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The Role of the Peace and Security Council in Addressing the Root Causes of the Darfur Conflict: A Comparative Analysis of Conflict Resolution Strategies in Other African Contexts

By

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Abstract

The Darfur conflict is one of the most protracted and deadly conflicts in contemporary Africa. Since its outbreak in 2003, the conflict has resulted in the displacement of over two million people, with an estimated 300,000 deaths. The African Union (AU) has played a pivotal role in mediating the conflict, and its Peace and Security Council (PSC) has been at the forefront of efforts to resolve the crisis. The PSC's intervention efforts to end the Darfur conflict have been multi-faceted, including mediation, peacekeeping, and humanitarian assistance. The PSC has deployed several peacekeeping missions to Darfur, including the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) in 2004, and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) in 2007. These missions were mandated to protect civilians, monitor the ceasefire agreement, and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid. In addition to peacekeeping, the PSC has engaged in several mediation initiatives aimed at bringing the warring parties to the negotiating table. These efforts culminated in the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) in 2006, which sought to address the root causes of the conflict and promote reconciliation. However, the DPA was only partially implemented, and the conflict continued. Despite the challenges, the PSC has remained committed to ending the Darfur conflict. In 2020, the PSC launched a new initiative, the Sudanese Peace Talks, which aimed to revitalize the peace process and bring all parties to the negotiating table. The talks resulted in the signing of a peace agreement between the Sudanese government and several armed groups in October 2020. While the peace agreement is a positive development, the implementation process remains challenging, and the PSC's intervention efforts will continue to be critical in ensuring lasting peace in Darfur through increasing engagement with local communities, increasing the participation of women and marginalized groups to ensure that their perspectives are taken into account and their rights are protected and the adoption of community-based approach to conflict resolution .

Key Words: Conflict, Comparative Analysis, Conflict Resolution, African Contexts, African Union, Darfur

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Introduction

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) is one of the main organs of the African Union (AU) established to promote peace, security, and stability on the African continent. One of the critical mandates of the PSC is to address conflicts and their root causes in African countries. The Darfur conflict in Sudan is one of the long-standing conflicts in Africa that has been a subject of discussion by the PSC. The conflict, which started in 2003, has claimed thousands of lives and displaced millions of people. The PSC has been involved in various initiatives to resolve the conflict and address its root causes. This paper aims to provide a comparative analysis of conflict resolution strategies in other African contexts and their relevance to addressing the root causes of the Darfur conflict. The paper examines the different conflict resolution mechanisms employed by the PSC and other actors in resolving conflicts in other African countries, such as South Sudan, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. The analysis focuses on the effectiveness of these strategies in addressing the root causes of conflicts and their potential applicability to the Darfur conflict. The paper also explores the role of the PSC in addressing the root causes of the Darfur conflict. The PSC has been instrumental in bringing various stakeholders to the negotiating table and facilitating peace talks. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives in addressing the root causes of the conflict remains a subject of debate. The paper will, therefore, provide an assessment of the PSC's initiatives and their impact on the conflict's resolution and the mitigation of its root causes.

Assumptions

The PSC can identify and implement effective strategies to address the root causes of the Darfur conflict.

Objective

Evaluate the PSC's role in addressing the root causes of the Darfur conflict, including its initiatives and their impact on the conflict's resolution and the mitigation of its root causes.

Statement of Problem

The Darfur conflict in Sudan is one of the longest-standing conflicts in Africa, which has claimed over 300,000 lives and 2.7 million displaced. Despite the efforts of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and other actors to resolve the conflict, its root causes continue to persist, resulting in ongoing violence and instability. The problem is that there is a lack of understanding of the most effective conflict resolution strategies to address the root causes of the Darfur conflict, and how these strategies can be compared and applied to other African contexts. Furthermore, there is a need to evaluate the PSC's initiatives and their effectiveness in addressing the root causes of the Darfur conflict, and the potential for the PSC to learn from conflict resolution strategies in other African countries. Therefore, this paper aims to address these gaps in knowledge by providing a comparative analysis of conflict resolution

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strategies in other African contexts and their relevance to addressing the root causes of the Darfur conflict, with a focus on the role of the PSC.

Review of Related Literature

Interests and the Complex Nature of the Conflict

The Darfur conflict is one of the most protracted and deadly conflicts in modern African history, with an estimated 300,000 people killed and 2.7 million displaced since its outbreak in 2003. The conflict is rooted in a complex set of historical, political, and economic factors, including marginalization, unequal access to resources, and ethnic tensions. Addressing the root causes of the conflict is crucial to achieving sustainable peace and stability in the region. This literature review examines the role of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) in addressing the root causes of the Darfur conflict, with a focus on comparative analysis of conflict resolution strategies in other African contexts.

One of the key challenges in addressing the root causes of the Darfur conflict is the complex nature of the conflict, which involves multiple actors with varying interests and grievances. In the study by Deng, Kimaro, Rothchild & Zartman (2010) on conflict resolution in Africa, there is an highlight of the importance of adopting a holistic approach to conflict resolution that addresses the underlying causes of conflicts, such as economic marginalization, intercommunal tensions, and issues related to land ownership. This approach can be informed by the lessons learned from conflict resolution strategies employed in other African countries, which have shown that community-based approaches, inclusive peace negotiations, and transitional justice mechanisms are effective in resolving conflicts and addressing their root causes.

The PSC has traditionally favored reaching consensus while making decisions. Before an agreement is formed, the PSC members engage in extensive persuasion, guided by the chair of the month, to ensure that there is a shared perspective and ultimately a consensus, as was the case in reaching a resolution on Darfur. This demonstrates unequivocally that the PSC uses consensus as its official method of decision-making; hence, attempting to reach consensus through persuasion can take time and cause a delay in the decision-making process. Aning (2017) stated that the PSC now routinely uses consensus to adopt resolutions.

The use of the voting system to pass resolutions in the future appeared to split the PSC members when making choices on security-related issues, which is bad for Africa, where wars might still break out at any time. This demonstrates that the PSC prioritizes consensus over voting in order to prevent the divide that voting can bring about in the decision-making process. According to Badmus (2017), the use of consensus in the PSC is desirable because it protects the AU's reputation by preventing the appearance of political fault lines among the PSC members. Although voting in the PSC is unpopular because it is seen as polarizing, it can be used to determine the positions of the states participating in the PSC on security-related issues. This can provide a clear picture of the timeliness of the response and the resource sufficiency that states devote to resolutions they support, which is crucial when evaluating effectiveness.

Kenya, Sudan, Ethiopia, Ghana, Senegal, Togo, Nigeria, South Africa, Algeria, Gabon, Mozambique, Lesotho, Libya, Congo, and Cameroon were among the fifteen members of the PSC in 2004 when the decision to intervene in the Darfur Crisis was made (Williams, 2009). It is noteworthy that Sudan, which was embroiled in civil war, was able to join the PSC, breaking the rules of the Constitutive Act. Sudan's election to the PSC

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demonstrated the AU's poor legal framework in ensuring that states elected to the PSC adhere to the guidelines established in the CA.

The Sudan's membership in the PSC while it was embroiled in a conflict demonstrates emphatically how inadequate the AU's legal frameworks are for interpreting and assessing a state's eligibility for the PSC. According to Smith (2017), the African Union's top officials do not give the established legal frameworks much thought. (2015) added that, as long as states fulfil their financial obligations to membership, the PSC elections are simply aspirational.

There is strong evidence suggesting that the African Union (AU) member states used the political decision to allow Sudan to contest and eventually got voted to the PSC due to its significant funding to the AU and the geopolitical influence that the Bashir regime enjoyed among the member states in Africa, despite the AU having legal frameworks in place that interpret the suitability of a member state that is eligible to contest membership to the PSC. The notion of liberal institutional theory that states are rational actors who seek their interests through the IOS they construct is supported by Sudan's influence over the AU to the point of violating the organization's regulations and becoming a PSC member. This tenet, however, was insufficient because its proponents failed to mention how far states would go to protect their interests.

The Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement (HCA), which was signed by the main combatants, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army, the JEM, and the Government of Sudan, opened the door for an intervention in Darfur. HCA, which outlined the requirements to be met by the opposing sides, marked a turning point for intervention in the conflict. With a few caveats, the HCA's content served as the PSC's mandate for the intervention (PSC/AHG Comm, 2004). Furthermore, it was stated by Okumu (2016) and Waitaha (2018) that the PSC's inability to develop a strong mandate demonstrates its ineffective leadership.

In conclusion, the PSC chose consensus as its preferred method of decision-making in reaching its decision to intervene in the Darfur war. The capacity of Sudan to run for and be elected to the PSC despite enduring civil conflict in violation of the norms of the Constitutive Act illustrated the AU's weak judicial systems, which are largely controlled by political decisions. The PSC's ineffective leadership can be seen in the weak mandate filled with reservations intended to handle the Darfur war. It is noteworthy that the decision to interfere in Darfur was made a year after the crisis started. This demonstrated that the PSC's authorization of the operation in Darfur was not prompt. This highlighted the neo-liberal belief that IOS are crucial to the establishment of peace and that efficacy, which takes into account the timeliness of the decisions made relative to conflict, is necessary.

Inclusive Peace Negotiations

In a similar vein, Makinda & Okumu (2007) reviewed the African Union with a keen emphasis on the challenges of globalization, security, and governance. Makinda & Okumu emphasize on the importance of addressing the root causes of conflicts through inclusive peace negotiations that involve all stakeholders in the conflict resolution process. Waitaha argues that the PSC should prioritize the participation of women and marginalized groups in peace negotiations to ensure that their perspectives are taken into account and their rights are protected.

The peace and Security Council is the body responsible for making all major decisions on the upkeep of peace and security in Africa. Since the PSC's founding in 2004, it has been confronted with the "boiling" crisis in Darfur, which has required its action. The

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PSC requires assistance from other African Union agencies in order to carry out its mandate because it does not operate in Pariah. The Peace and Security Architecture is made up of the Assembly, the African Union Commission (AUC), the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), the African Standby Force, the military committee, the Panel of the Wise, and the Peace Fund, with the exception of the first two organs (Sansculotte, 2017). Williams (2014) opines that CEWS, tasked with compiling knowledge and alerting the PSC of potential conflicts, was only approved in January 2007. In contrast, the members of the Panel of the Wise were chosen in January 2007 and officially introduced in December; the Africa Standby Force is still a work in progress.

The PSC would be under pressure to fulfil its declared objective of bringing peace to the Darfur region due to the sluggish pace of operationalizing the primary organs of the Peace and Security Architecture. The African Union Commission, through its chairperson, acts as the chief executive officer in charge of carrying out the PSC's decisions and can offer it the necessary advice (African Union Handbook, 2017). It is important to highlight that the African Union Commission was heavily involved in writing the PSC minutes and Communiqués because the PSC did not yet have a functioning Secretariat, which added to the Commission's workload.

The African Union Commission (AUC) authoring the communiqués meant that the AUC could be overwhelmed with greater workload as it was serving this role on an ad-hoc basis. Aning (2017) stated that the lack of having operationalized PSC Secretariat led to the PSC relying on the AUC for preparation of minutes and communiqués. The analysis found that there was no set deadline for the drafting of the minutes and communiqués, which caused a delay in the decision-making process regarding Darfur resolutions.

The PSC's ability to develop the mandate on its own was weakened when AUC assumed more authority than what was granted by the Constitutive Act. In contrast to the requirement that the agenda of the PSC be set by the chair of the month, according to Aning's (2017) opinion, the AUC has assumed powers till it can influence the PSC agenda through the PSC secretariat. Clear working procedures and a clear mandate are necessary for an effective intervention, both of which were glaringly absent during the Darfur intervention.

As the Darfur crisis erupted in 2003, the PSC was forced to establish a reconnaissance team in order to assess the situation and get ready to send out the Ceasefire Commission (PSC/PR/Comm. (V), 2004). The CEWS would have provided timely preventative advise to the PSC, but it took the reconnaissance team more almost three weeks to mobilize and go to the Darfur region. As a result, the Ceasefire Monitoring Commission, whose job it was to prepare the groundwork for the AMIS soldiers, deployed slowly.

States' handling of the CEWS conflict warning as internal matters demonstrates the necessity for the PSC to step up and provide leadership to those states who are already suffering early indicators of conflict. Moreover, the type of regime influences the course of action. In the instance of the Darfur crisis, the Bashir regime's autocratic nature proved to be a barrier to the PSC's intervention efforts. For this organ to fully realize its role as a pre-emptive organ, Williams (2014) and Wolf (2014) claimed that the sluggish operationalization of the CEWS and the difficulties it has dealing with the states suffering conflicts need to be addressed. This suggests that in order for the AU to be a useful tool that the PSC may use promptly to avert future crises, the AU needs to spend more financial resources and human personnel expertise.

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Finally, the failure to operationalize the APSA institutions, the PSC Secretariat, and the Continental Early Warning System in a timely manner proved costly in bringing the Darfur war to the PSC agenda on a timely basis and formulating the Darfur mandate. The Constitutive Act and the PSC protocol, which envision an independent Peace and Security Council capable of making decisions about conflict intervention without interference, both prohibit the assumption of additional powers from the AUC to the extent of influencing the content of the Darfur mandate. Regarding the liberal institutional theory, it is important to note that timely operationalization of the decision-making organs which was solely missed during the formulation of the PSC mandate in Darfur is necessary for states to be able to pursue their interests through the IOS effectively for the long-term well-being.

Accountability and Justice Mechanisms

Another important aspect of addressing the root causes of the Darfur conflict is the need for accountability and justice mechanisms. In their study on accountability in the aftermath of conflict, Sikkink & Walling (2007) highlight on the importance of prioritizing the implementation of accountability and justice mechanisms, such as truth commissions, reparations, and prosecutions, to address the grievances of victims and hold perpetrators accountable.

In terms of comparative analysis, the experience of other African countries in conflict resolution can provide valuable insights for addressing the root causes of the Darfur conflict. For example, in the study by Watts & Faasen (2009) on community-based conflict resolution in Africa, Watts & Faasen highlight the importance of adopting a community-based approach to conflict resolution, which involves working with local communities to identify and address the root causes of the conflict. This approach has been successfully employed in countries such as Liberia and Sierra Leone to promote sustainable peace and stability.

The African Union's PSC approved a number of resolutions regarding the Darfur conflict. The first resolution authorized the intervention in Darfur, giving the AMIS military troops the specific responsibility of serving as an observer mission to oversee the recording of human rights violations in Darfur and the monitoring of the Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement (PSC/AHG/COMM. (X), 2004). The severe human rights violations in the Darfur region caused the PSC to adopt the 12th resolution on the situation in Darfur, which called for the creation of the Ceasefire Commission (CFC), which would be composed of professionals with the knowledge to directly assist the AMIS soldiers. The CFC members' makeup was made public in the AU commissioner's 17th report. It indicated that the military observers contributed by the AU member states failed to reach the minimum number required despite pledging a higher number (PSC/PR/2(XVII), 2004).

According to the report, the many PSC resolutions on the Darfur conflict were a symptom of sluggish AU member state compliance. Following PSC approval (PSC/PR/2(XVII), 2004), the few African states that offered their forces for deployment in the Darfur conflict did so on various timetables. Furthermore, the fact that five of the fifteen PSC member states that were participating in the PSC offered their soldiers is a glaring example of inadequate leadership on the part of the PSC members, who ought to be leading the charge in defending the PSC's decisions. It is notable that African states did not stick to the timeline of availing troops thus compromising its ability to end Darfur conflict.

The failure of the initial mandate given to the observer mission, which was to put an end to the fighting in Darfur, was reflected in the alteration of the PSC mandate there. Aning

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and Waithaka (2018) argued that the African military's underdeveloped capabilities in many areas render it unprepared to respond to conflicts that develop on the continent. They pointed to the poorly coordinated deployment of the few military personnel available for the Darfur intervention as evidence. According to Okumu (2016), the majority of African states' lack of political backing for its peacekeeping intervention attempts has contributed to unsuccessful conflict intervention. The PSC's resolutions showed that the AU member states were only partially complying.

Military personnel available for deployment in the Darfur crisis fell short of the amount promised by AU member states and were insufficient. The several resolutions showed weak mandates that required follow-up resolutions to resolve and subpar PSC resolution implementations. In terms of effectiveness, the AMIS peacekeepers' capacity to put an end to the Darfur conflict was hampered by the lack of a deadline for providing sufficient troops. Also, the fact that just one-third of the PSC member states contributed troops was evidence of the PSC as a whole's lack of commitment and leadership.

Overall, the literature review suggests that addressing the root causes of the Darfur conflict requires a holistic approach that involves inclusive peace negotiations, accountability and justice mechanisms, and community-based approaches to conflict resolution. The PSC can learn from the experiences of other African countries in conflict resolution and adopt a more effective approach that addresses the underlying causes of the conflict, promotes sustainable peace and stability in the region, and ensures the protection of human rights for all stakeholders.

Methodology

Mixed-methods approach was used in the study collecting quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data was collected through a systematic review of existing literature on conflict resolution strategies employed in other African countries and their effectiveness in addressing the root causes of conflicts. The literature review included an analysis of the PSC's initiatives in addressing the Darfur conflict and their impact on the conflict resolution process. Qualitative data was collected through interviews with key stakeholders, including members of the PSC, representatives of the Sudanese government, civil society organizations, and other actors involved in the conflict resolution process.

The interviews provided insights into the challenges and opportunities in addressing the root causes of the Darfur conflict and how conflict resolution strategies employed in other African countries can be applied to the Darfur conflict. The comparative analysis was conducted through a thematic analysis of the data collected from the literature review and the interviews. The analysis identified common themes and patterns across different conflict resolution strategies and evaluated their relevance to addressing the root causes of the Darfur conflict.

Findings

The comparative analysis of conflict resolution strategies employed in other African countries, such as South Sudan, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, identified common themes and patterns in addressing the root causes of conflicts. For instance, community-based approaches, inclusive peace negotiations, and transitional justice mechanisms were effective in resolving conflicts and addressing their root causes in these countries.

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Analysis of the PSC's initiatives and their impact on the Darfur conflict resolution process reveal gaps and limitations in the PSC's efforts to address the root causes of the conflict. The findings highlight the need for the PSC to enhance its engagement with local communities, increase the participation of women and marginalized groups in peace negotiations, and prioritize the implementation of accountability and justice mechanisms.

Interviews with key stakeholders provide insights into the challenges and opportunities in addressing the root causes of the Darfur conflict and how conflict resolution strategies employed in other African countries can be applied to the Darfur context. For example, the interviews reveal the need to address issues related to land ownership, economic marginalization, and inter-communal tensions, which are among the root causes of the Darfur conflict.

Conclusion

The PSC can learn from conflict resolution strategies employed in other African countries and adopt a more holistic approach that addresses the root causes of the Darfur conflict. This can help to promote sustainable peace and stability in the region since the study highlights the importance of adopting a holistic approach to conflict resolution that addresses the underlying causes of conflicts, such as economic marginalization, inter-communal tensions, and issues related to land ownership. This approach can be informed by the lessons learned from conflict resolution strategies employed in other African countries, which have shown that community-based approaches, inclusive peace negotiations, and transitional justice mechanisms are effective in resolving conflicts and addressing their root causes.

The study underscores the need for the PSC to enhance its engagement with local communities in the Darfur context and increase the participation of women and marginalized groups in peace negotiations. This can help to build trust, promote dialogue, and ensure that the voices of all stakeholders are heard in the conflict resolution process. Lastly, the study highlights the importance of prioritizing the implementation of accountability and justice mechanisms in the Darfur context. This can help to address the grievances of victims, hold perpetrators accountable, and prevent the recurrence of violence.

Recommendations

The recommendations aim to enhance the effectiveness of the PSC's role in addressing the root causes of the Darfur conflict and promoting sustainable peace and stability in the region drawing that the PSC should increase its engagement with local communities in the Darfur context to build trust, promote dialogue, and ensure that the voices of all stakeholders are heard in the conflict resolution process.

There is the need to increase the participation of women and marginalized groups through prioritization of the participation of women and marginalized groups in peace negotiations to ensure that their perspectives are taken into account and their rights are protected. The implementation of accountability and justice mechanisms should be prioritized, such as truth commissions, reparations, and prosecutions, to address the grievances of victims and hold perpetrators accountable.

The PSC should adopt a community-based approach to conflict resolution, which involves working with local communities to identify and address the root causes of the conflict. This should be through the promotion of inclusive peace negotiations that involve all stakeholders in the conflict resolution process, including civil society organizations,

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traditional leaders, and marginalized groups. Beyond that there should be provisions for post-conflict reconstruction and development to ensure that the underlying causes of the conflict are addressed and that sustainable peace and stability are achieved.

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