaya koymuştur. Buradan çıkarılacak anlam, genç bireylerin barışın inşasındaki olumlu rollerinin giderek daha fazla farkına varmaları ve bu grupların karşılaştıkları siyasi ve ekonomik zorluklara rağmen barışın inşasında çok aktif olduğudur. Gençlerin olumlu rolüne dair artan farkındalık, barışın inşasında gençler gibi yerel aktörlerin rolünü savunan yerel dönüş tartışmalarına büyük ölçüde dahil olmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: gençler, rol, barışın inşası, çatışma, şiddet, çatışmaların kaynağı, Güney Sudan

ABBREVIATIONS

ARCRSS: Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan

AU: African Union

AYA: Active Youth Agency

CPA: Comprehensive Peace Agreement

CSYOs: Civil Society Youth Organizations

DDR: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

ICSS: I Can South Sudan

IGAD: Inter-Governmental Authority on Development

ISPR: Institute of Social Policy and Research

PBF: Peacebuilding Fund

PoC Sites: Protection of Civilian Sites

SADO: Smile Again Africa Development Organization

SSYPADO: South Sudan Youth for Peace and Development Organization

R-ARCSS: Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan

RUF: Revolutionary United Front

SPLM: Sudan People's Liberation Movement

SPLM-IO: Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition

SSR: Security Sector Reform

TRC: Truth and Reconciliation Commission

UN: United Nations

UNDP: United Nations Development Program

UNMIS: United Nations Mission in Sudan

UNMISS: United Nations Mission in South Sudan

UNSCR: United Nations Security Council Resolution

WWII: World War Two

FIGURES

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The role of the youth (Male and Female aged 15 and 35- see African Union, 2006: The African Youth Charter) in peacebuilding is of utmost importance and should not be underestimated. The United Nations (UN) officially recognized the significance of this role in 2015 by adopting the UN Security Council Resolution 2250 to urge member states to include youth, among other things, at all levels of decision making to promote global peace and security (UN, 2015). This dissertation contends that, despite facing political and economic challenges, Africa's youth (this dissertation used youth and young people interchangeably) have immense potential to build peace on the continent. With their energy, education, large population, and stake in the future, they are well-equipped to make a positive impact. As demonstrated in chapter four, young people in South Sudan have played key roles in the South Sudanese peacebuilding process as members of civil society organizations such as serving as mediators to resolve inter-community conflicts, promoting peace education through training and sensitization, addressing humanitarian needs by providing relief services, etc. These positive impacts provide concrete insights into the potential of Africa's youth to build sustainable peace on the continent.

1.1 Problem Statement

Some scholars (Hoeffler & Collier, 2004; Omeje, 2005; Urdal, 2006; Aning&Atta-ASAMOA, 2011; Paalo,2017) have labeled Africa's youths as potential drivers of conflict and violence in Africa due to their rapid population growth and weak economic identity (Fuller & Pitts 1990; USAID, 2005), participation in extremist groups (UNDP, 2016), and conflicts (Aning and Atta-ASAMOA, 2011). For instance, Omeje (2005; as stated in Suleiman 2019) accounted that Nigerian youth were responsible for 90 to 95% of conflicts in Nigeria. Urdal (2006) found that, relatively, youth bulge enhance the danger of domestic armed conflict, terrorism, and violent protests. According to Paalo (2017), youth political wings on the African continent typically engage in violent, and aggressive politics, undermining hopes for a positive contribution from the region's demographic majority despite the potential to strengthen democracy through cooperative, democratic actions with their mother political parties. Aning and Atta-Asamoah (2011) have also argued that since 1990, conflicts in West Africa have been concurrently influenced by the youth bulge problem. In fact, they believe that most of the combatants in Côte

d'Ivoire, Liberia, and Sierra Leone's civil wars (UNIDIR, 2008), were young people—nearly ninety five percent. This existing narrative suggests that young people have played little to no role in peacebuilding. However, this assertion is not accurate. As argued by Cihan and Ozerdem, (2022), academic literature has only recently begun to focus on the potential of youth in post-conflict societies. Moreover, credible international reports indicate that regardless of the wrongs, exploitation, discriminations etc., they face daily, especially in conflict environments, most African youths neither engage in violence or conflicts nor are violent. (UNDP, 2016). In their 2015 study, McEvoy-Levy and Berents acknowledged the important role that youth play in "everyday peacebuilding." They identified a number of tactics, like organizing against injustices, that young people employ on a daily basis to promote peace. This dissertation also presents an alternate viewpoint that underscores the substantial efforts of young people in advancing peace initiatives. Therefore, the argument of this dissertation is as follows: the young people who have participated in violence and conflict, as pointed out by the literature, were victims and not deliberate perpetrators. They were either brainwashed to fight for causes they did not support or were victims of their political and economic circumstances. Hence, this dissertation contends that despite their challenging predicaments, Africa's youth have the potential to promote peace and non-violence.

1.2 Research Questions

- What role do youth play as members of civil society organizations in South Sudan's post-conflict peacebuilding process?
- What are the impacts of this role on the peacebuilding process?
- What are the implications of this role on peacebuilding, generally?

1.3 Research Aim: This Dissertation's Goal.

This study seeks to establish the positive role of the youth in the South Sudanese peacebuilding process as members of civil society youth agencies and the impacts of this role on the peacebuilding process, as well as its implications on peacebuilding, generally. Answers to the study's research questions provide insights into the potential positive role of Africa's youth in peacebuilding on the continent.

This dissertation aims to challenge the current debate in existing literature by arguing that youth can be powerful change agents in peacebuilding. Therefore, the dissertation argues that the

picture painted by some scholars above cannot be the reality of every African youth. And that, in fact, even those who participated in violence, as pointed out in the literature, were victims and not ‘deliberate perpetrators.’ As previously stated, these youth were either brainwashed into fighting for a cause other than theirs or victims of their political and economic circumstances. For instance, actual or perceived youth exclusion has been cited to be a significant underlying cause of violent conflicts, according to empirical data from project evaluations (UNDP, Nd: as quoted in UN Peacebuilding Fund, PBF, 2019). Evidence (UNDP, 2016) also demonstrates that most youth are neither violent nor actively participate in violence, regardless of the exploitation, wrongs, marginalization, etc., they encounter daily, especially within conflict environments.

Even though there are studies linking young people to conflicts and violence, this dissertation argues that young people can still be active agents of peacebuilding because they are educated (Statista.com, 2021); highly affected by conflict (Plan International, 2018), and have a significant stake in the future. This thesis uses South Sudan to assess young people’s role in peacebuilding.

1.4 Methodology

1.4.1 Research Type

This study adopted a qualitative case study approach to understand the phenomenon under investigation. It is a type of approach that is used to explore the stories of a group or groups regarding a particular phenomenon. In this situation, the author, therefore, believes that the story of young people’s positive role in peacebuilding within South Sudan would be told better using this approach.

1.4.2 Population and Unit/Case Study

This study sought to establish African youth’s positive role in peacebuilding processes in the continent with a particular focus on South Sudan. Therefore, the main research population included young people aged 15 and 35, the accepted definition of youth by African Union. Specifically, the study focused on South Sudanese youth, being that the country is not only Africa and the world’s newest state, but also very fragile and accounts for one of the youngest global youth demographics, 73.7% below 30 (UN, 2020). Three vibrant youth-led organizations and one youth-focused organization were chosen as case studies to demonstrate the positive role of youth in peacebuilding. Youth-led organizations are organizations founded and run by South Sudanese youths. These include, South Sudan Youth for Peace and Development Organization

(SSYPADO), I Can South Sudan (ICSS), and Active Youth Agency (AYA). Smile Again Africa Development Organization (SAADO) is the youth-focused organization used for this study since its projects are easily verifiable.

1.4.3 Why South Sudan?

There are several reasons for choosing South Sudan for this study. First, South Sudan is both a post-conflict and fragile society. In other words, it is going through an intense process of negative peace which means that despite that the barrels are being silent (major wars have ended), the country is still unable to provide its citizens with the basic human needs or necessities of life. Secondly, South Sudan is the world's newest (CIAONET, 2021) and youngest sovereign state and accounts for a population of 73.7% under the age of 30 (UN, 2020) where 2/3 of its entire population (11.4 million) needs humanitarian assistance (World Bank, 2021). While this dire economic situation may create a condition for a relapse to violence and war, especially with such a high proportion of vulnerable youth population, young people chose instead to actively involve in the country's peacebuilding processes.

Finally, examining young people's role in an environment different than the author's would help override the potential research bias the author would have had if he had chosen his own country, Sierra Leone, as a case study.

1.4.4 Instrument

This dissertation used secondary and firsthand data. The author received ethics committee approval for this study. The ethics approval certificate, which shows that the author followed every ethical principle during his research, is attached to this thesis.

In terms of primary data, an interview was conducted with the executive director of one of the selected organizations. Additionally, the researcher interviewed two other youth leaders, making it three in total. The contributions of the two non-case study leaders are mainly recorded in chapter two and three, on young people's role in the South Sudanese conflict. These youth leaders have extensive knowledge on South Sudan, the conflicts, and the role of the youth in these conflicts. The interviews were conducted through Zoom and WhatsApp communication applications. One key challenge to data collection during the study was the difficulty reaching all the executive directors of the case study organizations. This happened for a variety of reasons. Among other things, since South Sudan is a very new post conflict state, internet connectivity is poor. As such, the author was unable to reach all of them. Or in some cases when he did, poor

internet prevented a successful interview process. In both cases, the author also collected additional relevant data from the websites of the case study organizations. The author got secondary data for the study from other materials such as project documents shared by the executive directors.

1.4.5 Results: Reporting the Qualitative Data.

The data is presented in chapter four, which is the results sections. For easier understanding of the various activities of each organization, the results are presented on an individual basis. For an audience to be able to verify the existence of these projects, links to the projects or websites through which the youth organizations can be contacted are subsequently provided.

1.4.6 The Study's Contributions

This study is important for several reasons. As mentioned throughout the dissertation, young people make up the majority of Africa's human population. For instance, 70% of Sub-Saharan Africa is under 30 (United Nations, Nd). As also indicated in the literature review section, some scholars hold the believe that young people are drivers of conflict and violence in the continent (Hoeffler & Collier, 2004; Omeje, 2005; Urdal, 2006; Aning&Atta-ASAMOA, 2011; Paalo,2017). Therefore, any study seeking to highlight the positive role of youth in peacebuilding must hold a special relevance in peacebuilding literature and its practice. Therefore, among other things, this dissertation will:

- complement existing literature thereby closing in on the gap that existed around the youth, conflict, and violence debate. It will further serve as a reference point for research purposes.
- provide a new perspective on how to look at peacebuilding from a locally youth led approach, since the discourse has mostly focused on the liberal exportation of peace to the global south.
- influence researchers to focus on youth's instrumental role in peacebuilding in Africa and how lessons learned could provide valuable insights into peacebuilding elsewhere.
- serve as a guiding tool for reference by decision and policy makers in respect of addressing the role of youth in peacebuilding.
- The study further draws the attention of scholars and practitioners of peacebuilding to the increasing awareness among Africa's youth of their positive role in peacebuilding, as

demonstrated by the large and active presence of youth organizations in South Sudan's peacebuilding process.

1.4.7 Limitation

One of the major limitations the researcher faced is his inability to administer interview and focus group questions physically due to both financial constraints and geographical limitations. This has the potential to affect the study's results because physical contact with participants is better at building trust, getting respondents relaxed and confident while providing the necessary information. Lack of funding, also, to a certain extent, affected the conduct of the study. Availability of funding would have allowed the researcher to travel to the field and collect data physically. This experience would have provided the researcher better insights into the work of the young people building peace in South Sudan.

Poor internet connectivity also affected the conduct of the study. Since the researcher did not physically visit the field, he conducted interviews through Zoom and WhatsApp communication applications. Extremely poor internet connectivity resulted in delays and in some situations, no interviews at all.

Also, this study mainly focused on young people's collective contributions. As such, it only examined their role through civil society youth organizations. It is therefore important for future studies to assess their individual contributions and how they also contribute to peacebuilding whether collectively or individually through other channels such as arts which includes music, paintings, and creative writings.

Furthermore, since the peacebuilding process just recently started, assessing the impacts of the role young people play in South Sudan's peacebuilding process is challenging. Consequently, this study was only able to assess the shorter-term effects of the activities of the case studies. Assessing the long-term impacts of their role is nearly impossible, now.

Finally, it was also difficult to reach youth organizations since many youth organizations in South Sudan do not have any tangible working websites. Some of these organizations hire other websites to host their organizations' profiles just so they can have an online presence. Because of this challenge, only four youth organizations were included as the final cases.

1.4.8 Validity of the Study's Results

For verification purposes, the author adopted two key approaches to make sure that the results of

the study are verifiable, thereby making the study internally valid. First, the study only included youth organizations that have existing websites (World Wide Web or social media accounts). Also, the author only reported projects that are listed on these organizations' websites. Where project reports are not listed on the websites, the author provided links and contact details of these websites for further verification. Thus, if ever anyone intends to verify the results, one can do so by simply logging on to the organizations' websites where their projects are listed or contacting them directly for any information on their work, including those included in this study.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The call for the return to local approaches (this call has been stylized as the 'Local Turn') as a preferable way to attain sustainable peace in societies in the third world has gained momentum in the critical paradigm over the past few decades. This dissertation uses the 'local turn' theoretical lens (Mac Ginty, & Richmond, 2013; Millar, 2014) to study the role of youth in peacebuilding. Generally, this study is theoretically grounded in the critical peace paradigm as an approach to the concept and practice of peacebuilding. The theory clearly aligns with the goal of this dissertation since it intends to critically examine young people's peacebuilding role in Africa. As the name indicates, this paradigm is overly critical of the traditional approach to peacebuilding, the liberal peace approach. The theories that fall within this paradigm include the feminist approach to peacebuilding, the 'local turn' and the hybrid peacebuilding theory. Specifically, the study is situated within the 'local turn' approach to achieving sustainable peace. This part of the dissertation, therefore, accounts for this dissertation's theoretical framework, the 'local turn' peacebuilding approach.

1.5.1 Why the 'Local Turn' as a Theoretical Framework?

The "local turn" approach to peacebuilding centers on local spaces and actors. Of the two, the latter is even more significant to this study. Africa's youth, which this dissertation seeks to study, find themselves within this space. The local turn peace approach, however, does not single out the role of youth in building peace. Nevertheless, because Africa has the world's youngest population (Trade Finance Global, 2022), young people indirectly make up a large number of local agencies driving peace initiatives in African communities. As such, any theory focusing on local agencies in peacebuilding (particularly in Africa) implicitly also focuses on young people as actors in peacebuilding. This theory is therefore suitable for this study because of its focus and

emphasis on the significance of the role of local agencies, which include youth groups, in post-conflict peacebuilding. In summary, this dissertation is first grounded in the critical peacebuilding paradigm (an approach that critiques traditional liberal approaches to peacebuilding). Second, it is specifically guided by the theory known as ‘local turn’ (found within the critical paradigm), which advocates for local ownership of peacebuilding processes.

The framework mentioned above is used to situate this dissertation within the wider literature on peacebuilding and provide specific direction to the study. As such, before delving into the details of the approach, it is necessary to first examine the concept and practice of peacebuilding and the various theoretical approaches to it.

1.5.2 Peacebuilding as a Concept and Practice

Peacebuilding, as a theory and a practice, appears to have gained prominence in the post-Cold War environment. Nevertheless, the usage of the terminology goes decades back. As noted by Rigual (2018) and Erzurum and Eren (2014), Johan Galtung (1975) is said to have propounded the concept in his work the “Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking, and Peacebuilding,” within which Galtung advocated for peacebuilding architecture to secure sustainable peace. The consolidation of this concept, however, can be attributed to the 1990s, a period in which the world experienced multiple major armed conflicts (Herbom & Wallesten, 2006; Gleditsch, Melander, and Urdal, 2016). In a desperate need to meaningfully respond to the growing nature of these conflicts and prevent future relapses, the UN tasked then Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to propose a viable way forward to lasting peace. His idea for sustainable peace was articulated in a document famously known as the ‘Agenda for Peace’ (UN, 1992; Reisman, 1993). This document accounted for the concept, content, and nature of peacebuilding. Thus, professionally, the UN Agenda for Peace (1992), defines peacebuilding as taking measures to find and enhance mechanisms that deepen peace to prevent a relapse (Butcher and Hallward, 2020; Hautaniemi and Laakso, 2014, pg.236: UN, 1992). According to Uesugi et al. (2021), UN (2009), peacebuilding is a process that creates the prerequisites for attaining fundamental security, bringing about peace dividends, boosting national capacity to spearhead peacebuilding initiatives, and fostering political process optimism. The foundation for long-term growth is laid through this process (Also quoted in Dag. UN, 2010). In other words, peacebuilding efforts lay the foundation for sustainable development. This implies that both peacebuilding and the sustainable development that follows suit, are long-term programs. Simply

put, peacebuilding is the collective term for all activities conducted by different actors, whether grassroots, national or non-national actors, to promote peace following the resolution of a war, typically by the signing of a peace accord. Post-conflict peacebuilding primarily focuses on initiatives like DDR (disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration), SSR (security sector reforms), relief efforts, the holding of democratic elections, and transitional justice (TJ), which includes the creation of truth and reconciliation commissions and war crimes tribunals, among other things.

The term peacebuilding, though simple in appearance, is a blurred concept. Apparently, as argued by Haugerudbraaten (1998), the foundation for this blurriness was in fact laid by the very document that broadened the concept. His argument is summed up in the following extract:

“The document lays emphasis on the fact that peacebuilding efforts must be based on sustained cooperative work to address underlying economic, sociocultural, and humanitarian problems by disarming, restoring order, repatriating refugees, destroying weapons, monitoring elections, promoting human rights, reforming security sector etc. These efforts the most part are associated with short to medium term international intervention and do not in any way carry the notion of sustained effort that address underlying causes to put an achieved peace on a durable foundation” (Haugerudbraaten, 1998:pg. 1).

Since the concept gained prominence through the United Nations Agenda for Peace document, it has been subjected to many reviews. Some of these reviews have directly addressed the concerns raised by Haugerudbraaten (1998) above. For instance, the Kroc Institute at the University of Notre Dame, within its effort to broaden the concept to mean “strategic peacebuilding,” concluded that peacebuilding becomes strategic when it works a long term and at all facets of society to establish and preserve links between people locally and internationally. Additionally, Lederach (1997) argued that the duration of peacebuilding procedures is longer, and their environmental requirements are different. As a result, he outlines the various conflict time frames and the necessary actions to be taken, such as the need for relief services and for hostilities to cease for short-term intervention, social change for medium-5–10 years), and generational change for long-term (20 years and beyond).

1.5.3 Theoretical Approaches to the Concept and Practice of Peacebuilding

Several conceptual and theoretical frameworks have been established with different approaches

to peacebuilding. Key among them are, as categorized by Rigual (2018)," (1) economic, (2) liberal, and (3) critical, etc. (as cited in Uesugi et al., 2021). According to Rigual, these approaches to peacebuilding emerged due to various assumptions about the causes of conflict. For instance, she contested that since economic peacebuilding approaches hold that conflict arises due to economic issues such as greed, and resource curse, peacebuilding must address economic grievances. Also, she presents that liberal assumption blames the absence of democratic governance as the main cause of conflict. As such, peacebuilding must be accompanied by the institution of democratic values and institutions. A key criticism against the liberal approach to building peace is that its peace programs and packages are more or less carried out by outside actors, as it is something programmed and planned by 'them' for 'us' (Millar, 2014). In response to this top-down approach, critical peacebuilders have instead advocated for other peacebuilding approaches, including the 'local turn,' and the hybrid form of peacebuilding.

1.5.4 The 'Local Turn'

The practice of peace intervention is not a new phenomenon. But as far as we are talking about contemporary history, this practice could be traced back to the end of WWI, which precipitated the creation of the League of Nations for the attainment of global peace and prevention of other major world wars. Failing to meet this goal, the league collapsed, and the United Nations emerged in 1945 to continue from where its predecessor had stopped. Even though this global body has been able to prevent other major world wars, it has struggled to maintain peace in individual countries. This struggle is partly associated with the approach (Western-centric liberal peace approach) that has been employed by the global body to implement peace in societies that have experienced violent conflicts over the past decades. These societies, mostly found in the global south, are entirely new to Western-centric peace approaches. Mac-Ginty (2008) for example argued that liberal peace minimizes the opportunity for traditional local peacebuilding approaches to work (As quoted in Bargués-Pedren and Randazzo, 2018. Also see other examples by Doyle (2011) and Chandler (2014) for a critique of the liberal peace approach). In fact, these societies have cultures and customs that are inimical to the universalist ideologies of liberalism. For instance, a key cause of disagreement against the Western liberal peace approach has been the debate on universalism and relativity of human rights. The foundation of such debate was laid by some key proponents of the concept, Kant (1895), for example, who saw interdependence

among states as the main solution to world peace. For Kant, such interdependence would be guided by intergovernmental institutions (UN, for instance) and global norms (like the Universal Declarations of Human Rights) which would dictate the interests and interactions of states. However, while the Western liberal approach to peace sees human rights (especially those the UDHR advocates for) as universal concepts that must be implemented to the core to attain peace in post-conflict societies, these societies have continued to hold on to cultures and norms that see human rights as relative to context. Therefore, the liberal approach to peace has tremendously struggled to attain peace in these societies. Consequently, this has resulted in a return to local approaches to peace.

Specifically, the idea of turning to a local approach for peacebuilding began gaining momentum in the post-Cold War era. This 'turn' heavily hinges on the catastrophic failures of the liberal peace approach in Rwanda, Somalia, and Bosnia (Leonardsson, and Rudd, 2015) and recently, Afghanistan. This explicitly and implicitly indicated that liberal peace is not the best-suited peace for the 'Third World,' or the 'Global South' as proposed by the West. Apparently, it became imminent to scholars in the peace literature that the 'need to turn to local approaches was now or never.' As such, voices calling for a local peace dimension eventually became stronger. For instance, Lederach (1997), argued vehemently against what he called a 'statist approach' to building peace in divided societies. For Lederach, attaining durable peace lay in the inclusion of the locals.

The 'local turn' is a peacebuilding theory that advocates for local ownership of peacebuilding processes by local agencies and practices. This appeal for local ownership is supported by the conviction that any peacebuilding effort that is not supported by the local population will inevitably fail since they, the local people, "have to live with it" (Donais, 2012). As such, resistance, and responses from the 'local' eventually emerge, as seen in places like Bosnia and Herzegovina (Kapler and Richmond, 2011) where local resistance challenged the less locally contextualized EU's peacebuilding approach. Apparently, South Sudan is a typical example where the local turn, as evidence in the huge presence of local actors in the country's peacebuilding process, especially the youth, is observed. If there can be any, the adage of the "local turn" would be "support us in our local struggle for peace rather than entirely imposing on us western liberal notions." Connotatively, the phrase implies turning to local approaches and

local actors for securing sustainable peace in the face of all the challenges accompanying liberal peacebuilding as a traditional approach to peacebuilding.

The term "local" is emphasized significantly, as can be seen in the sentences above. This suggests that a definition of the term itself is necessary. Since the 'local turn' came to light at the beginning of the new millennium, Randazzo (2016) argued that proponents have approached the concept of building peace from below. It is this bottom-up or local approach which Mac Ginty (2015) further argued that it could be dissociated from the concept of territory and instead seen in terms of relationships, activity, and networks if only it is approached critically. For Paffenholz (2017), what hinders the local turn is the dualistic and essentialist conception of the international and the local, which are introduced as the only pertinent sites of power or opposition. Two among the leading advocates for the "local turn" strategy, Mac Ginty and Richmond (2013), further viewed the "local" as Locally based organizations in war and post-war environments seeking to identify and initiate peace processes, with or without foreign assistance, while assuring legitimacy at both the local and international levels (as also quoted in Jackson and Albrecht, 2018). Indeed, looking at South Sudan, it is evident that while the youth organizations operated mainly on external donor funding, they also created the environment for peace to thrive even without such funding. The lack of such financial partnership, however, negatively affected their effective operations, leaving a space for questions such as 'can the local entirely build peace without the influence of the international?'

Despite gaining momentum, it appears that consensus does not exist on the exact meaning of the term (USIP, 2022). Despite this weakness, USIP (2022) was nonetheless able to tie the phrase to "two separate groups," as shown in the following passages.

The first group who advocates for the 'local turn' interprets "local" as geographical — a physical location that is sub-national, regional, or community-based rather than national. Building local peace, for them, entails moving from the capital to the sites of conflict and interacting there, (USIP, 2022, para. 7).

The second group, on the other hand, begins with the assumption that "local peacebuilding" is about a specific collection of social places and actors. Based on research on "everyday peace," this viewpoint contends that what distinguishes local peacebuilding is a commitment to working from the bottom up, centering, and empowering "authentic" grassroots voices in

communities, and allowing them to define what peace means rather than funding agencies or program staff, (USIP, 2022, para. 9).

As mentioned in the excerpt above and in the sentences that followed, two key issues stand out in the entire ‘local turn’ debate. These are local spaces and local agencies. Despite the lack of consensus generally among academics on the exact meaning of the term ‘local’, it is safe to say that, at least, these scholars see local spaces and local agencies as key subjects in the local turn debate. This makes the theory even more relevant to the current study. The case studies for this dissertation are all local youth organizations in South Sudan: SSYPADO, ICSS, AYA, and SAADO. Furthermore, these youth agencies are also very locally grounded. In other words, they are all operating in the South Sudanese society, addressing different but similar concerns of their different local communities.

As it is with the traditional theory in peacebuilding, the ‘local turn’ has also faced challenges and some backlash among academic scholars. First, it is said to lack clarity or that the peacebuilding academic field lacks consensus on what the term ‘local’ actually means (USIP, 2022). In other words, the term seems to be relative among academic scholars, depending on who is defining it. Also, the local turn runs counter to universalism which is at the core of liberal optimism and ideas of universal rights (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013), which is the second impediment, and one that has previously been mentioned. This notion of liberal universalism has always been the point of contradiction for relativists. The majority of the post-conflict nations where westerners have exported peace are in the global south, where cultures are vastly different. For instance, it is not customary in many African nations for children to report their parents to the authorities or take legal actions against them. Also, the ability of traditional, globally designed, financed, and supported peacebuilding initiatives to co-opt and undermine the local turn is a key difficulty that local turn faces, according to Mac Ginty and Richmond (2013). Finally, the local turn does not specify the specific local actors to target. The theory does not explicitly state whether the local groups targeted are youth or youth-led organizations. Local groupings are not homogeneous, as one may imagine. Different local organizations advocate different local concerns, such as indigenous rights, women's rights, youth inclusion, etc.

1.6 Conclusion

Young people have been seen as active drivers of conflict in the continent. This dissertation

counter argues this narrative by demonstrating the positive involvement of young people in peacebuilding in the continent. What this chapter has therefore done is to simply lay down the foundation for this argument. First, it presented, through the study's problem statement section, the current argument on the involvement of young people in conflicts in Africa. It then presented the position of this dissertation through the dissertation's research aim. Moving forward, the chapter then accounted for how data was gathered to effectively respond to the study's research questions and aim. Finally, this chapter also highlighted the importance of this study, its shortcomings as well as the theoretical framework that guides the study. In short, this chapter has introduced the dissertation, ranging from its main purpose, rationale and the method used to conduct the research. However, to firmly establish the study into the existing literature, it is quite important to dive further into the academic works around the topic under study. This is where the second chapter, which is dedicated to reviewing the key literature on the study's topic, comes in. It is therefore now important to turn our attention to this review.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

THE AFRICAN YOUTH, ECONOMIC IDENTITY, WAR, POLITICAL VIOLENCE, AND JIHADIST TERRORISM

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Existing Perspective on the African Youth, Conflict, and Violence

Some scholars (Omeje, 2005; Urdal, 2006; Aning&Atta-ASAMOA, 2011; Paolo,2017) have portrayed Africa's youth as drivers of conflict and violence in Africa because they have participated in violence, armed conflicts, and extremist groups (UNDP, 2016), as well as due to youth bulge—a demographic bomb or weak economic identity (Fuller & Pitts 1990; USAID, 2005). On the contrary, this is far from the reality of the African youth. Africa's youth have contributed to building peace on the continent (McEvoy-Levy and Berents, 2015; Cihan& Ozerdem, 2022). For instance, Adzande, (2022) argued that Nigerian youth were involved in managing conflicts between cattle herders and farmers by forming vigilantes and making sure that a win-win justice prevailed among the conflicting parties. The problem, as argued by Cihan& Ozerdem (2023), is that the literature only recently focused on youth's potential in post-conflict societies. This thesis holds that the young people who have participated in violence and conflict, as pointed out by the literature, were victims and not perpetrators. These youths were either brainwashed into fighting for a cause other than theirs or victims of their political and economic circumstances. Therefore, this thesis demonstrates how young people actively support peacebuilding in Africa.

Academic scholars (Kalyvas, 2001; Berdal 2003; Erikson and Wallesteen, 2004; Sambanis, 2004; Collier&Hoeffler, 2004; Kalyvas, 2009; Hoeffler, 2011, etc.) have accounted for the relationships between African youth, violence, and conflict using several yardsticks such as youth economic identity, jihadist terrorism, war, and political violence. This literature review chapter, therefore, examines this argument under the following headings: the economic identity of the African youth, African youths, civil wars, and politically motivated violence, African youths, and jihadist terrorism. To critically analyze the literature, this chapter will also integrate the study's research questions into relevant sections of this review.

2.2 'Economic Identity' of Youths in Africa: A Springboard for the Argument?

African youths have often been implicated as drivers of conflict and violence not necessarily because they are naturally violent but partly due to their weak 'economic identities,' or weak

income levels (Fuller & Pitts, 1990). Economic identity could be defined as an individual's economic status, which includes one's income level, or his or her identity in the labor force. In this instance, weak economic identity translates into African youths not having adequate income or sources of income to support themselves and their immediate families either due to unemployment or underemployment. Based on Fuller and Pitts (1990), this happens when there is a lack of an adequate economic structure to meaningfully engage the youths; eventually leading to a demographic bomb—a huge population of impoverished youth ready to resort to violence at any time. Consequently, a candid examination of the argument under review requires an exploration of this identity.

Africa is incredibly fortunate in terms of its abundance of both natural and human resource wealth. With regards to natural resource wealth (which are also mostly lootable resources), the African continent surpasses all other continents by an exceptionally large margin as it has over 30% (1/3) of all the mineral resources in the world, 12% of the global reserves of oil (see Macamo, 2022, p.1), 8% of the global reserves of natural gas reserves, as well as 10% of global freshwater supplies (United Nations Environment Program-UNEP, 2022). Up to 90% of the world's chromium and platinum are found on the continent (see Das, 2022, p.3). Africa has the biggest cobalt, diamond, platinum, and uranium reserves in the world (UNEP, 2022). This beautiful region is also home to nearly half of the world's gold (Aljazeera, 2022). The second-biggest tropical forest and the largest arable landmass in the world are all found in Africa (AFDB, 2016). See **Figure 1** below for a breakdown of the top mineral resources per country.

Figure 1: Africa's Natural Resource Wealth

NATURAL RESOURCES

Top minerals per country

The most abundant resource for each African country per tonne of production.



Source: Aljazeera <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/2/20/mapping-africas-natural-resources>

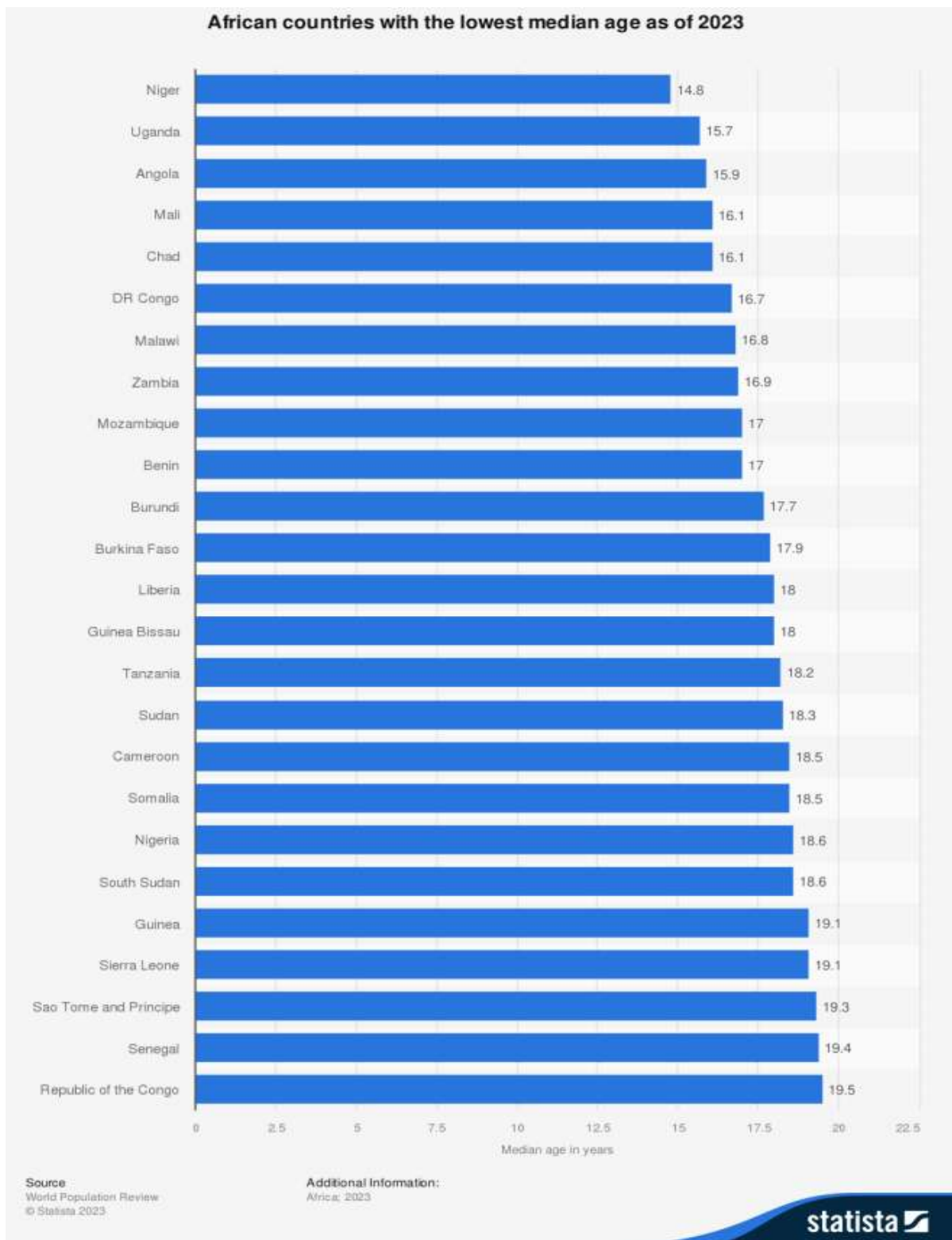
Lootable resources can have far-reaching negative consequences if not effectively managed. To understand the “why and how,” it is important to turn to the resource curse theory (Auty, 1993) for further discussion. The phrase “resource curse” describes the opposite correlation between economic development and reliance on abundant natural resources (Badeeb et. al., 2017; as quoted in Karstens, 2021). Put simply, the theory holds that natural resources are more likely to become a problem than a blessing to countries rich in natural resources since they become highly dependent on these resources for economic growth. In the example of South Sudan, despite being rich in natural resources, it is among the least developed sovereign states globally due to years of

conflict (EU, 2021). While Sefa-Nyarko (2016) argues that “it is simplistic” to entirely relate the civil war in South Sudan to lootable resources (oil in this situation), he however agrees that the resource curse theory partly accounts for the problems of the South Sudanese civil war. For Collier (2004), the greed to attain resources can also warrant people’s participation in civil wars. Le Billion (2004), further argued that belligerent factions also express violence in the vicious patterns of resource extraction and predation. In examining the RUF’s resource strategies in Sierra Leone’s eleven years civil war, Marks (2019) believes that armed groups use different strategies such as resource rhetoric and production to extract and manage lootable resources during armed conflict.

Since the resource curse theory surfaced in 1993, several scholars (Hausmann & Rigobon, 2023; Ross, 1993; Di John, 1993; Deacon, 2011; Brollo et. al., 2013, etc.) have weighed in on the debate with some arguing that natural resource abundance can be a blessing rather than a curse (Makepe et. al., 2014). These resources can indeed be essential elements of a country’s economic growth. For instance, many of the countries illustrated in **Figure 1** above depend heavily on natural resource wealth for revenue. In South Sudan, oil generates 95% of exports, over half of the GDP, and roughly 90% of all governmental income (BMZ, Nd).

Given the aforementioned data regarding resources, it is clear that Africa is top of its class with regards to global natural resource wealth, particularly mineral resources. However, the existence of natural resources and knowledge of them requires the availability of other resources, such as human resources, to be able to harness such natural resources effectively and efficiently for the benefit of its people. Fortunately, the African continent does not only have a huge human resource base but also a very young population. For instance, more than 70% of Africans in Sub-Saharan Africa are under 30 years old, making it the continent with the youngest population in the world (UN, 2022). With regards to individual countries, Africa’s newest country, South Sudan has 73.7% of its population under the age of 30 (UN Envoy on Youth, 2020). Another overwhelmingly resource-rich nation on Africa's west coast, Sierra Leone, has 80% of its population under 35, (Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015). Nigeria, Africa's most populous and economically powerful nation with over 200 -million people has over 60% of its entire demography below 35 years (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012). See **Figure 2** below for a breakdown of African countries with the lowest median age as of 2023.

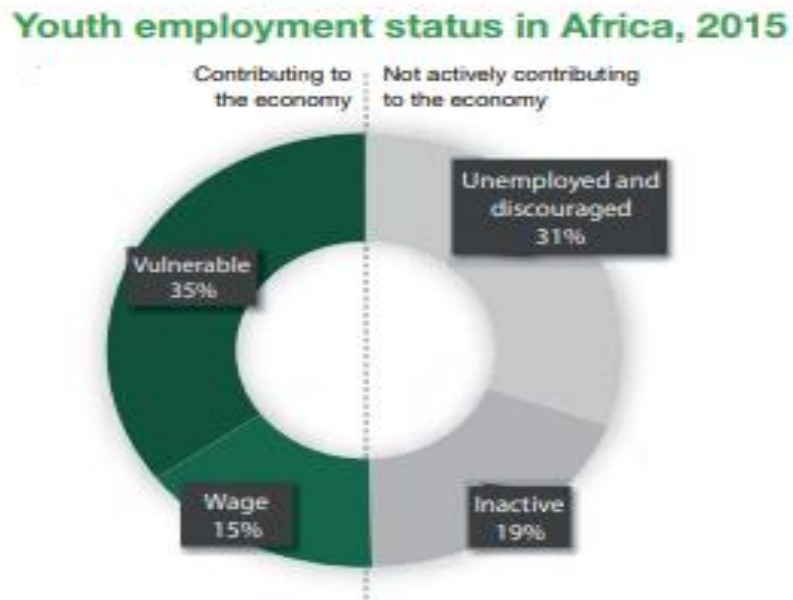
Figure 2: African Countries with the lowest median age as of 2023



Source: Statista <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1121264/median-age-in-africa-by-county/>

What do these statistics mean for the continent and its people? What are even the economic options available for youths to meaningfully engage in peacebuilding on the continent? Having such an enormous amount of natural resource wealth and an incredibly young, energetic, and vibrant human resource base means that the continent should be number one with regards development in the world both in explicit and implicit terms. Unfortunately, this is far from the economic reality of Africa. For instance, as of 2022, Africa had the lowest World GDP per capita- 16%, in economic terms, whereas the richest continent or region in the world, North America, had 376% world GDP per capita, the highest in the world (Statistics Times, 2021). By 2003, about half of the 3 billion people who lived on less than \$2 a day were under 24 and resided in the developing world (UN, 2003). Today, 1/3 of Africa's four hundred and twenty million youth aged 15 to 35 are unemployed and discouraged; another third are vulnerable employees, and only one in six are wage earners. 90% reside in middle- and low-income countries (AfDB, 2016;also see Youth Power, 2021). The story is even horrific in individual countries like Sierra Leone, where 70% of its youths are either underemployed or unemployed (ILO, 2017). In South Sudan, the unemployment rate remains extremely high. Out of its 9.2 million population in 2013 (World Bank, 2014), only 5% were receiving wages or salary through employment (as quoted in Edmond, 2014). See **Figure 3** below for the status of youth employment in Africa by 2015.

Figure 3: Youth Employment Status in Africa, 2015



Source: African Development Bank https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Images/high_5s/Job_youth_Africa_Job_youth_Africa.pdf

This high level of unemployment greatly affects young people's ability to contribute to the gross domestic product of South Sudan (Deng, 2016). As of 2022, World Bank (2022) estimates that 2/3 of the 11.4 million population of South Sudan (World Bank, 2021) needed humanitarian support. Overall, the country's history of protracted and intractable conflicts may partly be responsible for the dire existing economic situation of its people. Put simply, while the African continent remains to be the wealthiest resource-rich (both in terms of natural and human resources) region in the world, it remains to be the poorest region in the world by far. **Figure 4** below displays historical data on sub-Saharan Africa's unemployment rate since 1999.

Figure 4: Sub-Saharan Africa Unemployment Rate 1999-2021.

Sub-Saharan Africa Unemployment Rate - Historical Data		
Year	Unemployment Rate (%)	Annual Change
2021	7.62%	0.37%
2020	7.25%	0.67%
2019	6.59%	0.12%
2018	6.46%	0.01%
2017	6.45%	0.21%
2016	6.24%	0.41%
2015	5.83%	0.04%
2014	5.79%	0.08%
2013	5.71%	-0.15%
2012	5.86%	-0.08%
2011	5.94%	-0.08%
2010	6.02%	0.33%
2009	5.68%	0.03%
2008	5.66%	-0.30%
2007	5.96%	-0.16%
2006	6.12%	-0.11%
2005	6.23%	-0.12%
2004	6.34%	-0.31%
2003	6.65%	-0.11%
2002	6.76%	0.12%
2001	6.65%	-0.01%
2000	6.66%	-0.01%
1999	6.67%	0.06%

Source: Macrotrends. <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/SSF/sub-saharan-africa/unemployment-rate>

Nevertheless, while the continent's wealth can develop the growing youth bulge into a demographic dividend, it has however not been effectively and efficiently harnessed to achieve this goal thereby laying the foundation for the continent's youth's potential involvement in violence and conflict. This means that the continent, to a significant extent, lacks the economic options for young people to meaningfully contribute to peacebuilding in the continent. This macro perspective on African region regarding unemployment and other significant economic

problems demonstrate micro-level difficulties in countries such as South Sudan, especially for young people. In fact, some authors argue that indeed a linkage may exist between unemployment and violent conflicts. Stewart (2015) for example concluded that conflict is more likely in places where marginalization exists in terms of both unemployment and underemployment especially when some groups become deprived relative to others. Collier (2000) echoes this, arguing that unemployment is a clear incentive for joining uprisings as it plays a significant role in greed and grievance. However, as cited in Stewart (2015), Cramer (2010) noted that the lack of insufficient statistics on the labor supply and researchers' poor comprehension of the mechanics of the labor market in many sub-Saharan African nations make it difficult to clearly link unemployment to conflict.

As noticed in the discourse above, young people on the continent indeed have a weak economic identity and in turn lack adequate economic options to meaningfully engage in peacebuilding on the continent. Moving forward, it is important to evaluate other yardsticks used to qualify African young people as drivers of conflict and violence.

2.3 Civil Wars, Political Violence, and the African Youth

In Peace Studies (PCS) and International Relations (IR), civil war (an internal armed conflict that occurs within the boundaries of a state) remains to be one of the key areas that have received intense academic attention, especially in the aftermath of the Cold War (Zartman, 1995; Collier, 2000; Kalyvas, 2001; Berdal 2003; Erikson and Wallesteen, 2004; Sambanis, 2004; Collier&Hoeffler, 2004; Kalyvas, 2009; Hoeffler, 2011; Mundy, 2011; Kaldor, 2013; Voors et al., 2017; Marks, 2019). The cold war's demise also signified the eventual decline of dictatorships in many countries, particularly in Africa (Levitsky&Way, 2010). It subsequently ushered in a period that can be described as the "new independence." It is a period during which many countries mostly in Africa, engaged in armed conflicts to regain their independence for the second time, though this time from their own political leaders who had subjected them to years of penury, dictatorial, authoritarian, and oppressive rule. According to the United Nations (2003), there were 111 recorded armed confrontations between 1989 and 2000. Peace analysts and political economists (Berdal 2003; Erikson and Wallesteen, 2004; Sambanis, 2004; Collier&Hoeffler, 2004; Kalyvas, 2009; Hoeffler, 2011) have given these conflicts, which are now referred to as "new wars" due to their identity politics components, change in actors, goals, victims, and sources of financial support (Kaldor, 2013), significant scrutiny. One aspect of

these analyses focuses on how these new civil wars emerge. Based on Collier and Hoeffler(2004), civil wars emerge mainly due to greed or grievances, or both—one of the most debated arguments ever put forward since the emergence of this discourse. By greed, the authors argue that people join resistance movements based on the calculation of what they would gain from joining than sitting on the fence. While, in some other situations, others do so to right certain wrong which includes historical repression, marginalization, and exclusion—grievance.

In some of the debates about civil wars, the role of youth has stood out whether explicitly or implicitly. For instance, for Fuller and Pitts (1990), where youth cohorts surpass the majority of the demography without the requisite economic strength to transform them into a demographic dividend, such cohorts may become a demographic bomb ready to explode at any time. In fact, Aning and Atta-Asamoah (2011) make the case that the parallel impact of the youth bulge problem has never been absent from the conflict experiences in West Africa since 1990 (Aning & Atta-Asamoah, 2011). While Fuller and Pitts' 'youth bulges' explanation may seem nebulous, several authors have been able to quantify it. According to Samuel Huntington, a society becomes particularly prone to conflict when the youth cohort hits a "critical threshold" of twenty percent of the total demography,(as stated in Urdal, 2006, p. 7) especially when the society has little or no economic foundation to transform the youth cohort into a demographic dividend. In other words, Huntington's 20% implies a cohort that is largely unemployed and underemployed; a situation that I refer to as a 'weak economic identity.' While Urdal (2006) concluded that youth bulges indeed enhance the likelihood of civil war, particularly in situations of economic depression, the author did not find any evidence, either expressly or implicitly, that countries with youth cohorts (15-24) above a critical point of 20% are prone to conflict.

While there is disagreement among scholars (Kalyvas, 2001; Berdal 2003; Kalyvas, 2009; Hoeffler, 2011; Mundy, 2011) over the role youths perform in civil wars, it is worthwhile to remark that they all concur that the presence of huge, impoverished youth cohorts can pose a great concern to security and peace. This is important. Nevertheless, *can this argument be valid for the African region regarding their role in various conflicts?* Delving further into existing literature, one may find evidence suggesting that youth have both been perpetrators and victims of conflict in Africa. Indeed, the conflict in South Sudan reveals the critical role the youth play in armed conflict.

With respect to South Sudan, Human Right Watch (2015) accounts that thousands of young

people, some as young as 13, were recruited into armed movements in the South Sudanese war. Movements organized by youth in neighboring Sudan resulted in the ousting of President Omer Hassan Ahmed al-Bashir and ushered in a democratic transition (The Carter Foundation, 2021). When the more than twenty years of civil war between the Sudanese Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA) and Sudan's government (see Dogah, 2022) in the South ended with the signing of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), militias such as the "white army" militias, comprising of mainly male youths, made post-war governance exceedingly difficult for the SPLA Government in the South (Arnold and Alden, 2007). Stringham & Forney (2017) argued that besides ethnic tensions and other factors being part of the endemic causes of South Sudan's civil war, the "white army" repeatedly rebelled against the ruling class, whom they hold responsible for the growing disparities between urban and rural communities.

Going beyond South Sudan, a 2003 UN report estimates that about 300,000 young soldiers—the majority of whom were between 10 and 24—were putting their lives in danger during armed conflicts (pg. 374). UNDP (2016) found that, in military forces and armed organizations around the world, young women constituted approximately 10% to 30% of these groups. Also, around 100,000 girls under the age of 18 were reportedly engaged in armed warfare in 2008," (UNDP, 2016). Going by a 2011 study conducted by Aning & Atta-ASAMOA, young people made up nearly 95% of the combat soldiers in the civil armed conflicts in Liberia, Côte D'Ivoire, as well as Sierra Leone. This is also echoed in Suleiman's 2019 study where he held that according to studies, the majority (90–95%) of Nigeria's conflicts are caused by the youth.

While the literature portrays the involvement of youths in violent conflict over the years, the question it suggests is "What options (whether policy, institutional, or security wise) are available to young people to effectively contribute to peacebuilding in the continent?" Effective youth peacebuilding requires an enabling environment, something that has been missing from the continent for quite some time. The African Union (AU) Constitutive Act, The Africa Union Commission's Strategic Plan 2004-2007, and the Africa Youth Charter (AYC) adopted by AU in 2006 have all recognized young people's role in Africa's development. As meticulously organized in UNSC's resolution 2250, UNSC asks state parties to build an environment that promotes youth peacebuilding by including them in making decisions at every level to combat salient issues including conflict and violent extremism. This resolution also requires states to protect and partner especially with youth actors through adequate support to conduct anti-

violence activities and promote social cohesion (UNSCR, 2015). On the contrary, African countries have woefully failed in this regard (Resnick & Thurlow, 2015; Abink, 2021). Therefore, while we cannot be oblivious to their negative role in conflict and violence, it can however be also naive to ignore the failures of governance and political leadership in Africa to provide the enabling environment for youth peacebuilding over the past decades especially as required by Resolution 2250. This is where one of this dissertation's arguments that even "the young people who have participated in violence and conflict over the years were victims of their political and economic circumstances," comes in. For instance, endemic corruption, historical youth neglect and marginalization, patronage and clientelism, tribalism, ethnocentrism, and regionalism have often been referenced as major root causes of the civil wars in Africa after the demise of the cold war, especially in Sierra Leone (TRC, 2004). Besides having been historically neglected (Bangura, 2016), over 40% of the young people who join rebel groups claim that their motivation for doing so is a lack of employment, according to a World Bank survey from 2011 (as quoted in Africa Renewal, 2017). Similarly, Urdal (2006) found that youth bulge (a condition implicitly created by weak political leadership, Collier, and Hoeffler, 2004) increases the possibility of armed conflict. Such a condition has the potential to lead to 'grievance,' something Collier and Hoeffler (2004) agreed may influence, to some extent, the onset of civil war. Also, using Sierra Leone as a case study, Kunkeler and Peters (2011) argued that that youth violence in developing nations is still rooted politically. This further supported the thesis' argument that political leadership plays a key role in the involvement of youths in violent conflicts.

Today, over six hundred million youths live in unsafe and conflict-affected situations around the world (UNDP, 2016). Consequently, these conflicts have equally had a devastating blow on young people. The different types of violence that accompany conflicts that last long affect young people in a disproportionate way (Beren, 2014). According to estimates, 90% of all deaths due to direct armed combat include young adults (UNFPA, 2015). Based on WHO (2015) report, around 200,000 youths aged 10 and 29 are murdered annually, and almost all these killings take place in middle- and low-income economies. It is unfortunate to learn that despite being at the epicenter of conflict and violence, young people receive extraordinarily little attention. For instance, the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth (2016) concluded that since young people are regarded to be more resistant and, therefore, of moderate concern, worldwide humanitarian

assistance is mainly focused on children and not youths.

While the literature portrays Africa's youth's negative involvement in conflict over the years (Omeje, 2005; Urdal, 2006; Aning&Atta-ASAMOA, 2011; Paolo,2017), it is important to note that this role has not always been negative and most of the continent's youth are neither violent nor participate in violence (UNDP, 2016). The youth possess immense potential to drive change as they are equipped with energy, education, a substantial population, and have a significant stake in the future. They have already been involved in peacebuilding activities in various capacities. For instance, the author of this thesis has a verifiable track record of advocating for peace as a member of civil society organizations. While pursuing a Bachelor of Social Science degree in Peace and Conflict Studies at Fourah Bay College, The University of Sierra Leone, the author joined the Campus Peace Club Sierra Leone (CPC-SL) in 2017. This organization is a community-based youth group that aims to prevent conflicts and violence among young individuals in universities and secondary schools. After he and his senior colleagues graduated, they transformed this organization into a national non-governmental organization, which now focused on getting youths actively involved in the peacebuilding processes of post-conflict Sierra Leone, through research, training, and sensitization. Today, CPC-SL operates under the name, Center for Research, Peace, and Youth Affairs (CRPYA). Also, in South Sudan, youth organizations such as the Upper Nile Youth and Development Association (UNYDA), I Can South Sudan (ICSS), Active Youth Agency (AYA), and the Smile Again Africa Development Organization (SAADO), are actively involved in the peacebuilding processes of South Sudan. Among these are, but are not restricted to, facilitating the training and participation of other youths in the peace processes of South Sudan, serving as peace mediators, promoting peace education etc. In fact, it is not as if the few that participate in conflict and violence are naturally violent. These youths clearly lack the enabling environment to meaningfully promote peace. As argued by McEvoy-Levy (2012), youth lack the "official authority" in post-conflict peacebuilding responses, especially placemaking. Parrin et al. further developed the notion in 2022 that the youth are frequently seen as passive beneficiaries of transitional justice (TJ) endeavors, rather than being actively involved in the formulation and implementation of the said initiatives. This holds both in the wake of armed conflict and during the transformation from autocracy to democracy. Factors such as bad governance, historical youth neglect and marginalization, conflict-related deaths, insecurity etc., have made it difficult for young people to

effectively contribute to peacebuilding in the continent. Despite these obstacles, this thesis will demonstrate how young people can be active agents of peace on the continent.

Apart from civil wars, African youth have additionally been considered to be drivers of political violence, whether it be in the media (BBC, 2022), at meetings of state plenipotentiaries((UN, 2015; UN, 2022), or in scholarly discussions (Richards, 2003). For instance, Urdal (2006) concluded that a significant rise in the danger of terrorism, civil wars and violent demonstrations relates to relatively large youth cohorts. For Barakat and Urdal (2009), cultures with high male secondary school dropout rates are more prone to experience conflict because of youth bulges. This risk may be even higher in low- and middle-income nations. Similarly, a UNICEF (2014) report found that eight out of ten adolescent girls who were killed due to violence were aged between 15 and 19.

Youth unemployment has also frequently been a significant factor in this situation. For instance, Enria (2015) presented that high youth unemployment is not only a global concern but is also categorized as a major indicator of the possibility of relapse to conflict and violence. In her previous work, she made a case that the dreams of Sierra Leone's marginal young people for employment are linked to their participation in political upheaval. This is consistent with her contention that violence is not innate to unemployment, but that the influence of unemployment on political activism is mediated by social variables and the unique characteristics of the postwar political economy (Enria, 2015). Additionally, she established that violence is used to demonstrate devotion to political strongmen, (Enria, 2015). In consonance with Enria (2015), Bangura (2016), the author found that the historical abandonment and exclusion of youth in Sierra Leone, which is rooted in the present-day socioeconomic status of things, has resulted in vibrant but discontented, violent, and dissatisfied young people eager to turn to any means of survival. Paalo (2017) argued that despite having the potential to strengthen democracy through cooperative, democratic actions with their mother political parties, youth wings on the African continent typically participate in violent, aggressive politics, undermining hopes for a positive contribution from the region's demographic majority. However, this is due to their systematic exclusion from fundamental democratic processes. This agrees with Cubitt (2012) that political elites in Sierra Leone have long-standing, ingrained tactics for pursuing and achieving their own goals in contests for national power, including politicizing violence and pressuring youths into politics. As previously concluded above, this also explicitly and implicitly shows that political

leaders have been deliberately denying the youth the opportunity to actively promote peace. Rather, they have been used by these same political figures to cause the same violence African youths are accused of perpetrating.

The sections above have examined the role of African youth in civil wars and political violence as debated in the literature. In this examination, it became clear how scholars established the conceptual framework surrounding civil wars. These scholars further tied youth unemployment, greed and grievance and the physical participation of African young people to the onset and continuation of civil wars and political violence in Africa. Despite these, the discourse showed that the lack of an enabling environment has hindered young people from actively participating in peacebuilding processes in the continent over the years. In the end, a deeper comprehension of the role youth play in peacebuilding is critical to the establishment and maintenance of long-term peace in conflict-affected African countries.

2.4 Jihadist Terrorism in Africa and Youth

The youth violence-related debate has also made its way into the discourse of factors giving rise to jihadist terrorist activities (where perpetrators conduct terror activities in the name of fighting a holy war or jihad usually with the intent of establishing an Islamic caliphate/state). Going further into the debate first requires a comprehension of what the term “terrorism” means. In contrast to other grave legal offenses, particularly those involving grave international law violations, i.e., war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity, terrorism has hardly been the subject of a substantial international treaty. However, ICC was established for this specific purpose which is to prevent Violations of human rights and other major violations of international law (See UN Human Rights Council’s report on South Sudan, 2019). For this discussion, a few definitions that seem to enjoy wide usage are considered. The United States has been very instrumental in the fight against global terrorism. As a result, it is crucial to consider both its definition and some other relevant definitions that have been proposed by academic scholars regarding terrorism. As quoted by Ruby (2002) the United States “Department of State defines terrorism as a politically motivated violence perpetrated against civilian targets by subnational groups or clandestine operatives, usually with the aim to influence a populace,” (p.10; Ogbeni, 2021,p.19). This description includes “three important qualities that distinguish terrorism from other forms of violence. Terrorism must begin with political overtones. Terrorist operations are motivated by political goals and are intended to dictate or influence government

policies (Moore, 2011, p. 3; as also quoted in Ruby, 2002. Pg. 10).

It is vital to stress that the US Department of State's definition does not have a dominant impact. In fact, there have been several other definitions put forward by different scholars. For instance, Schmid (2012), believes that:

Terrorism is defined as a belief about the presumed efficacy of a specific form or strategy of fear-generating, forceful political violence and, on the other hand, a conspiratorial practice of planned, illustrative direct violent action without moral or legal restraints, mainly directed at civilians and individuals who are not fighting for its propagandistic and psychological impacts on different target groups and opposing sides, (as quoted in Henrich, 2023, p.9)).

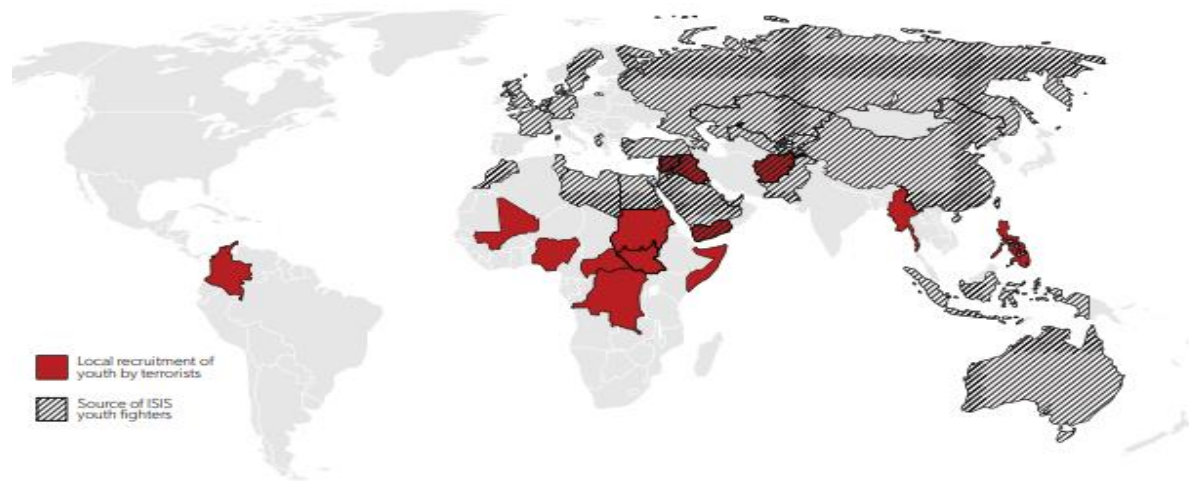
While the definition of terrorism is still up for debate, to put it simply, terrorism is an act done by using guerrilla tactics, typically brutal and crude, intended to instill fear in the hearts and minds of unarmed individuals or destroy government or civilian objects to achieve a certain objective(s). Terrorism takes different forms i.e., 'Islamist terrorism, conservative terrorism, anarchist terrorism, ethno-nationalist terrorism, and separatist terrorism,' (Europol, 2022). To situate it within a period, terrorism can occur during both war and peacetime. During war whether civil or interstate, rebel groups or armed forces can engage in several acts of terror sometimes against civilians and/or civilian objects leading to "genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing" (Butcher and Hallward, 2020, p.5), etc. depending on the nature and intent of the acts. Peace times may witness terror activities in the form of political, and ethnic confrontations or jihad. Typical jihadist terror movements include Al-Shabaab in Somalia, ISIS in the Middle East, and Boko Haram, which operates in Nigeria, West Africa.

Like the debate on civil wars, academic scholars have also invariably linked the youth cohorts to extremism across Africa. For example, Stephen (2016) claims that a failed educational system, family dynamics, social settings, and neurological factors might expose youths to radical views. This is consistent with the United States Institute for Peace's 2014 report that young men in Nigeria are more prone to radicalization because of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and weak family ties (USIP, 2014). For Piazza (2007), while the level of a state's economic growth is not a factor in determining whether there would be acts of terrorism, parameters such as demography, ethnoreligious heterogeneity, intensified repression by the state, and, perhaps most importantly, partisan politics structure have been shown to be key indicators of terrorism. Contradicting Piazza's view of economic determinants, Bagchi, and Paul (2018), using the MENA (Middle

East, and North Africa) and Afghanistan, and Pakistan areas as a case study, discovered that youth unemployment intensifies domestic terrorism—contradicting Piazza. For Bagchi and Paul, the quantity of natural resource wealth also appears to be negatively associated with domestic terrorism. Hence, implying that youth unemployment is not the only intensifier of domestic terrorism.

Delving further into existing literature, it is obvious that African youths have also been involved in some of the major jihadist extremist activities. As quoted in Weine et. al., (2009), at least 18 Somali teenage boys and young men who had previously been resettled as refugees in the US, abandoned their homes in the Minneapolis neighborhood and fled to Somalia for recruitment into al-Shabab (The Youth), East Africa's biggest and most notorious terror group. By 2011, the majority of Somalia's southern and central regions were under al-Shabab control (Shinn, 2011). It is, without a doubt, beneficial for the schools of thought that have successfully labelled African youths as violent to have a well-known and powerful terror group brand itself as "The Youth." South Sudan, the case study for this research, has essentially no case of violent extremism or terrorism. While reviewing details of the government's battle with the SPLM-IO, Romaniuk, et, al., (2018) found no references to violent extremism. In Kenya, however, since the Kenya Defense Forces were dispatched to combat the al-Shabaab extremist organizations in Somalia in November 2011, Recruitment, and indoctrination of young Kenyans into domestic terrorist activities continued (Kariuki, 2019). Moving from East to West Africa, ICCT (2013) found that some of the youths (those arrested by the Nigerian Government on terrorism charges) disclosed at one point receiving transactions of 5,000 Nigerian Naira from the terrorist group known as Boko Haram, who in turn sent them vessels of petroleum to set ablaze educational institutions in Maiduguri, Borno State. Overall, the statistics above have shown how African youths have participated in jihadist terrorist operations in several subregions of the African continent. See **Figure 5** below for detailed statistics.

Figure 5: Countries/Regions Where Terrorists Have Recruited Youths.



Source: Jessica Trisko Daden: Tackling Terrorists' Exploitation of youth. <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/report/tackling-terrorists-exploitation-of-youth/Tackling-Terrorists-Exploitation-of-Youth.pdf> [European Proceedings](#) | [Home](#)

Violent extremism has often been discussed in relation to youth, youth unemployment and other factors. This section examined the discussion around jihadist extremism in relation to youth and youth unemployment. It pointed out that factors such as state repression, ethnoreligious heterogeneity, youth unemployment, demography and structure of partisan politics may give rise to violent extremism. It also concluded that while evidence shows youth involvement in some of the major jihadist terrorist movements in the African continent, youth involvement in violent jihadist extremist movements in South Sudan is almost non-existent. This implies that despite the numerous challenges faced by the African youth, young people in South Sudan have the potential to be active players in the country's peace processes.

2.5 Overall Assessment

The whole idea of this dissertation emerged as a result of the negative portrayal of African youths in existing studies on conflict and peace. As presented above, some academics have successfully labelled African youths as drivers of conflict and violence in Africa (Omeje, 2005; Urdal, 2006; Aning&Atta-ASAMOA, 2011; Paolo,2017) despite the contradiction by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) that majority of African youths are neither violent nor have any interest in violence and conflict even though many live in fragile societies (UNDP, 2016). This dissertation has further argued that even the few who have a track record of participating in violence and conflict did so because of their political and economic predicaments (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004; Udal, 2004; TRC Sierra Leone, 2004; World Bank, 2011; Kunkeler

and Peters, 2011; Bangura, 2016) . In short, these youths are victims, not deliberate drivers of conflict and violence as presented by these academics (Omeje, 2005; Urdal, 2006; Aning&Atta-ASAMOA, 2011; Paolo,2017).

McEvoy-Levy and Berents (2015) recognized the significant role that young people play in everyday peacebuilding. They noted several strategies that young people use to build peace every day, such as mobilizing against injustices. Specifically, African youth have been particularly active in building peace, especially in post-conflict societies. For instance, South Sudanese youth organizations like the South Sudan Youth for Peace and Development Organization, I Can South Sudan and Active Youth Agency have made significant peacebuilding efforts. These efforts have been complemented by similar work by young people in other African countries, such as the Patriotic Advocacy Network, which mobilizes Sierra Leoneans around patriotism, and the Center for Research, Peace, and Youth Affairs, which trains and sensitizes young Sierra Leoneans to be actively involved in their country's peacebuilding process.

This dissertation posits that the aforementioned academics reached their conclusion without taking into account the political and economic circumstances that rendered the youth susceptible to engaging in conflict and violence. Let us for example take and digest the evidence presented by Aning and Atta-Asamoah (2011) who contended that young people have been part of the drivers of civil conflicts in West Africa since the 1990s by presenting that, in fact, 95% of combatants in Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, and Liberia's civil wars were young people. At the micro level, looking keenly at the economic and political condition of young people in countries like Sierra Leone, one will realize that it has not all been that golden (ILO, 2017) for the country's enormously young population (Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015). For example, 70% of Sierra Leone's youths are either underemployed or unemployed (ILO, 2017). Apparently, such an economic predicament has forced many of the country's unemployed or underemployed youths to engage in politically motivated violence as a means for economic survival. The impacts of this dire economic situation, backed by historical youth neglect and marginalization, is clearly articulated by Bangura (2016) who argued that youth who are energetic yet disillusioned, violently tested, and dissatisfied have been produced because of the inheritance and continued historical abandonment and exclusion of youth, which is also inherent in the current socioeconomic status quo. These youth will use all means necessary to survive. As such, the economic and political leadership crises of the 1970s, and 1980s in Sierra Leone manifested

through endemic corruption, regionalism, patronage and clientelism, tribalism, and ethnocentrism (TRC Siera Leone, 2004), made the country's young population 'ready-made rebels' who wasted no time in joining a revolution to change their future when the opportunity presented itself in the early 1990s. This argument remains true elsewhere in Africa such as South Sudan where the World Bank (2014: as quoted in Edmond, 2014), found that as of 2013, only 5% of South Sudanese were receiving salary or wages through employment out of its 9.2 million population. Due to political leadership deficiency, the country's political leaders have further exploited South Sudanese youth's economic vulnerability leading to their active participation in the country's post-independence civil wars. This political-leadership predicament is vividly portrayed in the responses of one of this dissertation's key informant youth respondents below:

South Sudanese Youth Leader 2:

"The majority of the rebel movements took advantage of young people's idleness and unemployment. Young individuals under 30 make up 71% of the combat groups. Instead of actively inciting violence, they were only its victims. These youngsters were primarily being brainwashed. They were misled by political leaders using phrases like "the other side is targeting us—our tribe." "We need to fight and deal with them to improve the country for us because they are the reason you are unemployed."

Like the micro level analysis, this victimhood is also projected in the macro level analysis. For instance, data shows that by 2015, 35% of Africa's youth were vulnerable; another 31% unemployed and discouraged, and 19% completely inactive; while only 15% received wages (Africa Development Bank, 2015). The continent's youth unemployment rate also grew by 7.62% by 2021 (Macrotrends, 2021). As argued by Deng (2016), this high level of economic vulnerability vehemently affects young people's ability to effect economic change in places like South Sudan. In fact, Collier and others have tied this condition to the outbreak of conflict and violence. While Collier (2000) sees economic incentive as a rationale for joining rebel movement, Stewart (2015) also believes that economic marginalization increases the likelihood of conflict.

Therefore, in contrast to categorically portraying African youths as drivers of conflict, the argument presented throughout this section have clearly demonstrated that the youths who participated in conflict were victims of their political and economic circumstances and not deliberate drivers of conflict and violence. These young people have a great deal of potential to promote peace on the continent, despite having been victims.

2.6 Conclusion

Some scholars have portrayed young people (between 15 and 35) in Africa as drivers of conflict and violence (Omeje, 2005; Urdal, 2006; Aning&Atta-ASAMOA, 2011; Paalo,2017). Scholars have linked the African youth to political violence, jihadist terrorism, and war using yardsticks such as youth economic identity, jihadist terrorism, war, and political violence. This literature review, therefore, examined these linkages between youth, violent conflicts, political violence, and jihadist terrorism using the yardsticks mentioned above.

The discourse above shows that while youths have indeed participated in conflict and violence over the years, the majority are neither violent nor actively participate in violence or conflict. Interestingly, even the few who participated apparently did so due to the lack of the enabling environment to actively promote peace. They were mere victims of their political and economic circumstances.

Thus, even though there are studies supporting the nexus between youth, economic identity, violence, extremism, and war, this dissertation argues that youth can play an active role as agents of peacebuilding since they have the required education, are more impacted by violence and conflict and have more stake in the future; that majority of African youths are neither violent nor participate in violence and that those who participate are mere victims of their political and economic circumstances and not deliberate drivers of conflict and violence. In fact, an increasing number of evidence show that youths, both men and women, have the potential to serve as active agents of change (UNDP, 2016). For instance, by the time South Sudan's national peace dialogue ended in 2020 (which is the focus country or case study of this dissertation), it had convened twenty thousand South Sudanese, including fifty youth delegates, five hundred and twenty representatives from the Abyei Region as well as the 79 counties in South Sudan(CMI, 2021). That notwithstanding, it is crucial to further narrow down this argument to South Sudan, the dissertation's case study.

CHAPTER THREE

SOUTH SUDAN: THE PAST, THE PRESENT, CONFLICT AND THE ROLE OF THE YOUTH.

3.0 INTRODUCTION

South Sudan, Africa's newest country, has a history that goes as far back as pre-colonial days. From precolonial, colonial, independence, and secession, this lovely nation has passed through many different facets of political and identity instability. After its secession from Sudan in 2011, South Sudan immediately experienced two major armed conflicts. Within these wars, the role of the youth has clearly stood out. Therefore, this chapter, first, examines South Sudan's precolonial, and colonial history and how these experiences influenced the country's post-colonial experiences as an autonomous region under the Republic of Sudan. The chapter will briefly discourse the two major wars that occurred between Northern and Southern Sudanese peoples and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that succeeded in resolving the almost 50 years of armed instability. Finally, after examining Southern Sudan's successful secession from North Sudan, the chapter will then access the post-independence armed conflicts that occurred in South Sudan and the role of South Sudanese youths in these conflicts.

3.1 Precolonial History of The Two Sudan

The racial composition of Sudan (before its secession) is the result of events that occurred which dates hundreds of years back. While historical accounts of the pre-colonial inhabitants of the land now known as Sudan and South Sudan (previously Sudan) are ambiguous, it is apparent that migration greatly contributed to the current racial and religious composition of the two Sudan. The current Arab composition of Sudan (frequently referred to as North Sudan in this dissertation) is said to be the result of the adventure of medieval Arab adventurers. These travelers who ventured into sub-Saharan Africa from the north around the 16th century described the land or the 'great Negro belt' that spanned the Red Sea as 'Bilad es-Sudan' an Arabic term meaning 'land of the Blacks' to signify the skin color of the original inhabitants of Sudan (which also previously included South Sudan)- before Southern Sudan's secession (Deng and Ruay, 1994). The statements above suggest in implicit and explicit terms that before the adventure of the 'medieval Arab adventurers,' the presence of other races was more or less non-existent except for the Black people who inhabited the land currently known as Sudan and South Sudan. While this apparently remains to be the case, South Sudan cannot be said to historically be part of the Republic of Sudan (Deng and Ruay, 1994). This is possibly because the late precolonial history of Southern Sudan has received less academic attention (Kapteijns, 1989). On the other

hand, the early Arab travelers are said to have mainly come in contact with northern Sudan, the land stretching along the Red Sea. The Sudd Swamp, one of earth's largest permanent swamps, (Gurdon, 1990), which borders Southern Sudan on the north, created a natural barrier against any foreign expedition. This swampiness and the unfavorable climatic conditions made Southern Sudan very difficult for foreigners to access. Therefore, it is apparent that the description “Bilad-es- Sudan” by the Arabs was made only in reference to northern Sudan. This implicitly means that Southern Sudan became part of Northern Sudan mainly due to colonial conquest; something that will be further discussed later in the proceeding section. The incoming Arabs eventually established Islamic states which comprised the Sudanese kingdoms of late precolonial Sudan (Keptejns, 1989). Like the white Christian missionaries who successfully changed the culture of Igbo Communities in precolonial Nigeria in Achebe’s ‘Things Fall Apart,’ (Achebe, 1958) the Arabs who were effective in changing Northern Sudan's appearance never arrived in substantial numbers or by force. The most notable were the Fazara, Rabia, Jad, Banu, and the Juhanna, who reached Sudan primarily through Egypt in handfuls (Deng and Ruay, 1994).

As it is with the precolonial history of ethnic groups in many African countries i.e., the Mane Invasion in the 1550s from Mali to Sierra Leone (Rodney, 1967), dominant tribes in Southern Sudan are believed to have also migrated to present-day South Sudan. South Sudan comprises multiple ethnic groups, about 64 distinct ethnic groupings although disagreement remains over the reliability of this figure since some key data supporting this number were collected under regimes in Sudan (Kon, 2015) A list of major ethnic groups in the country is further presented below. While Kon (2015) argues that these ethnic group were united because of common identity in terms of their struggle against repression from the North, this did not remain the same especially after independence from Sudan. As stated by Shulika and Okeke-Uzodike (2013), several local interethnic clashes have occurred in South Sudan since it voted to secede. For instance, disagreement between Dinka and Nuer political leaders led to the outbreak of the country’s first civil war in 2013, shortly after it gained independence in 2011 (Radon and Logan, 2014; Aljazeera, 2016).

While major tribes like the Dinka claimed to have left the Gezira to present-day South Sudan after the 11th century Kingdom of Alwa fell, to evade slave trade and slavery, the predecessors of the Nuer, Atuot, Nilotic Luo etc., the Shilluk Luo had also already historically occupied the region by the time the Islamic Sinnar Sultanate fell, and the Turco-Egyptians (Leonardi, 2007)

arrived in the 19th century (Beswick, 2016). As quoted in Deng and Ruay (1994), the following statement by a native genealogist, Mohamed Wahab Dolib, in his writing in 1680, throws a clearer light on the origin of both the Sudanese Arabs and traditional tribes of Sudan (both Southern and Northern Sudan):

The Nuba, Abyssinians, and Zing (blacks) were Sudan's first indigenous people. Every tribe which descended from the Hamag is a member of the Zing community, while every (tribe) that descended from the Funj is a member of the Nuba family. Other than these, the ethnic groupings of Arabs in Sudan are immigrants who have mixed with and proliferated with the tribes indicated above. Some of them have kept Arab features, while portions of the Nuba and Zing who dispersed among them have embraced Arab qualities; yet, in each case, they are aware of their ancestry (Deng and Ruay, 1994, p. 14).

Sudan's social, racial, and cultural makeup were forever altered by the arrival of the Arabs, as is the case with migration and multiculturalism everywhere. The lives and lived experiences of the Sudanese people were even further affected by the conquest of the Turco-Egyptians over Sudan in the 1820s, which we will now turn our attention to.

3.2 Colonial History Part I: The Turco-Egyptian Conquest (1821-1855)

The Turco-Egyptian conquest of Sudan had severe impacts on the lives of the Sudanese people. While this section is dedicated to examining these impacts, it is equally significant to, first, briefly, look at the conquest under review. The Turco-Egyptian rule was a period of Egyptian rule over Sudan between 1821 and 1855 which is known as *Türkiyya* to the Sudanese people (Ewald, 1991). Egypt's interest in exploring the source of the Nile River brought them to Sudan, leading to their subsequent occupation and administration of Sudan (Warburg, 1985). By the time this conquest materialized, Egypt had already come under the Turkish Ottoman Empire's control and merely served as a vassal state or Khedivate to the Sultan of the superior Ottoman empire. However, decades into the conquest of Sudan, Turco-Egypt also fell under the influence of the British Empire. By 1870, the Khedivate faced severe economic constraints. Consequently, the then Khedive of the Khedivate, Isma'il Pasha traded Turco-Egypt's shares of the Suez Canal Company to Britain due to the country's dire fiscal crisis (Cambridge University, Nd). Although Egypt was still a Khedivate of the Ottoman Empire, the country's fiscal crisis granted Britain the opportunity to co-finance it and eventually control the affairs of the country

by 1878 (National Army Museum, Nd). In 1882, Britain finally conquered Egypt to protect its trading interest with India through the Suez Canal against other European powers such as France (Deng and Ruay, 1994). Since by 1881 Egypt itself had come under British rule, the country depended on the British to help crush the Mahdist revolution that would eventually end the first Egyptian rule over Sudan in 1885 (Jacobs, 1985). The revolution, organized by Mohammad Ahmad, became known as the modern world's first Islamic revolution (Aljazeera, 2011). He subsequently established an Islamic state known as the Mahdiyyah which lasted from 1885 till 1899 when the British and Egyptians took over again.

The Turco-Egyptian conquest of Sudan arrived with it several challenges that greatly affected the lives and lived experiences of the Sudanese people. This invasion was just as cruel as one may have expected. The level of this cruelty has been clearly established in academic literature. In the words of Carole Collins (1976) in her book *'Colonialism and Class Struggle in Sudan,'* the socioeconomic impacts of the Turco-Egyptian conquest and administration are unequivocally stated:

The subjugation proved highly brutal, exacting an enormous cost on the Sudanese peoples and tribes." The assassination of Muhammad Ali's son around Sennar in 1822 resulted in the massacre of about 30,000 people, nearly all of the inhabitants of that region (p.4).

Turco-Egyptian imperial rule had a catastrophic effect on the Sudanese society." The subsistence economy was disrupted as entire districts were depopulated, and slave raids, while not on the massive scale like the trans-Atlantic slave trade, drove tribes into the jungle. Because of the unstable societal circumstances, the few economic and manufacturing endeavours undertaken (an iron foundry in the Kordofan hills; experiment planting of indigo, cotton, and sugar) perished (p.4).

During this period, the leadership of Turco-Egypt, the Ottoman-Egyptian military rule over Sudan was heavily dependent on using Southern Sudanese (who were mainly black) as slave fighters or Manluks to fight in the Egyptian army, although the army also included Turks and Albanians. As quoted in Warburg (1989), this is explicitly echoed in the journals of Charles Gordons, the British Governor General who was killed when he was sent to help the Egyptians expel the Mahdist Islamic revolutionists.

The land was overrun by people who hunted and dealt in slaves, and district governors, thirsty for pelf, assisted and abetted them in their raids. Seven-eighths of the inhabitants were slaves (pg.2).

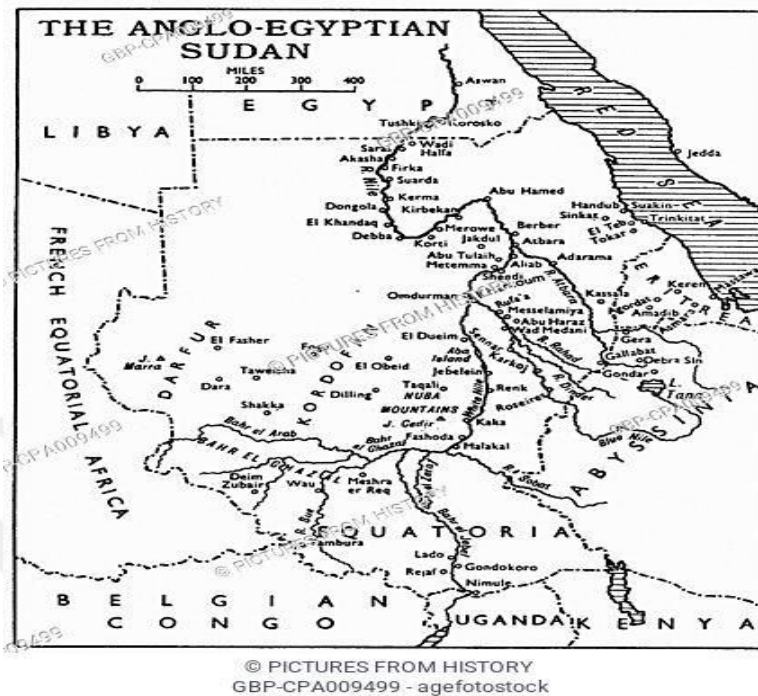
Eventually, the need to end the foreign rule over Sudan saw the rise of Mohammad Ahmad, a self-proclaimed 'Mahdi' (in Islamic belief, a Mahdi is a Messiah who will rule and rid the world of injustices etc. before the world finally ends) who rose up against the Turco-Egypt rule to establish an Islamic caliphate. But again, the rule of Turkiyya and Mahdiyyah made South Sudan as a place where Northern Arabs would trade and capture slaves (Derso, 2012). Despite that, the Mahdist rose up against a more superior Egyptian rule which was fully backed by the British Empire, the Mahdist Islamic revolution won and subsequently established an Islamic caliphate known as Mahdiyya until 1898 when the British and Egyptians jointly defeated the Mahdiyyah Caliphate and established a condominium administration over Sudan until its independence in 1956. The second part of the colonial administration, the Anglo-Egypt Condominium that subsequently followed is very vital to understanding post-independence governance in Sudan and the subsequent Sudanese civil wars that occurred between Northern and Southern Sudan. It is therefore now important to turn our attention to briefly understanding the dynamics of this checkered colonial administration and how this may have directed Sudan's post-colonial destiny.

3.3 Colonial History Part II: The British-Egyptian Condominium Rule (1899- 1956).

The post-colonial division that occurred between northerners and southerners in the Republic of Sudan could not be dissociated from the country's chequered condominium past. In simple term, condominium control is an ownership over a property or entity by two or more parties. For example, two or more people exercising ownership over flats in a building. When applying it to a state, country or a geographical territory, a territorial entity is referred to as a condominium if two or more foreign sovereign countries simultaneously exercise their sovereignty rights over it in accordance with formally established protocols (Princeton University, Nd). Thus, with regard South Sudan, Britain and Egypt collaboratively governed it. Like many post-colonial countries in the third world, this division has so much to do with colonial legacies left behind by colonial masters, in this case, the British and Egyptians. This section briefly examines the structure and dynamics of the condominium rule; while the section that follows next, will establish how this rule may have contributed to Sudan's post-independence division and subsequently civil wars.

Figure 6 below shows a map of Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.

Figure 6. Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.



Source: <https://www.agefotostock.com/age/en/Stock-Images/map-anglo-egyptian-sudan-south-sudan.html>

The annexation of Sudan by Anglo-Egypt (as shown in the map above) was a condominium rule over Sudan that began in 1898 (Sanderson, 1962) because of the ‘Accord for the Governance of Sudan,’ (Deng and Ruay, 1994). This rule left a lasting mark on the political culture of Sudan. This rule was like the “divide and rule” policy, what Lobban (1978) refers to as “the age-old technique of subjugation,” that Britain implemented in colonies like Sierra Leone, and the India sub-continent due to lack of adequate economic strength of the Crown. In Sierra Leone, for example, the British Empire was initially, mainly, interested in the urban part of Sierra Leone, Freetown. As such, the Queen of England, or the British Crown, only declared Freetown as a crown colony, which was directly governed by the Crown. Years later, as the Crown’s interest grew over the interior of Sierra Leone, Fredrick Cardew, the British Governor General in Freetown, declared a protectorate over the interior or hinterland of Sierra Leone (the rest of the country apart from Freetown) which was governed indirectly by local chiefs but answerable to the British Governor General, hence direct and indirect rule. This setup was known as the ‘Divide and Rule’ system since Sierra Leone was divided into a ‘colony (Freetown, ruled directly by the Crown) and protectorate (Cecillie, 2023), protected by the Crown (the interior part of the country otherwise known as the hinterland or simply, the rest of the country.’ The

same policy was introduced in the India Sub-continent where princely states remained under the direct control of their traditional rulers (but answerable to the British Crown) and the rest of the Sub-continent under direct British control. While Britain did this alone in her other colonies, it was different for Sudan. Britain and Egypt implemented the condominium rule in Sudan despite that Egypt was also under the dominion of Britain at the time. It was 'divide and rule' because Britain and Egypt maintained two separate systems in Sudan; Arabic and Islamic System in Northern Sudan and British and English system in Southern Sudan and certain policies (some which required Northerners to acquire permits before going to the South) prohibited Northerners from easily venturing into the South (Rahim, 1966; Mayo, 1994).

The condominium rule went through two different faces i.e., 1899-1919 as the first phase and 1920 till independence as the second phase (Rahim, 1966). During the first phase, the condominium powers were interested in Northern Sudan. For some scholars (Rahim, 1966), this was partly because Southern Sudanese people were very ancient, 'grass-wearing humans,' violent, and reluctant to colonial rule. The South was also swampy and not economically viable; and finally, Northern Arabs had already tasted civilization courtesy of Turco-Egypt. As such their major colonial policy over the South was to exert law and order over the native inhabitants of the South and in the process 'enable missionary activities' (Rahim, 1966). But the British's increase in the interest to rid Northern Arabs from trading, administering, and eventually settling down in the South, pushed them to introduce the Southern Policy (Mayo, 1994) and the 1922 'Passports and Permits Ordinance' (Sudan Tribune, Nd) to bar the Northerners and Muslims who may want to act in contradiction to this approach (Rahim 1966). The Ordinance created Southern Sudan as a closed district where no entry was allowed or entry by northerners and non-Southerners was only allowed subject to the approval of the British Governor General or his representatives (Derso, 2012). Lobban (1978) describes the extent of this division in his book titled 'National Integration and Disintegration: The Southern Sudan:'

In addition to the missionaries' efforts to promote "tribalism" and ethnic distinction, Southern Sudan was also cut off from the Northern Sudan through a formal public policy that was meant to undermine any feeling of national unity. There was a conscious effort to split the Sudan apart. The idea of Southern Sudan eventually joining Uganda was seriously considered.

As examined above, unlike many other colonies in Africa, for instance, Sierra Leone, the

Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, and Nigeria, colonial Sudan was the perfect example of a condominium state where its affairs were directly run by two foreign powers, the British Empire and Turco-Egypt leading to the imposition of two distinct cultural civilizations. Therefore, since this colonial incubation bred two different outcomes with distinct cultural makeups, coexistence became a farfetched phenomenon after independence. It is therefore important to now look further into how the condominium rule affected cohesion in Sudan after independence.

3.4 Independence, Division, and the Needs of the Southerners.

The dynamics and configuration of the English-Egyptian condominium established after defeating the Mahdist Caliphate, left an incredible semblance on the post-colonial social, political, and economic governance of independence Sudan. After the country gained independence in 1956, regional, racial, and tribal divisions between Northern Sudan and the Southern Sudan accompanied by violent confrontations and civil wars subsequently followed.

Figure 7 below shows map of Sudan after independence from the British Empire.

Figure 7. Sudan before the complete independence of the South



Source: [countryreports.org](https://www.countryreports.org/country/Sudan.htm) <https://www.countryreports.org/country/Sudan.htm>

As stated in Mayo (1994), the British southern policy has often been cited as the source of the Sudanese division since it barred the south from moving north and the north from moving south. In short, it prevented Northern Arabic influence on Southerners. The colonial legacies of the ‘Anglo-Egypt Condominium Administration’ shortly manifested in post-independence Sudan. While the British succeeded in completely dividing Sudan, it woefully failed to bridge this divide at independence. In the words of Riek Machar (1995), now vice president of South Sudan, also a former freedom fighter of the SPLM (a movement established by Southern Sudanese, notably Dr. John Garang, to fight for the liberation of Southern Sudan) and the linkage between the

Condominium Administration's policies and the post independence's north-south division is clearly stated:

Despite the lack of South Sudanese participation, the Khartoum Administrative Conference in 1946 supported North Sudan's colonisation of South Sudan. The British authorities in South Sudan were not there, and the decision was made behind the backs of the South Sudanese people. In order to take control of South Sudan as a colonial province, the British and North Sudanese conspired together with Egypt's backing. South Sudanese and their allies had angry reactions to the British betrayal of South Sudan, which was made public at the 1947 Juba Conference. The Sudan Legislative Assembly was subsequently established in 1948, ratifying the decision to cede control of South Sudan to North Sudan, (Sudan Tribune, nd).

Apparently, Southern Sudan only came under the direct control of the North at independence. Worst still, Southern Sudan only had 4 civil service posts in about 800 civil service seats vacated by the British (Derso, 2012; Aljazeera, 2011). Judging from the strict measures put in place by the British to prevent the North from influencing the South during the Condominium rule, it may not have been in the interest of the British to leave Southern Sudan under the total domination of the North. The British may have seemingly wanted the two regions to be separate states even at independence. In this case, Southern Sudan could merely be regarded as a 'situation gone wrong,' where Britain failed to maintain the independence of Southern Sudan. For instance, based on the extract above, the independence meetings were mainly for Northerners to attend. In fact, even during the Condominium Administration, Southern Administrators were told to hold administrative meetings separately from the North (Deng&Ruay, 1994) so as not to be influenced by the North. Economic problems induced by the Second world war (Darwin, 1988; B.B.C., 2023) may have been a contributing factor to the blunders made by the British Empire in granting independence to her former colonies. In the case of Sudan, since the British Empire was economically not able to maintain its colonies after the second world war (WW2), it pressed for independence without catering to the representation of Southerners in Sudan's post-independence political architecture (Woodward, 2011).

Clearly, the two regions had undergone two separate colonial governance. Therefore, even after independence, the two regions were politically, socially, and culturally distinct from each other.

As a result, placing the South under the direct control of the North, without the consent of the south, and without due regard to their distinct identities created by the Anglo-Egypt colonial administration, was an irreparable blunder made by the British. Nevertheless, the case of Southern Sudan was not unique. The British colonial administration had earlier done the same blunder in the case of Jammu and Kashmir. At independence, Lord Mountbatten (a British lawyer who was sent to help with the separation of the Indian subcontinent between India and Pakistan before granting them independence in 1947) was supposed to separate the Indian subcontinent on a 'majority and minority' rule. Meaning, communities with a Muslim majority were to be allocated to Pakistan while the same was to be done for India with regard to majority Hindu communities. However, despite that Jammu&Kashmir was a majority Muslim community, it was given to India. A key commonality between Jammu & Kashmir and Southern Sudan is that these two regions have experienced decades of protracted armed conflicts because of this colonial blunder. In fact, to date, Jammu and Kashmir remain to be one of the most polarized regions in the world. The same could be said for Southern Sudan. Sudan and South Sudan have also remained protracted since independence because of the colonial blunders explained above.

With the North at the helm of affairs over the South, it was noticeably clear from the beginning that this very 'marriage of coincidence' would not live in peace and harmony. The couples were so incompatible with each other to the extent that one desired total domination over the other. The Institute for Security Studies (2012), unequivocally summarized this desire for total domination in the paragraph below:

Following the overthrow of Ismail al-Azhari, the country's first prime minister, the military authority in Sudan emphasized the necessity of having a single language and religion. The administration adopted Arabic as its official language, and Friday was recognized as a holiday in the south. Foreign missionaries were kicked out in 1962, and religious assemblies outside of churches were outlawed in 1961. Construction of mosques was supported by the government, and chiefs were forced to become Muslims (p.6).

In the years following, discrimination of Southern Sudanese in the North became even more passively institutionalised. For example, the Sudan Government introduced Arabic as the only

official language in the country (Abdelhay, Makoni and Makoni, 2016). This affected Southern Sudanese in many ways especially in terms of education. For a people who had acquired education in English, suddenly doing it in Arabic was definitely not an easy task. For southerners living in the North, this was both a nightmare and a struggle to secure a future which was very bleak. In Moses' words, the discrimination of Southerners in the academic arena is made clear in his interview with Al-Jazeera (2011).

“When I started school in the North, they told my father “Your son is studying the religion of non-believers, and he reads English. Here, we do not have the English and religion of non-believers. He must take Islamic studies.” “When we went to the Ministry of Education, they told us to go back to the head teacher to solve our problem. We went and he refused to make any changes. Thus, I took Islamic studies. Even when I only failed Islamic studies, I repeated the entire year (year 3),” (Aljazeera, 2011).

With such increasing polarization between the Southerners and Northerners, it became apparent that Sudan was sitting on a timebomb that was ready to explode at any time. Indeed, shortly after independence deepening polarization and extreme discontent gave way to the major civil wars that plunged the country into decades of armed conflicts and underdevelopment. The section following will therefore examine the dynamics of these civil wars.

3.5 The 1955-1972 and 1983-2005 Civil Wars: The Results of the Historical Division

The result of the historical division between northerners and southerners or the ‘prosperous centre and the periphery’ as in the words of Robert O. Collins (2008), started to manifest immediately at independence. While both the first and second Sudanese civil armed conflicts could be indirectly related to the effects of the Anglo-Egypt condominium rule (considering its divide and rule policies), the first civil war is directly related to events that occurred in 1955. During the latter part of the condominium rule, military outposts in Southern Sudan were occupied by South Sudanese army members. However, this military arrangement was soon going to change for the state of Torit a little before Sudan's independence. In 1955, the government of Sudan ordered a unit of Southern Sudanese soldiers, the Equatorial Corps, stationed at Torit in Southern Sudan to disperse a group of protesters (Collins, 1988; Institute for Security Studies, 2012). These soldiers became sympathetic towards the protesters probably because they shared some forms of commonalities i.e., they were both South Sudanese and experienced the same form of oppression from the Northern government. Consequently, the Northern government requested for their transfer to Khartoum in Northern Sudan and to be subsequently replaced by

Northern Sudanese soldiers. Collins (1988) has it that the soldiers were very concerned since many of them had never been to the North, and they were going to leave their families behind. To add insult to the already deepened injury, an anonymous fax arrived informing members of the Equatorial Corps that they were being taken into slavery in the North. As it appears, there is more to the explanation given above. An event very specific and triggering must have ignited the first Sudanese civil war, which would go on to become one of Africa's longest armed conflicts. This specific event or final stroke that broke the camel's back is explicitly explained in the words of Joseph Lagu, the former Southern Sudanese rebel commander who formed the first major rebel movement, the 'Anyanya' (which translates as snake venom) during Sudan's first civil armed conflict against the government of Northern Sudan:

“When a group of Southern Sudanese soldiers within the Sudanese army refused to obey their Northern Sudanese commanders, one of the Northern Sudanese commanders shot a Southern Sudanese soldier in the arm as a warning for disobedience. Southern Sudanese soldiers then broke into the garrison, got weapons, killed northern commanders and any Northern Sudanese civilian they could find,” (Aljazeera, 2011).

Within the course of the conflict, power in Northern Sudan changed hands. Jaafar Muhammad Nimeiry took power in a coup in 1969 (Khalid, 2018). With him, the first Sudanese conflict eventually ended three years later when him and the South Sudanese Anyanya rebel movement signed the Addis Ababa Agreement (Woodward, 2011; Khalid, 2018). This agreement was incorporated into the Sudanese constitution adopted the following year. Subsequently, Southern Sudan became an autonomous region courtesy of Sudan's 1973 constitution (Dersso, 2012). See **Figure 8** below for a map of Sudan after autonomy was granted to Southern Sudan.

Figure 8: Sudan During Autonomy



Source: *Sudan Tribune* <https://sudantribune.com/article268993/>

For the next decade, Sudan would go on to enjoy a relatively peaceful society with no major armed conflict. This was also a period of relief, dignity, inclusivity, and hope for Southern Sudanese people since they now had the chance to direct their own affairs and shape their own destiny somehow autonomously. However, this period of relief, dignity, inclusivity, and hope would only last as much as the central government would allow it. In a dramatic move in 1983, President Nimeiry degraded Southern Sudan's autonomy to "three weak and powerless administrative regions," stripping southerners of their autonomy (Dersso, 2012). As quoted in Institute for Security Studies (2012), Johnson (2003) has it that the second Sudanese civil war started in 1983 in retaliation to Sudan's central government's suspension of the constitution that gave southerners autonomy and against several racial and ethnic discriminations suffered by southerners under the northern government. For Collins (1988), the events of 1983 parallel that of 1955; "it was 1955 all over again."

Eventually, Southerners vehemently disliked President Nimeiry's policies including his unilateral decision to violate the 1973 constitution by dissolving Southern Sudan's autonomy in 1983. Worst still, as in 1955, the Sudanese government requested the Southern Sudanese units, stationed in towns in Southern Sudan, to be moved to the North and be subsequently replaced by Northern units. This combination of factors gave birth to the Sudanese Liberation Movement/Army (Collins, 1988; Tounsel, 2016), with Dr. John Garang as the leader (Collins, 1988) and another major armed conflict that would last for the next 22 years.

While relevant literature on the number of youths in both the Sudanese Government's military and the opposition movements especially the SPLM is scarce, it is the position of this study that

young people may have made up a significant proportion of these armed groups, due to the very young nature of the Sudanese population. In fact, young people, including children were key targets of recruitment by the major parties in these wars; many who evaded capture and forceful recruitment would later become known as the ‘Lost Boys of Sudan,’ (Leonardi, 2007). Many youths may have also joined the liberation movements to fight dictatorship, historical repression, marginalization and to secure their future as this was the main goal of the SPLM. Judging from historical documentaries (Aljazeera, 2010, <https://shorturl.at/dhmzJ>, Aljazeera, 2010, <https://shorturl.at/iGNZ9>), Sudanese soldiers and members of the liberation movements appeared to be mainly young boys. The main goal of these liberation movements and the conditions that precipitated their establishment, strongly point to one of the key arguments of this dissertation: that the youths who took part in various conflicts as pointed out by the literature were mere victims of their political and economic predicaments. As presented throughout the discourse on Sudan’s post-independence wars (and as it will also be presented later in the sections that discuss South Sudan’s post-independence wars), political repression, marginalization, racial, cultural, and economic discrimination, orchestrated by central governments in Sudan, had forced Southerners, mostly young people, to take up arms to defend their future through violence.

Equally, these conflicts had significant effects on young people, including children. In 1994, there were over 20,000 displaced children and youth, aged 7 to 17, who had also lost their parents and had stopped going to school (Biel, 2003). Nearly half of the 20,000 young men and boys who fled Sudan during this sad exodus—known as the Lost Boys of Sudan—died from malnutrition, hunger, murder, and other causes on their way to refugee camps in Kenya—a neighboring country— (International Rescue Committee, 2014). The 20,00 children mentioned above were thought to have resisted capture by both the military and SPLM (Biel, 2003, IRC, 2014). Youth have also exploited their military enlistment to make investments in their home or family domain in an effort to fend against capture by the military domain and the domain of "home." (Leonardi, 2007).

With efforts from external peace actors such as IGAD (Butler, 2019), the second Sudanese conflict came to a successful resolution through the CPA signed in 2005. The provisions and the extent to which these provisions were successfully implemented greatly shaped the destiny of the two Sudan in the years following the signing of the CPA. Therefore, it is this ‘destiny shaping’

of the two Sudan by the CPA that the next section will briefly address.

3.6 The 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement- CPA

To put an end to the 1983–2005 conflict in Sudan, the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) (Sudan Tribune, 2005). Efforts by regional and international actors helped facilitate the peace process that ended Sudan's fifty years of violent armed instability (Carney, 2007). As examined in the preceding sections, Sudan experienced two major civil wars immediately after its independence from the condominium regime. After so many years of peace interventions, the conflict was finally resolved through the historic CPA in 2005.

In robust reviews of the CPA, several scholars (Einas, 2009; Belloni, 2001; Aalen, 2013; Rolandsen, 2011) have aired their views on the pros and cons, the prospects, and pitfalls of the provisions, and how the CPA shaped the future of the two Sudan. While some have unequivocally criticized the CPA, others have gone on the defensive. Some have often criticized the CPA to be a result of a quick solution to Sudan's Long-standing war (Rolandsen, 2011). For instance, Aalen, (2013) argued that while the CPA indeed won the war by ending the violent protracted conflict, it actually created the conditions for a relapse since it did not "make unity attractive" and thus played a role in Southern Sudan's complete secession in 2011. According to Aalen, this is so because the CPA sought to both end the war and democratize the country. By doing so, it contradicted itself. Ending the war meant that power was to be consolidated in the hands of conflicting parties (Njuguna, 2021)-which the CPA did, probably because of the desperation to end the war- which is against democratization. For Belloni (2011), despite that the CPA is being commended for finally resolving the decades-long war, it was only the final part of the puzzle. There were other individual accords that had done the groundwork for the final resolution of the civil wars. These include the Machakos Protocol was signed in July 2002, followed by the Security Arrangements Agreement in September 2003 (Britanica, Nd), the Wealth Sharing Agreement in January 2004, the Power Sharing Protocol in May 2004, the Protocol on the Resolution of Conflict in Southern Kordofan and the Blue Nile States in May 2004, and the Protocol on the Resolution of Conflict in the Abyei Area in May 2004(Mbugua, 2014). In contradiction, Rolandsen (2011) contended that despite the pitfalls of the CPA, the room for compromise was small and a significantly "better" deal was doubtful. This is also re-echoed by Einas (2009), who argued that while studies on peace agreements believe that peace

accords usually consolidate power in the hands of signatories at the expense of other political actors, this is not the case when it comes to the CPA. Even while it increased the SPLM and the NCP's credibility and cemented their political domination, the CPA, in Einas' viewpoint, helped provide a huge political space for other political forces in the North and the South.

The pitfalls of the CPA can be quite understandable. The CPA shares so much in common (especially about the condition or atmosphere under which it was signed) with several other peace accords signed across Africa over the past decades. Like the CPA, the Lomé Peace Accord of 1999 (which ended Sierra Leone's 11 years of civil war) was signed in an atmosphere similar to that of the CPA. Tensions were high and the public and the Government of Sierra Leone needed peace to prevail within the shortest possible time. In the case of the Lomé Peace Accord, this warranted Sierra Leone's government to make huge concessions to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). There had been thousands of civilian deaths and millions of displacements. The government itself no longer had a reliable standing army, except for ECOWAS' military forces, the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), to fight the rebels. Therefore, out of desperation to end the war, the Lomé Peace Accord granted the rebels 'blanket amnesty' and made the leader of the RUF, head of Sierra Leone's strategic natural resources. Hence in the case of Sudan, with or without the shortcomings of the CPA, secession was imminent as a result of the Anglo-Egypt colonial governance policies. These policies, like the Passport and Permits Ordinance and the Southern Policy, had already laid the foundation for conflict and eventual separation after Sudan's independence. Indeed, the two regions finally parted company in 2011 when Southern Sudan became Africa's newest nation through a referendum in which Southern Sudanese people voted overwhelmingly for independence.

3.7 South Sudan's Independence and The Subsequent Civil Wars

The complete departure of Southern Sudan from Northern Sudan was long anticipated. Thus in 2011, in an event that would seal this departure, the people of southern Sudan took a unanimous action to make the departure a reality. As per chapter two, section 1.2 of the 2005 CPA, which stipulated that the future of Southern Sudan would be decided by a referendum (UN High Commissioner for Refugees, ND), the Southern Sudanese people voted overwhelmingly, 98.83% (UN, 2011) for complete independence of Southern Sudan (USIP, ND; UNMIS, ND). Consequently, in July 2011, Africa welcomed its newest nation. The affairs of this new nation continued to be overseen by the Liberation Council, (the same body which had presided over the

autonomous Southern Sudan under Dr. John Garang), headed by Salva Kiir Mayardit and Riek Machar, as his vice. To some, the referendum ended a war that destroyed both Southern and Northern Sudan and claimed more than 1.5 million lives, including those of innocent civilians (Nathan, 2011). For the Southern Sudanese people, this was a dream come true, a moment of joy and hope for a brighter future for the new nation and her people. On the contrary, the future of this new nation was not particularly bright, for some academics. Some scholars envisaged challenges concerning state building such as managing the oil and water and orderly transition (Belloni, 2011; Nathan, 2011) that may deter the progress of this new country which its people had hoped for. For Belloni (2011), because of the country's huge developmental, political and security challenges, it would remain a fragile state and as such be at the mercy of international assistance. De Waal (2014) considers South Sudan as a 'kleptocratic state' where its affairs are managed by a corrupt dictatorial, and patrimonial system. De Waal's description of South Sudan as a Kleptocratic state, is further supported by The Sentry (2019) whose report titled 'The Taking of South Sudan,' shows strong connections between South Sudan's political leaders, multinational cooperations, and corruption of the state's major resources especially its oil which has protracted the conflicts that has led to destruction of the country and hugely affected millions of South Sudanese. Indeed, such fear eventually manifested through civil wars not long after the country's independence.

3.8 South Sudan and the Civil Wars

As mentioned above, challenges with the orderly transition of the country started to manifest immediately after the referendum. South Sudan's top political godfathers started disagreeing over key political issues. The stories surrounding the cradle of the South Sudanese post-independence conflicts are overly complicated. To unravel this, we need to undertake two processes. First, to understand why South Sudan's vice president and other cabinet members were sacked and second, whether this may have ignited the civil war. There are two stories surrounding the sacking of Riek Machar, the country's vice president, and other cabinet members. The one told by the South Sudan's president and the other told by others. On the one hand, President Kiir believes he sacked his vice and several other cabinet members due to an attempted or a failed coup d'état they had both implicitly and explicitly participated in a coup against him (Radon and Logan, 2014). Consequently, Machar was relieved of his duty of being the vice president of South Sudan. While President Kiir attempted to arrest him and others,

Machar fled to safety and started a guerilla warfare against the Kiir government while others were detained. However, as captivating as the coup d'état story of President Kiir may be, it is exceedingly difficult to validate such a story put forward by the president (Aljazeera, 2016). On the other hand, President Kiir is said to have felt threatened by Machar's call to challenge his leadership of the SPLM party and that of the country in a democratic process. In the following excerpt, an interview with some prominent youth leaders in South Sudan accounts for this 'democratic version' of the story.

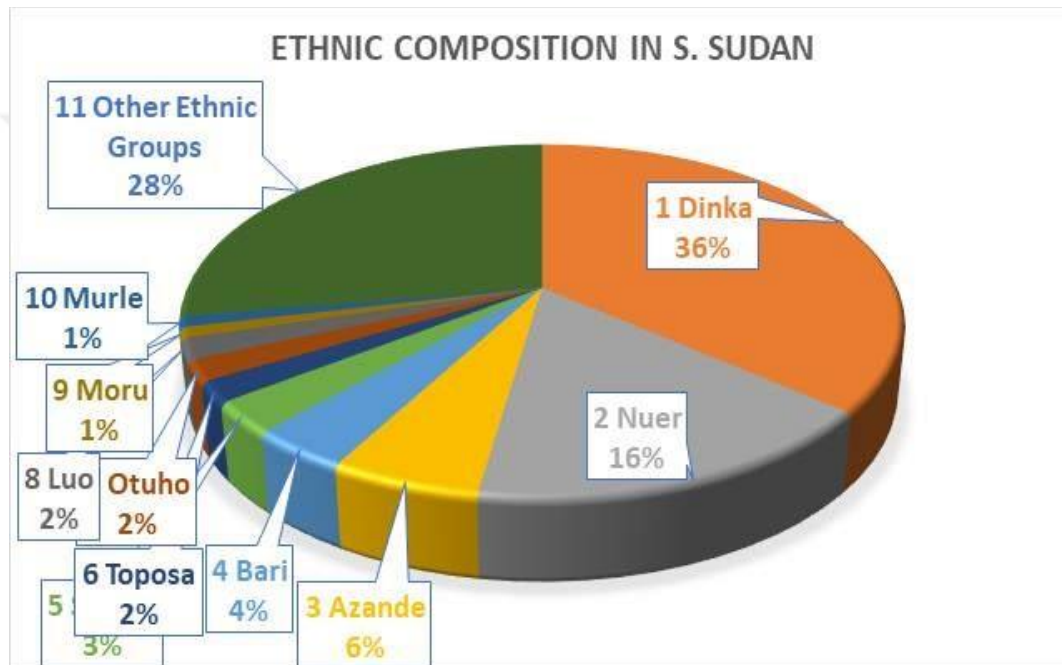
"Riek Machar demanded democratic processes. Among other things, Machar asked for elections within the SPLM political wing to be periodic and elections should be held for especially the party chairmanship position. Moreover, these elections must be held by secret ballot and not by 'raising hands' as they used to be. As such, he had decided to challenge the current president and leader of the SPLM political party for the position of chairman and in the subsequent national election.,\" (Youth Leader 2).

The excerpts above have also been supported by other credible sources with Aljazeera (2016) citing disagreement over who should lead the presidential race of the party to be the real cause of the civil war. In this case, while President Kiir cited a coup d'état attempt to be the main cause of the removal of his vice and other cabinet members, it is also possible that the real cause of his move to sack his vice president might have been that he felt threatened by the democratic demands of Machar, his vice. Above all, while disagreement remains over the real cause of the sacking, the point to note here is that the civil war started after President Kiir sacked and attempted to arrest Machar and the others (note that while others were arrested, Machar escaped). The national army then split along ethnic lines with some backing Kiir and others backing Machar (Aljazeera, 2016).

There is also a third position with regard the causes of the civil war in South Sudan. Scholars such as Nyadera (2018) relate the causes of the armed conflicts in Africa's newest country to ethnic animosities and rivalry. But this has been quickly debunked by other scholars. For example, to negate Nyadera's argument of 'ethnic animosities and rivalry' being the key driver of South Sudan's civil war, Radon and Logan (2014) argued that six out of the eleven political figures detained by the government concerning the suspected coup hailed from the Dinka ethnic group (President Kiir's tribes' men), only two were Nuers (Machar's tribe), and the remaining three were from other ethnic groupings. Therefore, while ethnic animosities may be part of the factors that exacerbated the civil war, as observed above, trigger factors point directly to power

struggle between the political elites within the SPLM Liberation Council. In agreement with this, Adeba (2014), also noted that the conflict however developed ethnic undertones that turned the Nuer and the Dinka, the major ethnic groups in South Sudan, against one another, despite the fact that its basic causes were political in character (Adeba, 2014; cited in Young, 2016). **Figure 9** below shows South Sudan's ethnic composition.

Figure 9: Ethnic Composition of South Sudan.



Source: Pannluel Wel <https://paanluelwel.com/2018/10/21/the-ethnic-compositions-of-south-sudan-how-does-it-look-like-in-your-own-mental-picture/>

The political incapacity of the SPLM itself may have contributed to the conflicts that have occurred within its structure. As Lyman (2013) pointed out, With a small political branch, the SPLM party is still primarily a liberation army. The military wing of the government of South Sudan, Sudan People's Liberation Army-SPLA (Savage, 2014) is more of a coalition of militias, each of which is frequently based on ethnicity, than it is a cohesive national force, and almost all of its top political officers are former generals.

The conflict eventually ended with IGAD's brokered peace deal signed in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia in August 2015. This accord, Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, made a provision for the setting up of a government of national unity that is purely transitional wherein the country's first vice president was to be elected by the

armed opposition, the SPLM-IO (UN Peacemaker, Nd).

3.8.1 The 2015 Accord and the Relapse

As it is with several peace deals, the 2015 South Sudanese peace accord faced enormous challenges to the extent of a relapse to violence and subsequently another civil war. From the onset, it appeared that some parties to the agreement did not envision a positive outcome of the agreement. There were differences in opinion regarding the full implementation of the accord. For instance, while President Kiir is believed to have voiced negative prospect for the 2015 peace deal, his vice president was hopeful. In different statements, they stated as follow:

President Salva Kiir Mayardit:

"We are not moving forward with the implementation of this agreement because of the way it was designed. When I signed this agreement in August last year, I told Uganda's President, Yoweri Museveni, that it was not meant to be implemented," (Aljazeera, 2023)

Riek Machar:

"The accord should be carried out in accordance with both the spirit and the letter of the accord. Because the deal represents a road plan for reforms and, secondly, for establishing an entirely novel system of governance for the country that would lead to democratic elections," (Aljazeera, 2023).

With statements like these, it was clear that the country would eventually relapse into a civil war. Indeed, it did. President Kiir and Machar were in a meeting to discuss ways forward for the 2015 peace accord when fighting broke out outside of the meeting premise between security forces of the government (Mainly Salva Kiir) and the bodyguards of Riek Machar. This and subsequent events led to the outbreak of South Sudan's second civil war after independence.

3.8.2 The 2018 Deal: A Revitalized Peace

The second South Sudanese conflict, since independence, eventually ended in August 2018 with the Revitalized Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) being signed, and the Reconstituted Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGONU) being established in 2021 (UNDP, ND). As with many peace accords, the revitalized agreement made provisions for national elections as part of the implementation of the provisions of the accord. However, there have been several challenges. The power sharing transitional government headed by President Kiir, with Machar as his vice plus four other vices, announced a two-year extension

of the transitional government and thus postponed South Sudan's first election since independence to December 2024 (Crisis Group, 2023). While President Kiir defended that he took such a decision to prevent another relapse and not with a motive to stay longer in power, his first vice president, Machar argued that elections need political space, and such a space does not exist in South Sudan at the moment (AP News, 2023).

3.9 The Youth and South Sudan's Post Independence Civil Wars

This part of the dissertation examines the youth's role in the conflict and makes the case that, like many other African nations where youth have experienced "the bitterness of war," youth involvement in the fight in South Sudan is a result of their political and economic predicament. In other words, they were unintentional victims of conflict and violence rather than active participants in it.

Young people's role in the South Sudanese conflict has received some attention in both academic and grey literature (UN Human Rights Council, 2013; Human Rights Watch, 2015; UNICEF, 2016; UN, 2023; Young, 2016; Craze, Tubianna and Gramizzi, 2016; Stringham & Forney, 2017). Since the conflict erupted in 2013, there have been reports that young people have played significant roles in it. For example, UN Human Rights Council (2013) reported that armed youth organizations like the Gojam or "White Army" and the SPLM/A-IO engaged in combat together. According to the report, Armed youth also assisted government troops, such as the Sudan People's Liberation Army, in planning their operations. Unconfirmed reports, such as those obtained from the author's discussion with two South Sudanese youth leaders, indicate that young people also make up most of the membership of other, smaller rebel groups like the National Salvation Army (NAS). However, regarding the role of certain youth groups like the Nuer White Army in the South Sudanese conflict, Young (2016) has been quick to warn that since the white army is a creation of the community, its defence of the community and attacks on government buildings and towns largely serve community interests rather than those of the SPLM-IO.

Since the war erupted in 2013, South Sudan has experienced grievous human rights violations (UNICEF, 2016). Most of the grievous violations of international law such as sexual slavery, rape, looting and destruction, killing, and abduction, have occurred in the Unity State region, the stronghold of the SPLM/O (Craze, Tubianna, and Gramizzi, 2016). Implicitly, these crimes point

to the youth as part of the perpetrators. As such, without consideration of the rationale surrounding their involvement, the literature above has mainly demonstrated the nature of youth's role in the South Sudanese conflicts.

While the literature above presents the role of youths as drivers or part of the drivers of conflict and co-perpetrators of heinous crimes in the South Sudanese war, it is significant to understand that further examination of the rationale behind this role reveals quite a different story. It is evident that youth participants were mere victims in these conflicts. These youths were either brainwashed or sometimes forcefully mobilized. As rightly stated by a UN (2023) report, geographical, racial, and other identity-based markers have been used by political, military, and traditional elites to incite factions against one another, and they frequently exploit them. As a result, there is a culture of intense mistrust, retaliation, and violence that people use to acquire and assert their political, socioeconomic, and control over others. According to Human Rights Watch (2015), thousands of young people, some as young as thirteen, were enlisted in armed groups during the South Sudanese conflict. UNICEF (2016) also estimated that by 2016, Since the beginning of the fighting in December 2013, approximately sixteen thousand kids have been enlisted by the parties to the conflict. Sometimes, the youths also took the law into their own hands to change their own political and economic realities. As presented in Stringham & Forney (2017), the 'white army,' mostly youth militias, frequently rebelled against the governing elite, whom they held accountable for the rising gaps between urban and rural areas across ethnic boundaries.

Young people's decision to join armed movements could also not be far from their economic realities. For instance, by 2013, only 5% of South Sudan's 9.2 million inhabitants received income or salaries from employment in 2013 (World Bank, 2014; cited in Edmond, 2014). In fact, in a 2011 World Bank report, the majority of young people cited unemployment as the reason for joining armed movements (World Bank, 2011). As a result, Deng (2015) asserted that youth unemployment significantly affects how much young people contribute to South Sudan's gross domestic product since as compared to the regional (17%) and income group (13%) averages, youth unemployment is greater (20% in 2022) (World Bank, 2021). To date, 2/3 of South Sudan's 11.4 million people needed humanitarian assistance according to World Bank estimates from 2022. Thus, these economic realities made them involuntary victims.

There is no doubt that the literature discussed above, regarding youth combatants being victims

of their political and economic predicaments, mirrors actual events. The author engaged two energetic youth leaders from South Sudan in an effort to understand young people's role in the South Sudanese conflict from their perspective as young people. It was evident from their responses that the youths who took part in the civil war did so under duress or because of their very own political and economic circumstances. These vulnerabilities are outlined in the excerpts below:

South Sudanese Youth Leader 1:

"Wherever there is a conflict, there are unmet needs. In South Sudan, the majority of the combat troops are composed of young persons under 30. Specifically, the National Salvation Army (NAS), and the SPLM/O, a group in which my brother fought. They join these groups because of several reasons. First, they do so to show their allegiance to particular ethnic groups. They are being misled into fighting along tribal lines, which is not in their best interests as individuals. Second, they are compelled by economic hardships. Additionally, they are being coerced into joining the fighting troops to some level. You will learn that the majority of the SPLM fighting forces during Dr. John Garang's time were made up of young people who were coercively mobilized."

One of the major weaknesses, as stated by youth leader 1, is the economic situation of young people, which is plainly caused by subpar political leadership that dates back to South Sudan's pre-independence era. The dissertation's literature review section makes specific mention of this as well. If we were to take a deeper look at the viewpoint of another South Sudanese youth leader on why young people participate in the armed conflicts in South Sudan, we would also see that one of the main arguments of this dissertation—that individuals who engage in conflict are victims rather than deliberate drivers—is clearly outlined.

South Sudanese Youth Leader 2:

"The majority of the rebel movements took advantage of young people's idleness and unemployment. Young individuals under 30 make up 71% of the combat groups. Instead of actively inciting violence, they were only its victims. These youngsters were primarily being brainwashed. They were misled by political leaders using phrases like "the other side is targeting us—our tribe." "We need to fight and deal with them to improve the country for us because they are the reason you are unemployed."

It is evident from the argument made above, which was supported by both primary and secondary sources, that the youth who took part in South Sudan's civil war were victims of their political and economic challenges than "deliberate drivers of the conflict." As such, it would be

very unfair and uninformed to categorically paint these youths as deliberate drivers of conflict and violence in South Sudan.

4.0 Conclusion

South Sudan has gone through several facets of cultural, economic, and political instability; as well as civil wars after seceding from the North. Within these wars, the role of the youth has taken central stage. This chapter has introduced South Sudan and the post-independent conflicts. In detail, it first examined the country's precolonial history where it argued that events of the precolonial setup, were responsible for the racial composition of Sudan. It Further delved into the colonial makeup of Sudan. Here it argued that the Turco-Egyptian rule had detrimental impacts on the Sudanese people which warranted an Islamic revolution that overthrew it. Looking further into the second part of the country's colonial experience, the discourse showed that the condominium rule of the Anglo-Egypt administration influenced Sudan's post-independence governance practices eventually leading the country to two major civil wars and the subsequent secession of the South.

At independence, the discourse revealed that the newly independent South relapsed into two major armed conflicts. In these, the role of the youth was addressed. This section established that while young people indeed participated in the conflicts, they were victims of their political and economic circumstances rather than being deliberate perpetrators of the conflicts. In summary, the political elites were using them to execute ethnic and political violence on their behalf. The lack of economic opportunity also exacerbated this victimhood. However, despite all these challenges, youths in South Sudan are playing an active role in the Peacebuilding processes of the country. Therefore, it is important to examine the nature and how this role are played in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOUTH SUDAN: PEACEBUILDING AND THE ROLE OF THE YOUTH

This dissertation's primary goal is to demonstrate the positive role of youth in peacebuilding in Africa by using South Sudan as a case study . Specifically, it sought to examine young people's role in peacebuilding in South Sudan and the impacts of this role on the country's peacebuilding process. It also sought to understand the implications of this role on peacebuilding generally. Despite being labelled as conflict-drivers by some academics (Omeje, 2005; Urdal, 2006; Aning and Atta-ASAMOA, 2011; Paalo, 2017), young people in Africa actively participate in peacebuilding efforts due to their distinctive position and important contributions in civil society organizations, particularly in post-conflict states. In South Sudan, young people have actively participated in the country's peacebuilding efforts as members of civil society organizations, despite this characterization. This chapter will begin by providing a general overview of the South Sudanese peacebuilding process with an emphasis on international, regional, and local initiatives. Second, the study will demonstrate, how actively, young people participate in the peacebuilding process as members of civil society groups by using three youth-led organizations (organizations established and run by youths) and one youth-focused non-governmental organization (one that is not established by youths but entirely works with youth to effect change in South Sudan's peacebuilding process) as case studies. These include, the South Sudan Youth for Peace and Development Organization (SSYPADO), Active Youth Agency (AYA), I Can South Sudan (ICSS) and Smile Again Africa Development Organization (SAADO). The activities or projects conducted by these organizations are presented on an individual basis. Finally, this chapter will outline the impact of the role these organizations play on the peace process; as well as link these impacts to the literature before concluding the chapter.

4.1 Peacebuilding in South Sudan

South Sudan's peacebuilding efforts began soon after the country gained independence on July 9, 2011. For the purpose of this study, the process has been divided into two stages: post-independence peace initiatives (also known as preventive diplomacy) and post-conflict peacebuilding efforts. Consequently, these classifications are utilized to present a broad overview of the nation's peacebuilding process.

4.1.1 Preventive Diplomacy

Put simply, preventive diplomacy involves peace-related actions undertaken to prevent potential

conflicts from emerging or existing ones from escalating. Preventive diplomacy happens when international, regional, sub-regional, and national actors use Conflict Early Warning Systems (CEWS) to prevent potential conflicts (UN, 1992). A critical example of a CEWS is Africa Union's (AU) Peace and Security Architecture's CEWS. A case in point is the diplomatic move made by ECOWAS, West Africa's regional economic, political, and military alliance, in December 2016 (Helal, 2017) to avert a violent conflict in The Gambia after the country's general elections, when the incumbent President Yahya Jammeh refused to relinquish power after losing the presidential election to the opposition candidate, Adama Barrow. In short, while one prevents conflict before it turns violent or prevents one from escalating, the other prevents a relapse after it has already occurred but is being resolved.

With regards to South Sudan, the United Nations, knowing how politically, and economically fragile the newly independent nation was, immediately made moves to secure the relative peace that prevailed in the post-independent environment of the country and to promote democratic governance (Wolle, 2021; UNMISS, Nd, <https://shorturl.at/fghwY>). As a result, the UN Security Council established the United Nations Mission in South Sudan-UNMISS (Wolle, 2021; blogs.un.org, Nd; UNMISS, Nd, <https://shorturl.at/fghwY>) on July 9, 2011, initially for a year (<https://shorturl.at/fghwY>). UNMISS was mandated by Resolution 1996 to strengthen security and peace and assist in creating the space for development in order to enhance its ability to govern successfully and democratically and to foster positive relationships with its neighbors (UNMISS, Nd). This mission was preceded by the U.N. Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), which UN Security Council Resolution 1590 set up and mandated to facilitate the implementation of the CPA signed on January 9, 2005 (globalsolutions.org, Nd; UNMIS, 2011), by the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army, as well as perform certain duties relating to humanitarian relief, human rights defense, and promotion (UNMIS, 2011). However, despite this enormous effort by the global peace body i.e., the UN, it is apparent that it failed, in its mandate, to strengthen peace and security and build relationships among South Sudanese people and to promote the democratic governance that South Sudan needed. This, therefore, gave way to the outbreak of violent armed conflicts in the newly independent state.

4.1.2 Post-Conflict Peacebuilding

As mentioned above, South Sudan became engulfed by two major violent armed conflict

immediately after its independence from Sudan. The first conflict occurred in 2013 which ended when the 2015 'Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan- ARCRSS' was signed. The failure of this agreement to produce sustainable peace resulted in a relapse to another civil war in 2016. Warring parties signed a second agreement in 2018, the 'Revitalized Agreement' (by revitalizing the previously failed agreement) to end the second civil war. As demonstrated by previous experiences, post-conflict peacebuilding anywhere requires legal mandates that would lay down the necessary legal conditions for an effective peacebuilding process to commence. For South Sudan, the two key legal frameworks mentioned above are worth examining.

4.1.2.1 Legal Frameworks for Post-Conflict Peacebuilding in South Sudan

I. Legal Framework One: Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan- ARCRSS, 2015.

After almost two years of intense fighting between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition- SPLM-IO and the government (AU, 2016; Aljazeera, 2016), the leaders of these two major fighting camps agreed to cease hostilities by signing the ARCRSS in 2015 (UN Peacemaker, Nd). Chapter one of the ARCRSS, the country's first major peace accord signed in 2015 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, calls for the formation of a transitional government in the country which would help the country's post-conflict peacebuilding processes get underway. This government would be in place for two and a half years, beginning 90 days after the signing of the agreement. Additionally, this agreement included provisions for a long-term cease-fire, interim security measures, humanitarian aid, interim justice, interim reconciliation, interim healing, etc. On transitional justice, the accord proposed a commission for reconciliation, truth, and healing.

As discussed in this dissertation's chapter three, the first accord failed, and a protracted armed conflict recommenced because of the breakdown in security between the key parties to the conflict, notably President Salva Kiir and Riek Machar.

II. Legal Framework Two: Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan- R-ARCSS, 2018.

Simply put, the collapse of the first peace accord precipitated the second. Therefore, the provisions in the second accord 'significantly reiterate' the provisions in the first. For instance, the revitalized agreement also called for, this time, a revitalized permanent ceasefire and transitional security arrangements, transitional government of national unity, humanitarian assistance (UN Human Rights Council, 2021), and reconstruction and transitional justice,

accountability, reconciliation, and healing (IGAD, 2015; Atjhub, Nd). Like in the previous agreement, the transitional justice provision also provided for a reconciliation, truth, and healing commission to be established. Additionally, the agreed transitional justice mechanism should also include an independent hybrid judicial court for holding to account perpetrators of serious violations of international law such as crimes against humanity, genocide, and war crimes (Mogae, 2020), and a compensation and reparation authority and fund.

4.1.2.2 Actors in South Sudan's Post-Conflict Peacebuilding Process.

The peacebuilding environment in South Sudan comprises of a mixture of actors. These include global actors like the UN and its agencies; regional and sub-regional actors such as IGAD and AU; as well as local actors including religious and youth groups.

I. Global Actors and Global Interventions

The peacebuilding atmosphere of post-conflict South Sudan comprises a host of international, regional, subregional, and local entities, including the United Nations. At the global level, it is worthwhile to assess the role played by the UN and its specialized agencies in the nation's post-conflict peacebuilding process. These agencies have provided both material and technical support to the peacebuilding process. For instance, by funding projects that address the major sources of conflict and insecurity, the United Nations Development Program's Peace, and Community Cohesion Project (PaCC) aims to reduce and mitigate conflict and insecurity at the community level in South Sudan (UNDP, Nd). This also complements the initiatives undertaken by IOM, the International Organization for Migration. Through the signing of a partnership agreement, the IOM has helped the Ministry of Peacebuilding construct its strategic framework and design a communications plan to effectively promote its peacebuilding initiatives, (IOM 2022). In addition, IOM's Transition and Recovery Unit also designs programs to address the fundamental drivers of conflict and insecurity in South Sudan using grassroots peacebuilding and conflict management approaches, (IOM, 2021). In terms of promoting education, the Global Peace Initiative reports that, UNICEF South Sudan obtained a GPE grant of US\$70,000 to assist South Sudan's Ministry of Education to put together an effective response mechanism to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. (Global Peace Initiative, 2022). To be more exact, UNICEF, GPE, and their partners are supporting South Sudan's government to execute initiatives that decrease the percentage of kids who are not in school by 15%, (UNICEF, 2022).

II. Regional and Sub-Regional Actors' Contributions

Continental and regional actors have also been influential in facilitating peace in South Sudan

(Kuol, 2018; Agwanda et. al., 2021). In fact, they have been the first points of call for peace intervention amid the country's fragility. For instance, the East African regional organization, IGAD, facilitated the signing of both South Sudan's first and second accords. Also, IGAD has been very influential in coordinating the implementation of the provisions of these accords despite all the security, economic, and political challenges in the country. On another note, AU has played more of a supervisory role as the regional body. For example, the body's Peace and Security Architecture (PSC) has convened two major sessions on the situation in South Sudan and made several field visits to the country to assess the overall situation on the ground, in particular the state of the R-ARCSS implementation's progression (Amani Africa, 2022).

The principle of subsidiarity must have influenced these continental and regional efforts. The principle of subsidiarity requires that the first point of call should be the authority closest to the problem (Oğuz, 2015). In this case, IGAD as a regional body to the East African region where South Sudan is situated has been the first point of call regarding the South Sudanese security problems with support from African Union. Both bodies are closer to the South Sudanese problem than any other global actors. One way or the other, these organizations have been able to live up to the expectation of this principle.

III. Local Actors and Local Initiatives

Local efforts have also been forthcoming with support from international non-governmental organizations such as ACORD, AEGIS TRUST UK, etc. despite the multiple difficulties faced by local peacebuilding. The role played by these international organizations especially by providing financial supports to local actors, including youth organizations in South Sudan, shows the significant correlations between the 'Local and the International' as argued in the hybrid approach to peace. Da Costa and Karlsrud (2012), for instance, makes the case that significant efforts are being made by local actors, despite the major institutional barriers limiting the impact of their efforts, to contextualize peacebuilding initiatives for local situations, using the example of UN peacekeeping help to local peacebuilding in the republic of South Sudan (also quoted in Liaga, 2019). This is also supported by Apugi (2017), who argues that notwithstanding the major obstacles that local actors face, such as a lack of resources, restricted access to conflict areas, insecurity, and political interference, local actors such as local faith-based organizations help bring together opposing ethnic communities by using conflict resolution strategies like mediation, peace discussions, and educating local leaders on peace and reconciliation.

Specifically, the Food and Agricultural Organization-FAO (Nd) also notes that the Assistance Mission for Africa (AMA), a religious local organization, has been focusing on guaranteeing the livelihoods of local communities via engagements designed to ensure food independence encompassing accessibility to clean water as well as safe sanitation for communities. Indeed, while all these local efforts are worth commending, the executive director of one of the youth civil society peace organizations used as case studies for this research acknowledged that local peacebuilders have difficulties, particularly with finance for project implementation and assessment or evaluation of the outcomes of these projects. This is a key disadvantage when peacebuilding is entirely approached from the local perspective, as advocated for by the ‘Local Turn’ approach. The inclusion of hybridity may help address this problem, as indicated above. This is so because, while local experience of the conflict context lies with the local people themselves, the financial capability is most of the time entirely monopolized by foreign agencies.

Despite this, South Sudanese civil society organizations (especially youth groups) have persevered in promoting the Addis Ababa peace deal among local communities, among other peacebuilding activities, as the country has a young population that is quite resilient (Mutasa & Virk, 2017). Therefore, it is now worthwhile to discuss the approaches employed by these youth organizations to further the peace process.

4.2 Role of Youths as Peacebuilders Through Civil Society Youth Organizations (CSYOs)

This section demonstrates the role young South Sudanese play through civil society youth organizations as active agents of peace in South Sudan’s peacebuilding processes. It shows that despite the enormous challenges they face, as presented above and in the preceding chapters, these youths still find ways and means to contribute to the country’s peacebuilding processes. The section is presented through four case studies. These case studies are further divided into two groups: youth-led local organizations and youth-focused local organizations. Youth-led organizations are local peacebuilding organizations entirely founded and run by South Sudanese Youths. These include, South Sudan Youth for Peace and Development Organization (SSYPADO), I Can South Sudan (ICSS), and Active Youth Agency (AYA). Youth-focused organizations, on the other hand, are those local non-governmental organizations, like Smile Again Africa Development Organization (SAADO), that are not founded by youths but are solely focused on working with South Sudanese youths to promote the peace process.

4.2.1 Case Study One: SSYPADO- South Sudan Youth for Peace and Development Organization.

SSYPADO is a youth led civil society organization that was founded in July 2010 (SSYPADO, 2010). Since then, the organization has been very active in building peace in South Sudan. SSYPADO operates in South Sudan's three political divisions i.e., Bhar El Ghazal, Equatoria and Upper Nile (Sudan Tribune, 2023; Crisis Group, Nd); as well as four neighboring countries. With the ultimate objective of "building more just and inclusive societies," SSYPADO supports humanitarian and development initiatives that respect universal human rights (SSYPADO,2010). SSYPADO is equipped with a large pool of experts who are ready to continue leading projects that are in line with its main aims.

SSYPADO operates on a wide range of issues. Specifically, its operational areas include Food Security and Livelihoods; Research & Advocacy; and Institutional Development; Governance, Human Rights, Security, and Peacebuilding; Education; Health & Nutrition (SSYPADO,2010; Right for Peace, 2023,). The above-mentioned have been of key interest to the organization's operations over the years.

The focus of SSYPADO's ongoing activities is on the national and subnational levels, specifically in Eastern Equatoria, Upper Nile State, Jonglei, Western Bahr El Ghazal, and also Western Equatoria. The organization's central support office is in Juba, Central Equatoria. Regional programs are run in Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, and Ethiopia both inside and outside of refugee camps (SSYPADO, 2010).

When closely examining this organization's work, it is clear that it has conducted successful initiatives in four of its operational domains, namely peacebuilding, education, health, and governance. For instance, in 2017, SSYPADO organized an intergenerational dialogue and exchange learning visit to Rwanda, in which over thirty-three young people from different CSOs, and social and political stakeholders in South Sudan participated (SSYPADO, 2017). The project facilitated learning about the Rwandan genocide and post-genocide social reconstruction and reconciliation. More importantly, how the lessons learned could be implemented in post-conflict South Sudan. The following year, SSYPADO also participated in Combating Conflict related issue that affect national identity in South Sudan funded by DFID and over 5,456 people were reached Also, SSYPADO organized workshops in conjunction with Right for Peace to educate young 'uninformed' people on how to avoid conflicts based on identity (Right for Peace, 2021;). The organization's area of peacebuilding encompasses these initiatives.

SSYPADO has also performed admirably in promoting governance, another crucial operation area. For example, to influence the High Level, Revitalized Forum (HLRF) set up observe South Sudan's peacebuilding process, SSYPADO held two regional youth conferences in Entebbe, Uganda, and Kigali, Rwanda, between March and June 2018 (SSYPADO, 2018). These conferences, which drew in 250 youth from various political parties, youth leagues, youth led CSOs, associations, and unions, also reviewed the National Youth Agenda 2023.

Again, SSYPADO has considerably promoted peace education as one of its key pillars. Between 2018 and 2020, SSYPADO carried out the project "Give Youth a Voice for a Peaceful South Sudan (phase I)" with funding from the Swiss Embassy (SSYPADO, 2020,). Through public conversations, civic education, and workshops, this project helped over 3,000 people, including refugees in Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Khartoum, as well as 5,000 people at the UN Civilians Protection (POC) sites in Juba, in Wau, and Malakal POC, both in South Sudan. Additionally, in March 2021, SSYPADO held a workshop on peace education and leadership development for eighty young people from the ten states and three administrative regions which the Japanese Government provided fundings for through its Japan International Cooperation Agency-JICA (SSYPADO, 2021). Also, in December 2021, SSYPADO organized a peace education orientation session in Juba for around 106 participants from various institutions, including academics, young lawmakers, CSOs, line ministries, and government officials (SSYPADO, 2021).

On the promotion of health among the South Sudanese population, with financing from the SWISS Government (phase II), SSYPADO participated in the COVID-19 awareness campaign in 2020; a campaign that impacted eight hundred families and 4,934 people (SSYPADO, 2020). While this aspect of the organization's activity may appear unrelated to peacebuilding, it is vital to recognize that health security is very related to peacebuilding. In fact, it falls under the umbrella term, human security, which is a key aspect of peacebuilding.

The evidence presented above indicates that SSYPADO has made considerable progress in some of its core operational areas, which, taken together, points to a significant contribution to the peacebuilding effort in South Sudan. Despite these successes, however, the organization has not made enough progress in a few other crucial operational areas like institutional development and food security, judging by the data that is currently accessible. This seeming setback could be attributed to lack of sufficient funding. This means that, even though South Sudanese youth

organizations may have great ideas, financial constraints may heavily restrict these youth organizations from putting their excellent proposals for promoting peace into action. SSYPADO's executive director unequivocally pointed this out in his response to a question posed to him regarding challenges to youth peacebuilding in South Sudan:

“Youth are enormously contributing to peacebuilding in South Sudan whether individually or through organized groups. However, the lack of financial resources is greatly constraining our efforts. Donor funding is hard to come by. Sometimes after implementing a project, it becomes difficult to conduct a successful post project evaluation due to lack of financial constraints.”

Despite challenges such as these, other youth organizations such as the I Can South Sudan (ICSS) (the next section's key focus) remain steadfast in their bid to promote peace in South Sudan.

4.2.2 Case Study Two: I Can South Sudan (ICSS)

Origin

The I Can South Sudan Youth organization (ICSS) was first formally established by South Sudanese refugee youths in Bidibidi refugee settlement located within the Yumbe District in Uganda, through the relevant Ugandan authority (ICSS, 2017,). According to Bukuluki et.al, (2021), and O'Byrne and Ogeno (2021), this settlement, which houses around two hundred and seventy thousand refugees from South Sudan, is the world's second-largest refugee camp and the largest in Uganda and Africa.

The main focus area of ICSS includes promoting the ‘wellbeing’ of internally and externally displaced persons (ICSS, 2017,). The organization first started operations in the Bidibidi refugee camp in Uganda where it had been initially established. When the South Sudanese conflict subsided with the signing of the Revitalized Agreement (UNMISS, 2018) in 2018, the organization extended its operations to South Sudan after being formally established through the relevant authority under South Sudanese laws in 2019. Specifically, ICSS focuses on five thematic areas which include child protection and women empowerment, education, peacebuilding, livelihood, and environment.

South Sudan's Peacebuilding journey remains to be a complex process that include a variety of players at the local, regional, and global levels like youth groups, IGAD), AU, and the UN. As indicated previously, youth groups have contributed immensely within the local framework. ICSS is not an exception. While this study cannot verify whether it has implemented projects in

all its thematic or operational areas, verifiable data shows that ICSS has implemented projects in some of its thematic areas such as peacebuilding, livelihoods, and education with support from Misereor Germany a Catholic organization committed to fighting poverty. For example, after a serious fight had broken out between South Sudanese refugee youths and youths of their host community, ICSS conducted an intensive conflict resolution dialogue to foster peaceful coexistence between South Sudanese refugee youths and youths of their host community, Bidibidi, Uganda (ICSS, 2021,). The conflict which had started in a cinema hall, quickly graduated into violence, to the extent that the Bidibidi village was nearly burnt down had not been for the timely intervention of the local police. To determine and prevent future conflicts, ICSS introduced an inter school debating competition on conflict resolution among school going pupils. These debates are geared towards identifying key conflict drivers between the refugee community and the Bidibidi host community and to give voice and space to children to have a say in the peacebuilding process. To amplify this voice back home in South Sudan, ICSS worked with children to produce two audio peace songs (<https://rb.gy/4ipr4>, <https://rb.gy/yyddp>) calling for peace, unity and reconciliation (ICSS, 2022, <https://rb.gy/975v9>). To promote children's education, it has also established a children's musical center for vulnerable and internally displaced children in Tambura, one of the crises hit places in South Sudan (<https://rb.gy/yyddp>). These children were among the thousands of South Sudanese children who are surviving the conflict.

Since its establishment in South Sudan in 2019, ICSS has only had few successes on livelihoods and women empowerment as some of its thematic areas. For instance, in 2021, the organization was able to provide 'startup business capitals' to 15 single mothers and further train them on small scale business skills (ICSS, 2021, <https://rb.gy/yyddp>).

Over the few years of its existence, the organization has improvised to deal with imminent issues outside its thematic areas. Examples include its production of about 3,307 face masks South Sudanese and 390 reusable sanitary pads to school children at the Yoyo Secondary school in Bidibidi, the community hosting the largest amount of South Sudanese refugees (<https://rb.gy/2oo7u>). While these projects do not fall under any specific thematic areas of the organization, they are however covered by the organization's overall focus, the promotion of the wellbeing of displaced persons. Also, it falls within health security, a key component of the human security framework in peacebuilding.

In comparing ICSS to other youth organizations such as SSYPADO and AYA, ICSS has also equally positively impacted the South Sudanese peacebuilding process, despite the fact that since its establishment in South Sudan in 2019, it has been constrained by a lack of adequate funding to implement large scale nationwide projects (ICSS, 2022, <https://rb.gy/yyddp>). The case of ICSS shows how impactful young people can be in peacebuilding even in the face of adversities.

4.2.3 Case Study Three: Active Youth Agency (AYA)

The Active Youth Agency, a youth led organization, was established in 2004 by youths in Mundri region in South Sudan initially to assist war-affected Southern Sudanese (AYA, 2023, <https://shorturl.at/lmtAV>). AYA has dedicated its entire attention to fostering peace in South Sudan through civic education, health, education, and other initiatives ever since South Sudan gained independence in 2011 (UNMIS, 2011). Therefore, civic education, gender-based programming, improving livelihoods, health, and capacity building constitute the organization's focus areas. Like SSYPADO, AYA operates in all South Sudan's administrative regions i.e., Equatorial, Bhar El Ghazar and Upper Nile.

With support from international partners, AYA has been able to fulfil some of its objectives. For example, the Government of Japan and UNDP, enhanced AYA's financial capability to initiate a host of programs in three different places in Amadi State namely, Mundri, Lakamandi and Lui to enhance the credibility of South Sudan's national peace dialogue (AYA, 2017, <https://shorturl.at/lmtAV>). Implemented between August and December 2017, key among the programs most relevant to this discourse, are discussed below.

AYA organized a peace football tournament in Mundri State (AYA, 2017, <https://shorturl.at/lmtAV>) to support the national dialogue South Sudan's government instituted (UNDP, 2020) to complement South Sudan's peace process. Elias, the captain of Mundri Star FC, the tournament winner, acknowledged in his interview that "the football tournament was a job well done" (AYA, 2017, <https://shorturl.at/lmtAV>) and expressed his thanks for having the opportunity to utilize football as a tool for peace. This was also reiterated by the country's Minister of Local Government, Amadi State, Hon. James Abdulahi, who thanked AYA for their 'great contribution to the national dialogue which the president initiated to address our concerns,' (AYA, 2017, <https://shorturl.at/lmtAV>). Indeed, football, a game of love, is an innovative method to initiate peace especially among an enormously young population like South Sudan. Football is among the top youthful games widely loved by young people in the African

continent. Thus, using such a game to get young people to participate in peace processes is a wise move by every indication.

Another key program implemented as part of the UNDP and the Japanese Government's funded package included training workshops in all three areas mentioned above to inform and seek youth and women's views on the national dialogue (AYA,2017, <https://shorturl.at/lmtAV>). Additionally, AYA organized cultural gala competition among local communities where community members sang cultural peace promoting songs (AYA, 217, <https://shorturl.at/lmtAV>). This was also followed by drama and music that portrayed the national dialogue to the wider locals who apparently had very little or no idea of how the process worked. In both programs, participants gained valuable insight into how the dialogue worked, and what conflict resolution generally means. This is, for instance, clear in one of the female participants' remarks: "when we face problems, we need to sit down and address them before the problem escalates and cause trauma as we are now traumatized," (AYA, 2017, <https://shorturl.at/lmtAV>).

A key challenge which the researcher faced was the difficulty in obtaining tangible and verifiable information on projects implemented by the organization before 2017. While it may have implemented several peace related projects before this period, apparently, there is no evidence of this effect. Again, it is apparent that despite that the projects the organization implemented in 2017 (a year after South Sudan relapsed into conflict) remain relevant to the peace process, they could not cover all the organization's operational areas like health and livelihoods. On the contrary however, since the projects already implemented highly focus on promoting peace in the targeted areas (as presented in the preceding paragraph), it is enough to argue that AYA is indeed among the youth organizations actively driving peace in South Sudan. Besides youth-led organizations such as SSYPADO, AYA and ICSS, young people have also been driving peace in South Sudan through youth-focused organizations, such as the Smile Again Africa Development Organization (SAADO). Consequently, it is therefore now important to turn our attention to how young people are driving change through youth-focused organizations in South Sudan.

4.2.4 Case Study Four: Smile Again Africa Development Organization (SAADO)- a Youth-Focused Organization

Youth-focused organizations are those non-governmental local organizations working with South Sudanese youths and youth organizations to promote the country's peacebuilding process. Apart from leading change through youth-led organizations, youth-focused organizations also

create the financial and technical platform for youth to actively promote peace in South Sudan. While there are many youth-focused organizations in South Sudan, this thesis used the Smile Again Africa Development Organization (SAADO) as a case study (because the work of SAADO can be easily verified on the internet) to highlight how young people are also driving change through youth-focused organizations.

SAADO is a youth-focused national NGO that work with youth to fight against poverty in their communities (SAADO, 2011, <https://rb.gy/6eqg3>). Since its establishment in 2011, it has been working with young people to alleviate poverty, promote peacebuilding, empower women, and protect children's rights, enhance livelihoods, promote quality education, and provide access to hygiene, water, and sanitation (WASH) throughout South Sudan (SAADO, Nd, <https://rb.gy/6eqg3>). The motto of SAADO, 'Youth Against Poverty,' indicates that youths are the center of its activities.

SAADO, through South Sudanese youths, have implemented several highly impactful projects since its establishment in 2011. This section, however, will present projects implemented in 2016 and 2017. Reason being that these projects (as it is with projects of the other case studies used in this dissertation) can be easily verified by anyone who happens to read this dissertation by simply logging on to SAADO'S website at <https://saado.org/index.php>. In 2016, the organization focused on programs such as gender, protection, education, and peacebuilding. As such, it implemented programs to promote these initiatives. For instance, to reduce the health vulnerability of women, SAADO in 2016 provided '500 dignity' kits which included disposable packages, soap, sanitary towels and washing towel to vulnerable women in Bor Protection of Civilian Site-PoC (SAADO, 2016, <https://rb.gy/mk891>) one of the places designated by the United Nations for protecting internally displace persons- IDPs (UN,2020, <https://rb.gy/sqcep>). Indeed, this gesture, whether small or big, implicitly ended up impacting the lives of these vulnerable IDPs; and it must have been a stich in time since both IDP settlements and refugee camps suffer from mutual health concerns that may emanate from the inadequacy of sanitary or dignity kits or the lack thereof, among other things.

To complement this effort, the French Embassy in South Sudan partnered with SADDO to improve the entrepreneurial and employment skills of vulnerable women in Gudele and Manuki in Juba, South Sudan's capital (SAADO, 2016, <https://rb.gy/mk891>). This partnership provided about thirty women and girls with training in small scale business management and further

provided small funds for startup to the beneficiaries (<https://rb.gy/mk891>). Despite that this project only targeted a very small group of beneficiaries, among thousands of vulnerable women especially in the interior part of South Sudan, it is worth commending that if these women and girls put the training and little funds received to better use, it will end up impacting many more lives than initially intended.

Later that same year, SAADO developed and disseminated a comprehensive communication package on drought and famine, gender-based violence, malaria, land mines and measles (SAADO, 2016, <https://rb.gy/mk891>). This package, which geared towards raising awareness on the prevalence of the aforementioned, was disseminated to people of all walks of life through the best possible channels of communications such as community radio programs, workshops etc. (<https://rb.gy/mk891>).

SAADO is also observed to have continued its activities in program areas it had worked in the previous year although this time with different activities. In 2017, SAADO additionally worked on programs that fall within the purview of gender and protection, education, and peacebuilding (SAADO, 2017, <https://rb.gy/zjz1u>). Between June 2017 and January 2018, SAADO implemented an eight-month project to ‘enhance the coping ability of gender-based violence survivors who are affected by conflict,’ in Juba POCs by establishing victim support service and broadening their horizon on human rights, justice etc. (<https://rb.gy/zjz1u>). That same year, SAADO also implemented a school feeding program that fed 36,829 school pupils in fifty schools in Juba and Terekeka counties (<https://rb.gy/zjz1u>). Either way, this project must have positively impacted the education sector. Implicitly, this may have increased school enrolment and retained many children in school.

Looking keenly at the activities conducted above by SAADO, one would notice that their effects are profound even though these projects are mainly focusing on specific groups of people and geographical areas. This observation applies to all the other case studies presented in this chapter. Besides, it is very difficult for a single organization to implement projects covering an entire country even in normal circumstances. It is even more complicated when one considers South Sudan where youth organizations remain highly underfunded, and the war situation makes their operations nearly impossible. Nevertheless, the impacts of the activities of the case studies, as presented above, on the South Sudanese population and the peacebuilding process in general (which is the focus of the next section), can still be evaluated.

4.3 Impacts of the Role of South Sudan's Youth on the Country's Peacebuilding Processes

Measuring the impacts of peacebuilding projects is a huge task that is almost impossible if the project lacks long-term orientation (Lederach, 1997). This means that since peacebuilding is a long-term project, its impacts are mostly felt after a lengthy period. The assessment of the impact of peacebuilding is a process that is often fraught with numerous challenges. Menkhaus (2004), to some extent, has narrowed down these challenges. For Menkhaus, several of the challenges to assessing the impacts of peacebuilding reflect common measurement issues in social science, including the need for relevant indicators, the issue of causality and attribution, the related issue of the counterfactual, and the erroneous argument between assessment as "art" and "science." In terms of measuring the impacts of the work that SSYPADO does, one of the case studies, these challenges are reflected in the organization's Executive Director's response below:

“As peacebuilders, it can be challenging to gauge the results of our efforts because conflict is constant in human affairs. Conflict resolution requires effort and time. You must start seeing that people's minds are changing eventually. However, there is still hope since people can grow to trust one another. It takes a while, though. People can, for instance, begin to develop trust today and start fighting again tomorrow.”

With regards to South Sudan, it can even be more difficult to measure the impacts of any peacebuilding work since the country has just emerged from a devastating civil war. In fact, peacebuilding is even yet to fully commence since the country's transitional government (The East African, 2023) is yet to fully start implementing key provisions of the 2018 agreement that ended the war.

That notwithstanding, the impacts of the peacebuilding work being conducted by the aforementioned youth groups are measurable. For instance, on involving youths in peace and security decision-making (as required by UN Resolution 2250), because of SSYPADO's unyielding contribution to the peace process, South Sudan's transitional government appointed SSYPADO's executive director to represent other young people on the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangement Verification Mechanism committee (Small Arms Survey, Nd), a body that takes decisions on reforming the country's security sector. This body has been able to disarm, demobilize and retrain combatants. Regarding peace education, after SSYPADO's intergenerational and exchange visit to Rwanda, an idea to include peace education into South Sudan's curriculum was born. This proposal is currently being included in the review process of the country's education system.

In terms of the impacts of SSYPADO's specific peacebuilding projects, the Institute of Social Policy and Research-ISPR (Bimeny, 2022; The Zambaki Advisory, Nd; ISPR, Nd, <https://ispr-ss.org/>) conducted 'an impact assessment study' on SSYPADO's "Give Youth a Voice for a Peaceful South Sudan (phase I)" project between August and November 2020. ISPR is a premier public policy research organization that provides national and regional expertise to the public sector, private sector, and civil society organizations in pursuit of effective ways to address policy concerns (ISPR, Nd, <https://ispr-ss.org/>). According to ISPR's assessment, the project helped young people in the communities create stronger relationships, and networks, and build local peace. As a result, the project was successful in helping young people embrace ethnic diversity and forge relationships with one another. The report's analysis also revealed that 50% of respondents from various places felt strongly that the project had raised their voices.

While it is indeed difficult to access the real impacts of projects implemented by the case study youth organizations (in the absence of an independent external evaluation), it is sufficient to imply that projects such as the training of vulnerable women on small scale business management by ICSS has the potential to help these women improve their livelihoods in the nearest future. This is an impact on food security, a key aspect of human security which is integral to peace and conflict studies. Also, providing sanitary pads to female school children would get them to stay in school and compete for a better future. Additionally, AYA's organization of football tournaments for young people is an innovative way to get young South Sudanese involved in the peace process. As stated in chapter two, these people make up most of the population. Meaning, getting them on the side of peace indicates a huge prospect for durable peace in the country. Additionally, AYA's effort to add South Sudanese women's voice to the peace process through consultative dialogues provides a solid foundation for gender mainstreaming in the country's peacebuilding process.

This positive role of young people perfectly falls within the local turn framework of peacebuilding as indicated earlier. This role has further reinforced the argument of the local turn that local ownership of peacebuilding is in indeed very essential. The negative side of this argument, however, as noticed with the case study youth organizations, is that international partnership remains essential as local agencies may still need financial resources and even expertise from their international partners. For instance, one of the key challenges youth civil society organizations face in South Sudan is the lack of donor funding to implement

peacebuilding projects. These funds mostly come from international funds which means that without these funds youth local agencies cannot effectively operate- indicating local dependence on international support.

Taken together, the collective efforts of these youth organizations to actively promote peace individually in South Sudan vehemently contradict the popular narrative that young people are active drivers of conflict in the African continent (Omeje, 2005; Urdal, 2006; Aning and Atta-ASAMOA, 2011; Paalo, 2017). It further portrays that despite their economic and political predicament, they still find ways to effect change in their various communities, a key argument of this dissertation. This strongly agrees with the position that majority of Africa's youth neither participate in violence nor are interested in it (UNDP, 2016). These youth organizations are focusing on individual aspects of the peacebuilding process i.e., health, livelihoods, relief, security and coexistence, inclusion, women peace, and security, etc. Put together, these efforts reflect the multi-dimensionality of contemporary peacebuilding.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter's main objective was to outline South Sudan's efforts at peacebuilding and to make it obviously clear the importance of youth participation to these efforts. Therefore, the chapter has accomplished a very straightforward task: it has provided a vivid depiction of the South Sudanese youth's role in the country's peacebuilding process as members of civil society organizations. First, it presented the wholistic peacebuilding efforts conducted by various local, regional, and international actors regarding the South Sudanese conflicts. It also presented the legal framework upon which the peacebuilding is based. Specifically, it demonstrated the various role young South Sudanese play in South Sudan's peacebuilding process as members of civil society youth organizations. In summary, these civil society youth organizations, i.e., SSYPADO, AYA, ICSS and SADD, have strongly complemented the economic, social, security and health aspects of the peacebuilding process. Finally, it presented the impact of this role on the peacebuilding processes. This chapter concluded that, among other things, these youth organizations have raised the voices of young people, women, and children in the peacebuilding process. Furthermore, it also established that the efforts of these organizations have improved the livelihoods of vulnerable women and enhanced the educational prospects of young children.

Overall, this entire discourse has achieved one simple goal: it has established that young people

play active roles in peacebuilding despite the lack of the enabling environment (as argued in chapter two) to play this role. As mentioned above, this contradicts the narrative of certain academics that young people are drivers of conflict in the African continent (Omeje, 2005; Urdal, 2006; Aning and Atta-ASAMOA, 2011; Paolo, 2017).

Above all, while evaluating the effects of these organizations' peacebuilding activities may be premature given the shorter period, it is apparent that these organizations' works are already having positive effects on South Sudan's peacebuilding process. The implications of this, however, for the wider literature on young people, conflict, and peacebuilding require further discussion. This will, therefore, be the objective of the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY FOR PEACEBUILDING AND LITERATURE.

5.0 INTRODUCTION

The significance of the youth's role in peacebuilding has increasingly developed momentum in academic literature over the past few decades. This has been complemented by coordinated efforts at gatherings of state plenipotentiaries. For instance, the United Nations in 2015 recognized the significant role youth can play in building peace especially through civil society organizations by passing a key resolution (Resolution 2050) on peace, security, and youth (UN, 2015). Young people on the other hand, as presented in the previous chapter (chapter four), have lived up to this recognition by actively contributing to peacebuilding in the African continent through civil society youth organizations despite their political and economic predicaments.

This chapter discusses and interprets the findings of this dissertation while linking it to the wider literature. This section will be discussed using the following structure. The chapter will begin by presenting the dissertation's key argument. It then subsequently summarizes the key findings of the dissertation and how these results have answered the study's research questions. It will then go on to discuss the implications of these primary results for peacebuilding and academic literature. Finally, the closing sections will bring the chapter and the dissertation to a conclusion.

5.1 Discussion

5.1.1 What Roles are Youth Playing to Promote Peacebuilding in South Sudan?

The key argument of this dissertation is that Africa's youth have enormous potential to contribute to peacebuilding in the continent since they are highly educated (Statita.com, 2021); are greatly affected by conflict and fragility (Plan International, 2018); and have huge stake in the future. This argument emanated as a result of the negative portrayal of Africa's youth as active drivers of conflict (Omeje, 2005; Urdal, 2006; Aning and Atta-ASAMOA, 2011; Paalo, 2017). To demonstrate this positive potential, this dissertation examined the role of youth in peacebuilding as members of civil society organizations in South Sudan, and also assessed the impact of this role on the peacebuilding process. To further understand this positive role, the study answered specific questions I.e., 'what role are young people playing in South Sudan's peacebuilding process? What are the impacts of this role?' By conducting key informant interviews with the executive directors of some of the youth organizations and undertaking extensive desk research, this study found that young people have immensely contributed to the South Sudanese peacebuilding process in different roles through civil society youth

organizations. These roles, which are the key findings of this dissertation, include: serving as mediators, thus, promoting conflict resolution through dialogue; improving livelihoods through relief services and entrepreneurial skills trainings and funds allocation; strengthening the culture of peace through peace education; and promoting inclusion by giving voice to other youths, women, and children. The roles in question are of paramount importance in response to the call made by Resolution 2250, which emphasizes the pivotal role of youth in promoting peace and security, particularly through their active engagement in civil society organizations.

Regarding conflict resolution through dialogue, ICSS and AYA are seen to have been very active. For example, ICSS facilitated a dialogue that resolved an intense conflict between South Sudanese refugee youths and the youths of their host community, Bidibidi, Uganda. AYA's training workshops which sought youth and women's view about national dialogue (a national cohesion program implemented by the Government of South Sudan) indicates a strong conflict resolution mechanism. Unlike hybridity, this role vehemently supports the local turn approach. As argued by Lederach (1997) formal peace negotiations are usually statist in nature. Meaning they are entirely done among primary parties to the conflict such as state representatives and various rebel or other belligerent forces, leaving the local population entirely out of the negotiation process of a conflict in which they are the most affected party. Thus, regarding South Sudan, the efforts of ICSS and AYA as local actors in bringing conflict resolution to the local population (the local space) promotes inclusion of everyone and local ownership of the country's peace process. Their efforts are sometimes even more effective than statist interventions. For instance, after Sierra Leone's civil war ended, ex-combatants were not fully reintegrated into society by the formal peace mechanism put in place. With the effort of Fambul Tok, many ex-combatants properly reconciled with their victims and were integrated into their various societies through traditional approaches such as 'burn fire,' the ancient practice of reconciling victims with their perpetrators by gathering around a burning fire (Conciliation Resources, 2012).

In the case of strengthening peace through peace education, youth organizations such as ICSS, AYA and SSYPADO have made great inroads. In the aftermath of a series of identity conflicts among South Sudanese youths, SSYPADO, in conjunction with Right to Peace, held workshops to educate youths about the intersection of identity, conflict, and peace. One of its key projects, in which about thirty young people from various civil society organizations were taken to Kigali

to learn about Rwanda's lessons on genocide, represent a significant stride on peace education and the promotion of the culture of peace in South Sudan. This was preceded by its peace and orientation workshops held for 106 people including youths, CSOs, line ministries and other government officials. Efforts like these were also complemented by ICSS, which disseminated peace messages through audio songs which it had produced, sung by its children's wing. It also promoted peace education through debate competitions on conflict resolution topics such as the root causes of conflict and conflict resolution mechanisms. Additionally, AYA also implemented drama programs to teach the common South Sudanese about the country's ongoing national dialogue implemented by the President. Although these activities may have been carried out without international donor support, the efforts undertaken above by the youth groups mentioned were funded by their international partners. This explicitly indicates the influence of the 'international' over the 'local' to promote peace in South Sudan. For instance, the learning visit organized by SSYPADO to Kigali, Rwanda was sponsored by AEGIS Trust. As poor and fragile as South Sudan currently is, without the donor and sometimes also without the expertise of the 'international,' AEGIS Trust, and others in this case, the local actors would not have been effective in promoting the country's peace process.

On Inclusion and responsiveness, these youth organizations have further played key roles. AYA's training workshops to inform and seek youth and women's views on the national dialogue, for instance, did not only give voice to the voiceless but also implicitly included usually marginalized groups like women and young people in the peacebuilding process. SSYPADO's "Give Youth a Voice project," provided a concrete space for youth inclusion in the peace process. As addressed in Chapter Four, other youth organizations' attempts to promote the involvement of South Sudanese, particularly youth, to build peace in the country were equally seen in the activities of other youth organizations.

Livelihood advancement is also among the key findings of this study. It is a key intervention in post conflict peacebuilding. Livelihood concerns are very crucial both during conflict initiation and during post conflict peacebuilding. Conflict may occur due to the high cost of living. Such concerns must be addressed after conflict to prevent a relapse or isolated post conflict violence. Fortunately for South Sudan, youth organizations have implemented projects that enhanced livelihoods. A case in point is the small-scale business training and startup funds provided by ICSS to fifteen single mothers. Another instance is the case of SAADO, a youth focused group

which provided about thirty women and girls with training in small scale business management and small funds for startup.

Health and sanitation are also very significant elements of post-conflict peacebuilding. Health Security in peacebuilding includes addressing both natural and conflict induced health concerns such as pandemic or epidemic outbreaks, war wounded, and climate change victims. In South Sudan, youth-led and youth-focused groups have been influencing change to address these concerns. For instance, SAADO's victim support services for gender-based violence survivors, its provision of about five hundred dignity kits to IDP women, ICSS's provision of over three thousand face masks and provision of about three hundred and ninety reusable sanitary pads, as well as SSYPADO's COVID-19 protection awareness campaign are few of the examples of youth's contributions to health security as a key component of South Sudan's peacebuilding efforts.

What are the main ramifications of these initiatives in South Sudan at the local level? These initiatives have numerous ramifications for South Sudan. First the vibrancy of youth organizations in South Sudan's peacebuilding processes indicates that indeed local actors are active players in the country's peacebuilding efforts. Even during the peak of the war, these local actors made significant strides in the country's most hard-to-reach regions. Also, while this remains to be the case, such efforts have also been significantly constrained, especially by financial means. As advocated for by hybridity, this implies that the fusion of both local and international efforts can be of great importance to addressing these barriers.

5.1.2 What are the Impacts of These Roles?

The examination of these roles, as discussed above, also necessitated the assessment of their impacts on the peace process. These impacts are addressed properly in chapter four. For instance, as stated in that chapter, independent evaluation which the Institute of Social Policy and Research (ISPR, Nd, <https://ispr-ss.org/>) undertook, revealed that young people felt heard and represented in the peace process because of specific projects undertaken by SSYPADO. Among other things, this youth led organization had organized several projects that created the environment where young people had the opportunity to interact and work with key players in the peacebuilding process such as government officials, international partners, and civil society organizations.

5.1.3 How Have the Findings Answered the Study's Research Questions?

With the foregoing presented, the one question that obviously arises is whether these results have adequately answered the set of questions that this study sought to investigate. To a very far extent, yes, they have. For instance, the study's results have demonstrated very vividly the various capacities in which young people have contributed to South Sudan's post-conflict peacebuilding process. These capacities, as presented in the previous sections, target key aspects of the peacebuilding process. In every post-conflict peacebuilding agenda, these aspects are among the most targeted areas. The findings also helped address the study's second question, "what are the impacts of youth participation on South Sudan's peacebuilding process." The sole limitation to this is that peacebuilding is a lengthy process. For example, it takes time to realize the effects of ICSS's small-scale business training on the lives of its female recipients. Such effects can only be felt over a lengthy period. On the other hand, their mediatory role to prevent conflict between South Sudanese refugees and youths of their host community in Uganda was subsequently felt. Their intervention resolved a conflict that would have spiraled into a violent conflict. On the other hand, whether this intervention will lead to long term cohesion between the two communities requires time to evaluate. There are many of these examples embedded in the result section of this study. As such, assessing the impacts of the various works South Sudanese youths are doing to promote the country's peacebuilding process appears nearly impossible. Nevertheless, the short-term impacts of the various roles played South Sudanese youths to promote the country's peacebuilding process can be readily felt. The longer-term impacts need more time. To assess the latter requires further studies. In short, the study's results have been able to adequately answer the study's research questions. Furthermore, to do justice to the discourse, it is quite necessary to further explore what this really means for peacebuilding and the literature surrounding it.

5.1.4 Implications for Academic Literature and Peacebuilding: The Contributions of this Thesis to Peace and conflict Studies.

Having gone through all these beautifully implemented projects, one would want to ask the question "What lessons, then, have we learned overall from these efforts?" The efforts undertaken by these youths suggest a hosts of lessons to be learned. First, these efforts tell us that young people can be active drivers of change unlike what the literature indicates. In the literature, scholars like Paolo (2017) contend that youth political wings in Africa engage in

violent political approaches. For him, this undermines the hope of a positive contribution by the continent's major population base to meaningfully contribute to democracy despite having the chance to do so through their parent political parties. On the contrary, the effective contribution of youth to the post conflict peacebuilding processes of South Sudan, despite the lack of resource, expertise, as well as economic, and security challenges they face, indicates the immense potential they have to positively promote peace on the African continent. Besides the fact that this is a clear manifestation of what the local turn approach to peacebuilding envisaged, the theory's application to this finding is, to some extent, limited. As indicated by Kendhammer and Sullivan, the theory is devoid of key information on which local social spaces and actors are critical for recognizing and addressing conflict drivers, as well as the most effective partnerships and empowering techniques (USIP, 2022). In other words, while the theory generally touches on local aspects of peacebuilding, it could not specifically address young people's role as local actors in peacebuilding. Because of their crucial role in peacebuilding, as demonstrated in South Sudan, they must be given a special attention in terms of a local or hybrid approach to building peace. Despite this flaw, what matters more is that youth make up a very important group of people situated within the local agencies that "local turn" generally advocates for. This group of individuals contribute immensely to South Sudan's peacebuilding process. In fact, most of these youth groups have been operating in the country even before the war started in 2012.

Again, judging by the numerous presences of active youth organizations in South Sudan and concrete evidence of their various impactful work, young people in Africa are increasingly becoming aware of their role as partners in development rather than as recipient of development as has been the case over the years. This contradicts Aning and Atta-Asamoah (2011) who argued that conflicts in West Africa have been influenced, concurrently, by the region's youth bulge problem. As argued above and in the previous chapter, the presence of large youth cohort suggests otherwise. South Sudanese youth, despite being enormous in number, have been a blessing to the country's peacebuilding process. This, however, does not in any way argue that the claim of Aning and Atta-Asamoah (2011) are not genuine. What this argues is that, as formerly argued in the literature review section, these youths have mainly been victims of their political and economic circumstances. What the result of this study suggests is that young people have increasingly become aware of their positive role to effect change in a peaceful and productive manner.

Finally, another key lesson learned is that young people's efforts are being challenged by financial constraints; implying in this regard that local ownership alone, as argued by this study's theoretical framework, cannot suffice for effective peacebuilding. Thus, the need for interaction of the local and the international (Mac-Ginty, 2008; Millar, 2014) becomes necessary. This interaction, however, must be negotiated to maintain a balance and prevent dominance of 'one side over the other.' In summary, then, the study's findings indicate that young people can be active agents of peace, have become increasingly aware of their role as development partners as well as they face numerous challenges to their active participation in peacebuilding.

5.2 Theoretical and Practical Recommendations

This study has examined the youth's role in South Sudan's peacebuilding process with the aim of understanding their contributions and the impacts of these contribution to the country's peacebuilding process; as well as the implications of these for peacebuilding generally. As noticed in chapter one and in this chapter, above, the study has had several implications as well as limitations. These implications and limitations suggest recommendations worth looking into.

On the one hand, the study's limitations (as articulated in chapter one) suggest that, first, future research could focus on examining how young people promote peacebuilding individually and by other means such as through Arts which includes but not limited to music, painting, and creative writing. This study only focused on addressing how young people are contributing to peacebuilding through organized groups such as civil society organizations. An examination of how they do contribute to peacebuilding in the continent through other means, as outlined above, is crucial.

Additionally, it also suggests that future studies specifically look at female youth's contributions to peacebuilding in the continent. While this study did not focus on individual genders within the youth group, personal observation revealed that the youth peacebuilding domain in South Sudan is dominated by male youths. All the executive directors of the case study youth organizations used in this study were male youths. Such study will unravel the whys of the seemingly minimal presence of female youth in the youth peacebuilding domain.

Also, this dissertation was only able to examine the short-term effects of the various activities of youth organizations. As such, it is recommended that future studies also consider evaluating the longer-term impacts of the work of these youth organizations on South Sudan's peacebuilding process.

This chapter first presented the key argument and the primary purpose of the dissertation. Subsequently, it summarily presented the dissertation's results. Going forward, it addressed the question whether the results adequately answered the study's questions. Furthermore, it discussed the implications of these results for peacebuilding and academic literature, which was followed by theoretical and practical recommendations.

5.3 Overall Conclusion

The overall narrative of Africa's youth over the years has been negative due their increasing growth in population without the requisite economic opportunities (Fuller and Pitts, 1990; USAID, 2005), their involvement in extremism and violence (UNDP, 2016) and their felling of resentment (Hoeffler and Collier, 2004). Because of these, some academics have portrayed them as drivers of conflict and violence in the continent (Omeje, 2005; Urdal, 2006; Aning&Atta-ASAMOA, 2011; Paalo,2017). This thesis has built on the argument put forward by UNDP (UNDP, 2016, argues that majority of Africa's youth are neither violent nor have any interest in it), by arguing that even those who have participated in violent conflicts (as portrayed by Omeje, 2005; Urdahl, 2006; Aning&Atta-ASAMOA, 2011; Paalo,2017) were victims of their political and economic predicaments and not deliberate drivers of conflict. This argument is presented in detail in chapter two of this dissertation. Furthermore, this dissertation further argued that Africa's youth have the potential to be active drivers of peace, unlike their negative portrayal by the aforementioned scholars in the literature. To further demonstrate this positive potential, this study used four youth organizations in South Sudan as case studies, which are actively building peace to promote the country's peacebuilding process, leading to the conclusion that, indeed, Africa's youth can be active drivers of peace despite their political and economic predicaments and their negative portrayal in the literature. Thus, the primary aim of this dissertation was to showcase the positive impacts Africa's youth have on peacebuilding in the continent. To achieve this aim, the author divided the dissertation into various chapters and segments, each one leading to the other. These chapters are coherently summarized below.

The basis of this dissertation is clearly and coherently presented in the first chapter of this dissertation. Here, the author laid out clearly the entirety of the dissertation, starting with the dissertation's topic. This chapter introduces the dissertation by providing a clear background to the research. Subsequently, it provides a statement on the problem that warrants the study in the

first place. This chapter also accounts for the study's research questions, overall aim, methodology, limitations, and a concise summary of each chapter of the dissertation's chapter. With regards methodology, chapter one reveals that this study used a qualitative research approach backed up by interviews and intensive desk research as the study's data collection instruments. Also, this section shows that four youth organizations actively promoting peace in South Sudan were used as case studies to highlight the positive role of the youth in the African continent. To provide a theoretical direction to this study, this chapter further laid out the theoretical framework of the dissertation. On the other hand, this chapter also accounts that study was limited in several ways. That is, among other things, the study was only able to assess the short-term impacts of the role of South Sudanese youth on the country's peacebuilding process (these projects have barely just been implemented and the peace process is still ongoing. Peacebuilding efforts require long term for their impacts to be felt, Lederach, 1997)- leaving room for future studies to assess the longer-term impacts of the projects of these youth organizations on the peace process. While chapter one summarizes the entirety of the dissertation, the need for the study was further argued in the chapter that followed, chapter two. In chapter two, the argument surrounding the negative portrayal of Africa's youth was first discussed. Then, the author counter argued that the youths who participated in the violent conflicts and violence as presented by the various academics, were victims of their political and economic predicaments and not deliberate drivers of conflict. To support this argument, the author examined the current political and economic challenges of Africa's youths as well as the various political and economic conditions under which young people have participated in conflicts on the continent. This proved to support the author's argument that these youths were mere victims. In addition, this led to the overall objective of the dissertation, examining the positive impact of Africa's youth in peacebuilding utilizing South Sudan as a classic example, a road less traveled by previous academics. Finally, this chapter provides the reasons for selecting South Sudan to portray young people's positive role in peacebuilding; a rationale which includes but not limited to South Sudan being Africa and the world's newest state and at the same time undergoing an intense process of state fragility; as well as having an enormously young demography (UN Secretary General's Envoy on Youth). However, before pursuing the study's main aim of demonstrating the positive impacts of young people in advancing peacebuilding, the need to first introduce South Sudan (the dissertation's case study), its independence, the recently

resolved conflicts and the role of the youth in these conflicts, emerged. This paved the way for this dissertation's third chapter.

This thesis' third chapter mainly assessed young people's role in the conflicts that occurred after South Sudan gained independence. However, before this, the chapter traced the historical development of South Sudan, ranging from its precolonial history with Sudan, its experience with Turko-Egypt, Mahdists, and the British Condominium colonial rules. The discussions in these sections show that these experiences have greatly shaped the socio-economic, and political makeup of both South Sudan and its parent country, Sudan, today. The section on South Sudan's post-independence conflicts revealed that while the youth indeed actively participated in these conflicts, they did so mainly due to their political and economic predicaments. In short, they were victims of these two predicaments. That political leaders used the youth to execute ethnic violence. On the contrary, the chapter concluded that despite that these young people became actively involved in the country's peacebuilding processes. Demonstrating this positive involvement required a separate chapter. This paved the way for chapter four which demonstrated the positive involvement of young people in building peace in South Sudan.

Using four youth organizations as case studies, Chapter Four illustrated the many approaches used by the youth to advance South Sudan's peace process. Here, the dissertation showed that youth are promoting peacebuilding in South Sudan through youth-led organization (youth organizations established and run by youths) and youth-focused organizations (those that were not established by youths but entirely work with youths to promote the country's peacebuilding process). As one of the most important chapters of the dissertation, the author examined in detail the projects implemented by these youth organizations, briefly discussed the impacts of these projects on the peacebuilding process, as well as linked them to the literature on peacebuilding and the study's theoretical framework, the 'Local Turn Approach' to peacebuilding. While chapter four did a great deal of work, a detailed analysis of the results of these projects, and their implications for literature and peacebuilding required an examination. As a result, the dissertation was extended to chapter five where the issues mentioned were addressed.

Chapter five serves as the concluding chapter of this dissertation. This chapter provided the key finding of the dissertation as well as examined where the various youth organizations stand in relation to these findings. Further it demonstrated what these results mean to the literature on peacebuilding (especially the negative positions of Omeje, 2005; Urdal, 2006; Aning&Atta-

ASAMOA, 2011; Paalo, 2017) by providing their implications for the academic literature and the practice of peacebuilding. This chapter further restated this thesis' limitations and made some recommendations for further scientific inquiries and peace building. This is also where the conclusion to this dissertation lies.

This section has just provided a coherent overall summary of the entire dissertation in a few paragraphs. Overall, the dissertation has provided us a distinct lens regarding the discourse on young people, conflict, and post-conflict peacebuilding, especially in the African context. It also presents a significant understanding of the positive role of the youth in peacebuilding, beyond the African continent. Specifically, the dissertation has revealed that, Judging from the argument presented throughout this study using both primary and academic research data, the young people whom the literature has pointed out to be active drivers of conflict, were actually victims of their political and economic circumstances rather than being deliberate drivers of conflict. Moreover, despite the fact that these young people lack political and economic options, they, nevertheless, play an active role in peacebuilding especially through civil society organizations, as demonstrated in chapter four. Finally, this means that the capacity of young people must be enhanced to continue to promote peace-building efforts in the continent as they already immensely possess this potential.

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