

## Post-Conflict Interventions and Liberal Peacebuilding Approach in South Sudan

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### Abstract

*The challenge of post-conflict peacebuilding in Africa to maintain long-term political order and economic stability persisted. This article contributes to the ongoing debate by concentrating on the situation of South Sudan, which had just two years of independence honeymoon (2011-2013). Using a qualitative case study, the article thoroughly reviews the literature and critically analyzes the debate on peacebuilding methodologies, actors' effect on the peace-building process, the successes and failures of peacebuilding efforts, and probable next steps in the context of South Sudan. The article claims that the liberal peacebuilding attempts in South Sudan have resulted in a multidimensional problem and cyclical conflict without forging a social compact between the people and the government. The peacekeeping process, mediation efforts, and sanction measures are all part of South Sudan's peacebuilding initiatives. Under the controversies of mutually reinforcing liberal peacebuilding interferences, South Sudan is dreaming of national cohesiveness. These liberal peacebuilding projects, however, suffer from epistemological irrelevance, methodological challenges, institutional impotence, and practical incompleteness. Thus, the situation in South Sudan emphasizes the importance of developing innovative peacebuilding strategies that will not only facilitate dialogue but also promote inclusivity, ownership, and the transfer of agency to communities by taking into account the local circumstances.*

### Introduction

The end of the Cold War and the 9/11 incident declared the liberal peace ontological and epistemological foundations as universalizing rationality of order and a solution for a renewed security imperative and post-conflict states launched peacebuilding projects under the auspices of the United Nations (UN) and other actors (Millar, 2017: 293; Lide' n, Mac Ginty, & Richmond, 2009: 592). Nonetheless, in the post-conflict Global South, particularly in Africa, international-sponsored state-building and peacebuilding projects have frequently resulted in a lack of recognition and failed attempts (Masabo,

2019:138) providing significant challenges to conflict resolution theory and practice in Africa (Fosu, 2005: XV). This is experienced in some African nations including Rwanda, Angola, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Zimbabwe the Central African Republic (CAR), Sierra Leone, Liberia, and South Sudan witnessing recurring intrastate strife and bloodshed (Tom, 2017: 51; Omeje, 2018: 293).

Following the 9 July 2011 referendum, South Sudan was admitted into the UN on July 14th, 2011 as the result of the Comprehensive

Peace Agreement (CPA) signed in 2005 (Francis, 2016: 285). Despite the two-year honeymoon period of its independence, South Sudan has been embroiled in renewed deadly conflicts and has seen recurring crises that fail to preserve peace as violence persists, demonstrating the fragility of the CPA-forged peace and continuous mediation attempts failing to achieve peace (Githigaro, 2016: 112; Liaga, 2017: 1). In addition to the failure to execute the CPA, there have been many sequentially proven incidences after the December 2013 violence that have hampered South Sudan's peacebuilding efforts (Masabo, 2019: 134).

Morris (2013:14) argues that the challenges of state-building and peacebuilding in South Sudan relate to how South Sudan was administered both by the colonial and post-colonial states in Sudan and the dynamics and interests of the political parties in South Sudan. Also for Omeje (2018:294), South Sudan's post-war peacebuilding phenomenon has failed to address the country's ethnonational elites' ambition for power and riches, resulting in a return to armed warfare. The war began on a political level and then targeted executions and army recruiting and deployment swiftly injected ethnic dimensions into the fight (Blackings, 2018: 6). This indicates that, in South Sudan, the historical background of the political settlement and peacebuilding endeavor produced tensions between the need for a speedy end to violence and the necessity for a more inclusive process that results in a more lasting and sustainable accord (Jok, 2015: 15).

Focusing on South Sudan, this article contributes to the ongoing debate about

peacebuilding by pushing beyond generalizations of the reasons for this crisis of transition to a sustainable and stable political institution. Despite the efforts of local, regional, and international players, the paper contends that South Sudan's peacebuilding measures result in multidimensional difficulty and cyclical carnage in search of alternative inventive approaches.

After this introduction, the rest of the article is arranged as follows: the second section briefly highlights the methodology. The third section assesses the condition of post-conflict peacebuilding in Africa to address the South Sudanese issue through the theoretical prism that this essay uses to explain the peacebuilding processes. The fourth section covers the context and focuses on the competing dynamics in South Sudan after 2011. The fifth portion examines failures of the South Sudan's peacebuilding measures, and the sixth section is a conclusion part followed by the way forward.

### Research Methodology

The approach of the study is founded on an understanding of the relational and contextualized agency of liberal peacebuilding in achieving peace and security in South Sudan based on qualitative research approach and case study design. A qualitative critical literature analysis using secondary data such as research papers, books, journals, and other working materials was conducted to evaluate how liberal peacebuilding attempts influenced the South Sudanese situation. The materials were evaluated both conceptually and contextually to investigate the limitations of

liberal peacebuilding attempts in South Sudan.

### **State-of-Art in Post-conflict Peacebuilding in Africa**

Reflecting the post-Cold War Western-led political climate, various peace operations have sought to build sustainable forms of peace by incorporating the liberalized state into a Pacific Union of Liberal Democracies (Lide' n, *et al*, 2009: 587). Following that, expectations of ending armed conflicts were raised through the UN Agenda for Peace (1992), which defines peacebuilding as an outside intervention in support of peace processes to end violence and reconstruct states after wars (Ljungkvista & Jarstad, 2021: 2211).

Although the majority of regional and international organizations refer to peacebuilding as a post-conflict activity to describe the process of (re-)building countries following the violence, the term has produced significant disputes and controversies in academia and politics (Omeje, 2018: 281). In Africa, peacebuilding remains a difficult endeavor characterized by competing ideas and actions, all of which are worsened by the Western's channeling ideologies (Muggah, 2009: 3). This exclusion of non-Western discourses assumes the "universality" of Eurocentric modes of thinking (Fitzgerald, 2021: 2), which raises concerns about the motivations of powerful actors who sponsor and implement these activities, as well as their impact on the societies in which they operate (Newman, Paris, & Richmond, 2009: 3) because the duties and responsibilities of these external actors have a significant impact on the

eventual outcome of the peacebuilding process and ways to promote peace (Tom, 2017: 48).

These debates fall between the maximalist and minimalist peacebuilding continuums, where the minimalist approach entails a variety of targeted measures to reduce the risk of relapse into conflict and solidify peace by strengthening national capacities for conflict resolution at all levels laying the groundwork for long-term peace and development; and the maximalist approach encompasses the entire conflict spectrum, beginning with the pre-conflict phase and continuing through conflict resolution (Newman, 2009: 27; Omeje, 2018: 282).

The pinnacle of the dispute is defined by the junction of two ontological trajectories where the first group argued in support of dominant orthodoxy while acknowledging technical flaws (Robert, 2011: 2540). Proponents like Ronald Paris (2010) believe in the ontological and epistemological legitimacy of liberal peacebuilding and propose to save it due to the lack of any other viable option. The second scholarship, on the other hand, indicts a variety of failures of orthodoxy liberal peacebuilding as descending states to autocracy and violations of human rights, promoting "hybridity and the local turn" for the necessity of subjectivity in any peacebuilding engagement aiming to reflect on the "inter-subjective nature of the relationship between projectors and recipients of the rapidly hybridizing liberal peace" (Richmond 2009: 55). Millar (2017: 295) agrees, arguing that local conflict management institutions based on indigenous conceptions and practices are important within a confined geographical or

cultural domain and must be taken into account in peacebuilding efforts.

The dominant paradigm of liberal peacebuilding efforts in most African nations continues to focus on the implementation of political settlements (Ylönen, 2012: 29), although the nature of conflicts in Africa is more complex, involving diverse fighting groups, competing players, and layers of conflict (Ylönen, 2012: 29; Jok, 2021: 363). Salih (2009: 138) explains this as "Liberal peace blind spots in Africa," implying that the theory and practice of liberal peace in Africa downplay the entrenched tensions between liberalism and democracy in transition countries, favoring the liberal over the social and making politics subservient to the market. Further, Omeje (2018:282) contextualized the political economy of armed conflict and peacebuilding in Africa in terms of "(neo) patrimonial governance, rent-seeking, competition for power and resources, and prebendal corruption".

In line with these what is happening in South Sudan reveals not only the internal weaknesses of the CPA but also the peacebuilding efforts are engineered under the militaristic assumption depicting "only those who waged war should determine the terms of the peace talks" excluding political and civic groups and strengthening the armed dictatorship (Masabo, 2019: 137). For Jok (2021: 365), in South Sudan, the priority of (re)building a state ignoring nationhood becomes much easier for the political elite to divide communities making a return to open conflict more likely. This makes instructive note that the international community's involvement in promoting the break-up of

Sudan and propping up post-independence nation-building interventions in South Sudan is framed by the liberal peacebuilding project based on "short-term, quick-fix, and exit-strategy orientation" (Francis, 2016: 56).

The ineffectiveness of liberal approaches in volatile conflict-prone societies due to a lack of local ownership and insufficient consultation with local stakeholders (McNamee & Muyangwa, 2021: 6) and the dysfunctionality of peacebuilding projects as a top-down approach among power brokers and the establishment of state institutions (Newman et al, 2009: 5) are the evidencing cases in South Sudan for this essay. In general, an over-reliance on liberal peacebuilding models has not yielded the expected results in South Sudan, and peacebuilding measures to find solutions to the conflict should consider the people's histories, cultures, and experiences and the specific political contexts which are crucial for an understanding of the root causes of conflicts and which are required for the sustainability of outcomes.

### **The Historical Context of South Sudan's Quest for Statehood**

The hunt for a state in South Sudan began on August 18, 1955, as a fight for autonomy by Southern soldiers resisting transfer to the North using mutiny as a guiding rule of battle (Kuajien, 2018: 4). Thenafter, there were different forms of independence struggles against the North. After more than 20 years of civil wars, South Sudan emerged on July 9, 2011, as the world's 195th independent state, the 54th Member State of the African Union (AU) (Bereketeab, 2013: 1), deriving the *de facto* status from the 2005 CPA that marks the

final stage of a six-year peace agreement (Ali, 2011: 2).

South Sudan is one of the most diverse countries in the African continent constituting over 60 different ethnic groups making English the official language although Arabic, Bari, Nuer, and Dinka are the most spoken languages in the country (Melhe & Ojok, 2018: 4). Geographically, it covers 619,745 sq. km sharing common borders with Ethiopia in the east; Kenya, Uganda, in the south-east; Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and CAR in the south and south-east; and Sudan in the north. South Sudan has ten states and its capital city, Juba, is located in the Central Equatoria state (Kaiya, 2015: 2).

Regardless of these profiles, the key events leading up to the conflict happened on 15 December 2013, South Sudan witnessed an outbreak of violence resulting in estimates of casualties from 600 to 20,000 within three days, and 352,000 internal displacement and fled to Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda (IGAD, 2015: 2). This marked CPA as a “missed opportunity” in terms of supporting the peacebuilding efforts (Githigaro, 2016: 114) coupled with other unresolved issues related to a disagreement over sharing of oil revenue between Sudan and South Sudan, and the contested status of the border (Abyei, Southern Kordofan, and the Blue Nile) (Sulaiman & Chuckwu, 2013: 147). Moreover, the oil revenues that flow directly to the south following the CPA are affected by expenditures and security-related projects (Githigaro, 2016: 114); and the unwillingness of SPLM/A to transform from an armed movement into a civilian government has

affected the human security of its citizens (Tom, 2017: 51).

These developments generated “new challenges of South Sudan” (Hendricks & Lucey, 2013: 2) as elites have continuously and systematically entrenched their power and access to resources (Lucey & Kumalo, 2017: 3) together descended the country into conflict and civil strife, first in 2013 and in 2016 both caused by mistrusts and disagreements between and among the country’s political elites and the army (Francis, 2016: 248).

These provided the opportunity for the intervention of external actors to voice their opinions and take action in South Sudan (Tom, 2017: 52) imposing a liberal approach that is converted into a “proxy” for the extension and attainment of strategic interests of the actors (Francis, 2016: 285). Therefore, the situation in South Sudan is an indication that if the underlying drivers of conflicts are not addressed and resolved properly, they can undermine stability and peace in a country and possibly lead to the resumption of fighting.

## **The Peacebuilding Efforts in South Sudan**

This section covers the peacebuilding efforts undertaken in South Sudan by the international community, as a third-party intervention, such as the UN, AU, IGAD’s constituent countries, and relevant regional actors, among others.

### ***Mediation Efforts***

Though the history of mediation between Sudan and South Sudan started with the

negotiation of the CPA in 2005, the breakout of violence on 15 December 2013 immediately required the response of the regional and international community (Sulaiman & Chuckwu, 2013: 148). As an immediate response, on December 15-16, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) the then-head of the UN Mission in South Sudan, and Uhuru Kenyatta contacted the leaders; and also the IGAD Council of Ministers, led by the then-Ethiopian Foreign Minister, Seyoum Mesfin, paid a three-day visit to Juba from December 19 to 21, 2013 pursuing the need of political solution to end the violence (Giumelli & Weber, 2022: 261).

The first phase of mediation (19 December 2013 to 6 January 2014) was required to respond to the violence by IGAD, a regional organization joined by South Sudan in 2011 (Lucey & Kumalo, 2017: 3) having the then Ethiopian Foreign Minister as the chief mediator, who is accompanied by mediators from Kenya and Sudan while Uganda is only involved at heads of state (HoS) assembly. The warring party delegations comprised the principles, the leadership committee, and technical or subject committees (ICC, 2015: 4). Despite this response to the crisis, the varied stances of regional governments generated regional divides, rendering IGAD unable to apply unified pressure on the South Sudanese parties who were unable to reach an accord (Giumelli & Weber, 2022: 264).

The second phase (from 7 to 23 January 2014) was when the respective parties signed the Cessation of Hostility (CoH) agreement to address the issue of detained cabinet and SPLM party members and set the stage for

mediation by establishing a Joint Technical Committee and a Monitoring and Verification Mechanism as stipulated in the CoH agreement (Giumelli & Weber, 2022). The HoS agreed on a cessation of hostilities (CoH) accord to halt the violence; and a regional "Protection and Deterrence" force (PDF) to use force to create the environment for dialogue and implementation of the CoH (ICC, 2015: 12). Though this phase demonstrated cohesive efforts, competing for regional interests harmed the peace process within South Sudan as the primary mediators focused on their various stances vis-à-vis the warring parties (Ibid). This mediation was similarly halted owing to a lack of coordinated efforts, as well as the uncoordinated unilateral participation of various regional heads of state (Lucey & Kumalo, 2017: 3), and a lack of effective engagements of the international community with IGAD on a political, rather than military-led strategy (ICC, 2015: 12).

The third phase began in February 2014, when the parties agreed to create a Transitional Government of National Unity (TGNU) through an intermediate arrangement. This phase started after the signature of the CoH and an agreement on the status of detainees and lasted until the TGNU's inception involving substantive negotiations focusing on the formation of a broad-based government (Giumelli & Weber, 2022: 269). By late 2014, the goal of reaching a politically transformative agreement through a "multistakeholder" process had been abandoned in favor of a simpler power-sharing arrangement that would lay the groundwork for future political change; however, even this proved unattainable, as deadlines were missed and South Sudanese

became increasingly emboldened to call IGAD's bluff and IGAD kept the process alive through procedures like a cessation of hostilities workshop and party discussions, which did not resolve core issues but did serve to avert a return to significant violence (ICC, 2015: 14). The political nature of this phase made the mediation process more challenging and highlighted further the divergent regional interests regarding the resolution of the crisis in South Sudan. The Government of South Sudan acted increasingly hostile to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), accusing it of sheltering terrorists.

The fourth phase (from March 2015 to August 2015) aimed to "close the deal" and get parties to sign a comprehensive peace agreement, realizing that IGAD-facilitated negotiations were insufficient to get the warring parties to sign an agreement; as a result, in August 2015, IGAD's efforts bore fruit and the ARCISS was signed in Addis Ababa by Machar and Pagan Amum as the heads of the opposition groups, and later by Kiir (Giumelli & Weber, 2022: 29). Following that IGAD-Plus was launched on 14 June 2015 constituting 6 IGAD Member States, 5 representatives of the AU, the AU commission, China, the European Union (EU), the Troika (Norway, the United Kingdom, the United States), and the UN to deepen the cooperation between IGAD member states and its main partners (IGAD, 2015: 4). These latter entities were included in the IGAD-Plus with the goal of increasing the political clout of the discussions and forcing an agreement on the parties (ICC, 2015: 15). Despite their contribution to emergency food and medicine for South Sudan, "Troika and Peace Making in South Sudan" remained

unrealistic due to the Troika's oversimplifications of the collective failure in building peace for its deep economic interests of exploiting mineral and oil (Melhe & Ojok, 2018: 8) have dissatisfied both IGAD and the South Sudanese (ICC, 2015: 14).

The ARCISS was eventually signed in August 2015 with strong pressure from the Troika, despite some reservations expressed by the parties to the agreement that was followed by the establishment of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (JMEC) to be led by former President Festus Mogae of Botswana (Lucey & Kumalo, 2017: 4). However, the focus on its implementation has been overshadowed by the fighting and an announcement by Kiir on 14 December 2016 in which he declared the start of a process of national dialogue to link political settlements with grassroots grievances, redefine unity, address issues of diversity, agree on a mechanism for sharing resources and enhance reconciliation, among others yielding those opposing the dialogue, and those supporting it (Lucey & Kumalo, 2017: 3).

All these mediation efforts verified "a divided and ineffective international community" (ICC, 2015: 19) with limited participation of local actors in the mainstream peace initiatives (Liaga, 2017: 1) together failed to achieve peace through mediation in South Sudan.

### *Sanction Regime*

The AU's Peace and UNSC mentioned the South Sudan sanctions system in December 2013, and the EU and US followed suit shortly after, in the course of 2014, enforcing the arms embargo, travel restriction, and asset freeze (Giumelli & Weber, 2022: 272). The UN

Security Council then agreed in 2015 and 2018 to impose sanctions and a weapons embargo on South Sudan in response to persistent hostilities and peace deal breaches that were determined to be renewed until May 31, 2023 (Ibid). However, the series of punishments generated the impression that specific groups were being punished, exacerbating already difficult circumstances for the mediation (ICC, 2015: 22). Furthermore, disagreement among foreign parties to the South Sudan war lessened the possibility of sanctions (Giumelli & Weber, 2022). This shows that a more thorough examination of the use of sanctions in South Sudan has an influence on internal political dynamics without adding to peacebuilding efforts.

### *Peacekeeping Efforts*

Following the signing of the CPA, the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) was established as a traditional peacekeeping mission, tasked with overseeing a peace agreement, monitoring and verifying security arrangements, support for humanitarian assistance and human rights protection, as well as providing political support to the parties (Francis, 2016: 265). After the commencement of violence in 2013, the South Sudanese government failed in its responsibilities to protect the people leaving the UNMISS in charge and determined that the situation continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security in the region and acting according to the Chapter of the UN Charter, Security Council Resolution 1996 of July 8, 2011, set up the UNMISS (Sharland & Gorur, 2015: 8). Its mandate aims at strengthening peace and the new state and

promoting long-term economic development. It will support the government in the exercise of its responsibilities regarding prevention, mitigation and regulation of conflicts; help it to insure security, set up the rule of law and strengthen the police and justice sectors comprising 7,259 uniformed personnel and 2,598 international civilian staff members, local civilians and volunteers (Ferraz, 2013: 58). As such, UNMISS is tasked with achieving strategic objectives related to South Sudan's political and security situation, including the protection of civilians (PoC), facilitation of humanitarian delivery, promotion of human rights, and support for the peace process (Day, Hunt, Yin & Kumalo, 2019: 2). Despite these extended mandates UNMISS was unable to fulfill its mandate due to divergent regional interests confronted with frequent impediments by the host government, and the mission also lacked the UNSC's robust and unified political support in enforcing sanctions on violators of peace agreements, even in the face of direct attacks on the mission (Wondemagegnehu, 2020: 25). South Sudan, in general, remains an example of a large peacekeeping force whose mandate developed in a rapidly changing setting.

### **Failures of Peacebuilding Efforts in South Sudan**

The fundamental failings of liberal peacebuilding initiatives in South Sudan may be categorized as epistemological irrelevance, methodological difficulties, institutional powerlessness, and practical incompleteness.

First, the epistemological triviality of liberal peacebuilding is centered on the practices of



Western-centric theories of international relations and peace studies, which have not adequately reflected the nuanced epistemological diversity toward this goal (Agathangelou & Killian, 2006: 459). Epistemology, defined as "the philosophical study of specific concerns regarding human knowing," raises the topic of African epistemology of peace based on learned experience that shapes Africans' perceptions of the world (Dama, 2021: 47). Conflicts in Africa have their epistemological roots in the cunning propaganda of Westerns who have resurfaced in independent African countries fomenting these conflicts (Boaduo, 2010: 168). Thus, addressing the paradoxical danger of perpetuating epistemic and ontological violence seeks to promote peace by providing practical tools for resolving epistemic politics in peacebuilding or mitigating their material consequences (Fitzgerald, 2021: 2). To capture the complexity of peace in its empirical diversity, as a situation or condition in a specific locality; as a web of relationships; and as ideas or discourses about what peace is or should be, international interventions must consider local perspectives, encourage local agency, and establish local ownership (Ljungkvista & Jarstad, 2021: 210). These techniques give multiple paths for peacebuilding efforts in South Sudan and, when combined, can provide a more complete picture of what peace is, and how it is manifested, experienced, and understood.

Second, the methodological difficulties of South Sudanese peacebuilding efforts are related to the manifestation of several factors, including poor CPA implementation, historical power and resource conflicts between the Dinka and Nuer ethnic groups,

the weakness of mechanistic approaches to peace, and a failure to address the root causes of the conflicts in South Sudan (Masabo, 2019: 135). The mediation efforts were an elite-based method that disengaged the larger public and provided a lack of accountability and openness in the peace process (Sulaiman & Chuckwu, 2013: 150). This has demonstrated the inadequacies of top-down methods of peacebuilding based on the liberal peace concept, which promotes peace via democratization, the rule of law, human rights, and a free, globalized economy (Liaga, 2017: 2). Given South Sudan's protracted and violent conflict, such a high-level peace is neither accessible nor relatable to its people, exposing the inadequacies of the approach and exposing the divide between political elites and citizens, who are frequently viewed as recipients of, rather than participants in, the process (Ibid).

Third, the institutional issues of peacebuilding in South Sudan addressed by IGAD's mediation process do not address regional rivalries and power struggles between neighboring countries (historic enmity between Uganda and Sudan, as well as rivalry between Uganda and Ethiopia over their respective influence on regional security, has colored the mediation process), centralization of decision-making at the HoS level, and related lack of institutionalization within IGAD (ICC, 2015: II). The IGAD's mediation process failed to build trust and understanding between the parties, and in its absence, and the lack of a commitment to broad-reaching reconciliation, the mediation followed Western practice and emphasized legal criteria and timetables (Sulaiman & Chuckwu, 2013: 150).

Fourth, the practical inadequacy of South Sudan's peacebuilding efforts is in terms of inclusion and exclusion from the process. The efforts made as operational tactics are under fire for their inefficiency, legitimacy, and reliance on state institutions over civil society, a social compact, and agency (Lide'n et al, 2009, p. 286). In this context, inclusivity refers to peacebuilding as a situated and co-constituted process that must take into account historical conditions and the local turn as the conceptual basis of an alternative model allowing for an analytical sensibility to peacebuilding as emergent and adaptive (Danielsson, 2020: 1080). In the case of South Sudan: lack of inclusivity of interested parties in southern Sudan, notably civil society and other political parties (Sulaiman & Chuckwu, 2013; 150); local peacebuilding efforts are “under-prioritized and under-resourced” at the expense of exporting western knowledge to the ideas and methodologies used (Liaga, 2017: 4); the existing indigenous or cultural religious everyday peace practices, ceremonies and rituals were also not widely used (Bedigen, 2022: 56); and the exclusion of women and youth in the peace process has proved the patriarchal gender norms that are deeply implicated as drivers of conflict in South Sudan (Mutasa & Virk, 2017: 24).

The aforementioned complementing elements demonstrated that the international community failed to engage in post-independence nation-building and post-liberation-war peacebuilding, hence fostering the violence in South Sudan (Francis, 2016: 248). In general, interventions for peacebuilding state-building in South Sudan remained unsuccessful due to: historical legacies and distrust between communities

(CARE, 2020: 4), the failure of the traditional development approach to work on unresolved social, political, and governance dynamics (Knezevic & Smith, 2015: VII), the political system functioned as a marketplace for private gain (Tom, 2017: 52), weak administrative capacity and a militarized approach to governance and politics (Annan, 2019: 17), the gap between the top-down and bottom-up peacebuilding approaches (Liaga, 2017: 5). All of these issues highlight the necessity for a pragmatic approach that focuses on theoretical and methodological innovations to produce emancipatory dynamics of peacebuilding in the global south post-conflict situations.

## Conclusion

The post-conflict peacebuilding efforts in South Sudan are defined by the international community's split efforts owing to differing objectives of regional parties without comprehending the country's unique dynamics. On its way to becoming a stable state, South Sudan faced several major challenges in achieving long-term peace due to elite ramifications, uninformed partnerships, external interventions, and the exclusion of local social capital. The peacebuilding initiatives in South Sudan prioritized Western liberal techniques hiding local registers of peacebuilding, therefore, the conditions there increase the importance of finding innovative peacebuilding strategies that will not only facilitate dialogue, but promote inclusivity, ownership, and transference of agency to communities. The peacebuilding techniques should take into consideration the local circumstances of the disputes, such as South Sudan's historical background, limited

resources, and the role of local initiatives. In general, the situation in South Sudan emphasizes the significance of developing new peacebuilding techniques to establish a coherent state capable of reducing violence and internal divides of rivalry for state authority.

### The Way Forward

The basic policy implications of South Sudan's liberal peacebuilding initiatives show that, regardless of previous achievements (*if any*) and challenges, investing in the next steps is critical for balancing international interventions with local realities and capacities including:

- Decolonizing peacebuilding in a society dominated by epistemic hegemony that ignores epistemic diversity might help to address epistemic injustice, which is critical for fostering and preserving peace and security in Africa.
- Indigenous epistemologies can help address conflict and promote peace by utilizing social imaginations and local realities to identify difficulties and find solutions via trials and innovations.
- Recognizing and creating a national identity fosters a social contract between people and government, promoting national unity is key to sustaining peacebuilding operations without relying solely on outsiders.
- To promote peacebuilding, community conversation should be inclusive and based on local norms and traditions, with participation from all stakeholders, including women and youth.
- Building social capital via activities and interactions between groups can support peacebuilding efforts while also investing in peace education programs is crucial in promoting peace in divided societies.

### About the Author

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