

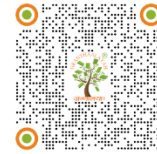
Original Article

POLITICAL ELITES REBELLION AND ITS IMPACT ON SOUTH SUDAN

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ABSTRACT

Since it's gained her independence in 2011, South Sudan has been plagued by political instability, largely driven by the actions and rebellions of its political elites. This research investigates the underlying motivations behind these elite-led uprisings and their wide-reaching impact on the country's socio-political landscape. The study identifies key drivers such as power struggles, ethnic divisions, corruption, and the competition for control over natural resources, particularly hydrocarbons. These conflicts, often fueled by personal and ethnic grievances, have perpetuated cycles of violence, destabilizing governance and hindering development efforts. The effects of these rebellions have been devastating for the civilian population. The research highlights the severe humanitarian crisis marked by mass displacement, economic hardship, the destruction of infrastructure, and widespread human rights abuses. The study also underscores the psychological trauma and social disintegration caused by ongoing conflicts. Additionally, it sheds light on how these rebellions have disrupted essential services such as healthcare and education, exacerbating poverty and inequality.

Through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies, the research provides a nuanced analysis of the visible and invisible impacts of elite rebellions. It concludes that achieving sustainable peace and political stability in South Sudan requires addressing the root causes of conflict. Proposed solutions include inclusive dialogue among political elites, governance reforms to combat corruption and enhance transparency, and reconciliation initiatives to heal historical grievances. The study further emphasizes the importance of international support and the implementation of power-sharing agreements as pathways toward conflicts resolutions. This research contributes to the broader academic discourse on political instability and elite behavior in post-colonial states, offering insights that could inform policy interventions and peace building efforts in South Sudan and other similar contexts.

Keywords: Political, Elites, Rebellions, Impact, South Sudan

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Personal, political, military, social, or religious grievances can lead to a rebellion, which is a mass movement for destruction of a country. Rebellions and civil wars are not solely motivated by opportunistic greed or by long-standing grievances as argued by Collier and Hoeffler (2004) rather, academics contend that people rebel because they feel as though they are being denied the financial advantages or social standing that they are entitled to. Potential rebels might also be discouraged from rebelling if they would have to give up important economic possibilities and obligations. Collectively, these problems demonstrate that equitable government

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and economic opportunity should lessen the incentives and chances for rebellion. One of the first reasons for why humans fight is that they have innate enmity for other groups. According to this explanation, grievances and feuds build up over centuries until members of different racial, ethnic, or religious groups despise one another, frequently having forgotten or misinterpreted the original and long-ago triggers. They then get ready to fight and murder each other at any moment.

Ancient hatreds were prominently mentioned in accounts of the atrocities in Bosnia and Rwanda. Bosnia allegedly plunged into civil war in 1992 as a result of the collapse of communism, which released primal hatreds among Serbs, Croats, and Bosniak neighbours. Some traced these animosities back to the fourth-century divide between Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christianity that spanned the Balkans. Similarly, the Rwandan genocide is frequently described as a reflection of Hutus' fundamental hatred for Tutsis. Citing ancestral hatreds offers a simple reason for ethnic violence. However, it is nearly certainly incorrect. Multiple studies have revealed little, if any, correlation between a country's ethnic or religious variety and its risk of experiencing civil war. Furthermore, it appears that whether distinct groups display even modest enmity, it is heavily influenced by circumstances. For example, Daniel Posner discovered that the Chewa and Tumbuka ethnic groups display tremendous enmity in Malawi, yet the same groups are fairly cordial in Zambia, even agreeing to marry across ethnic lines. Similarly, prior to the civil conflict in Bosnia, one-quarter of marriages crossed ethnic and religious lines.

A popular example of how resources can fuel conflicts is diamond, as highlighted in the book *Blood Diamond* During Sierra Leone's Civil War, that rebel groups would capture easily mined diamond fields. These diamonds were then smuggled out of the country, helping to finance a rebellion or civil war. The rebels argued that certain natural resources, such as oil, are associated with an increased likelihood of conflict or insurgency, and other resources, such as diamonds, are associated with increased insurgency or conflict duration. This is because natural resources can lower the cost of starting a war and provide rebels with an easy way to finance protracted conflicts. Natural resources can also make it more profitable for the state to claim the prize, further reducing the opportunity costs of rebellion. For the same reason, Collier and Hoeffler also conclude that states with low GDP per capita are more likely to experience civil war and insurgency because low median incomes make conflict a more profitable option [Collier and Hoeffler \(2004\)](#).

[Fearon, and Laitin \(2003\)](#) offer the opposite view. They see opportunity structures created by state weakness as the cause of rebellion or civil war. They find evidence in favour of riot technology as a mechanism. In addition, they find that ethnicity, religion, or any cultural or demographic characteristics do not seem to be positively associated with the beginning of civil war. Economic factors are likely to play a role in the conflict, likely to generate grievances [Fearon, and Laitin \(2003\)](#). In *Why Men Rebel*, Ted Gur argues that people are motivated to rebel by "relative deprivation" rather than absolute poverty or pure greed. Basically, "relative disadvantage" is a group's feeling and belief that they have not received the economic benefits or political voice they believe they are entitled to. This sense of injustice causes conflict. In addition, groups are often particularly motivated by the fact that they have lost advantages or power they once enjoyed, or fear that a change in circumstances will lead to a loss of power and economic advantages [Ted \(1970\)](#).

Since gaining independence in 2011, South Sudan has experienced chronic political instability and civil conflict. Central to these conflicts are the actions and rebellions of political elites, whose motivations and impacts are complex and multifaceted. Despite their significant role in the ongoing turmoil, the specific reasons why these elites choose to rebel and the impacts of their actions are not well understood. This gap in understanding hinders effective conflict resolution and governance strategies.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The study seeks to move beyond surface-level grievances and analyse the strategic calculations, motivations, and limitations that drive South Sudanese elites to rebel. This involves examining the interplay of personal ambition, ethnic loyalties, access to resources, and the pursuit of power within the context of a fragile state. Ultimately, this study seeks to provide a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics surrounding elite-led rebellions in South Sudan, moving beyond simplistic narratives to reveal the often-invisible ways in which these conflicts shape the country's political landscape.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Despite the frequent occurrence of elite rebellions in South Sudan, particularly in Juba, their impacts often remain invisible to both the local and international communities. This phenomenon presents a significant challenge to understanding and addressing the root causes of instability in the country [Johnson \(2014\)](#). The political elites in South Sudan are deeply divided along ethnic lines, primarily between the Dinka and Nuer tribes. These divisions foster a climate of mistrust and conflict, yet the consequences of elite actions are often overshadowed by the broader ethnic tensions. Persistent power struggles between key political figures, such as President Salva Kiir and his former deputy Riek Machar, have led to recurrent cycles of violence and rebellion. However, the visible impact of these power struggles on governance and public life is often obscured by ongoing conflicts and humanitarian crises [Jok \(2011\)](#).

Control over lucrative resources, especially hydrocarbons, is a major driver of elite rebellion. Corruption and patronage networks complicate the political landscape, but the tangible effects on economic development and public welfare remain difficult

to discern due to widespread poverty and infrastructure challenges [Patey \(2014\)](#). The continuous conflict has resulted in a severe humanitarian crisis, with millions of people displaced. The focus on immediate humanitarian needs often overshadows the political dynamics and their specific impacts, making it hard to attribute changes to particular elite actions. South Sudan's fragile state institutions struggle to implement and sustain reforms. The frequent changes in leadership and policy rarely lead to significant, visible impacts on the ground due to the lack of effective governance structures [De Waal \(2014\)](#).

While significant research has been conducted by Dr. Luka Patey in (2014) on the causes and consequences of political instability in South Sudan, there remain several critical gaps in understanding the specific impacts of elite rebellions and why these impacts often remain invisible. These gaps hinder effective policy-making and intervention strategies aimed at fostering stability and development in the country. Addressing these research gaps is crucial for developing a more comprehensive understanding of the political dynamics in South Sudan and improving the effectiveness of interventions aimed at stabilizing the country. By focusing on micro-level impacts, the intersection of humanitarian and political issues, institutional responses, media practices, and comparative analysis, this study can provide deeper insights into the reasons why the impacts of political elite rebellions in South Sudan remain invisible [Copnall \(2014\)](#).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

BROAD OBJECTIVE

To examine the phenomenon of political elites' rebellion in South Sudan and its impacts on the country's political stability and development.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- 1) To identify the primary motivations behind the rebellions of political elites in South Sudan.
- 2) To investigate the effects of rebellions on the people of South Sudan.
- 3) To explore the potential paths towards conflict resolution and peacebuilding in the context of political elites' rebellion in South Sudan.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) What are the primary motivations behind the rebellions of political elites in South Sudan?
- 2) What are the effects of rebellions on the people of South Sudan?
- 3) What will be the way forward towards conflict resolution and peacebuilding in the context of political elites' rebellion in South Sudan?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

Addressing these problems is critical for several reasons:

- A deeper understanding of elite motivations and the hidden impacts of their actions can inform more effective policy and peacebuilding interventions that target the root causes of conflict.
- Conflict resolution: by highlighting the less visible consequences of elite actions, this study can contribute to more holistic conflict resolution strategies that go beyond immediate humanitarian responses.
- Academic contribution: this study will add to the academic discourse on political instability and conflict, providing insights that can be applied to other post-colonial states facing similar challenges.

JUSTIFICATION

The persistent conflict and political instability in South Sudan pose significant challenges to peacebuilding, governance, and development. Understanding the underlying factors driving these issues is essential for crafting effective interventions. This study focuses on the motivations behind political elite rebellions and the often-invisible impacts of their actions, which are crucial yet underexplored dimensions of the conflict in South Sudan. Informed policy making is imperative by identifying the motivations behind elite rebellions, policymakers can develop targeted strategies to address the root causes of conflict. This can lead to more effective peacebuilding efforts and the stabilization of political institutions. Besides, improved governance is critical through understanding the invisible impacts of elite actions in creating governance structures that are more resilient to manipulation and subversion by political elites. This can strengthen state institutions and promote long-term stability.

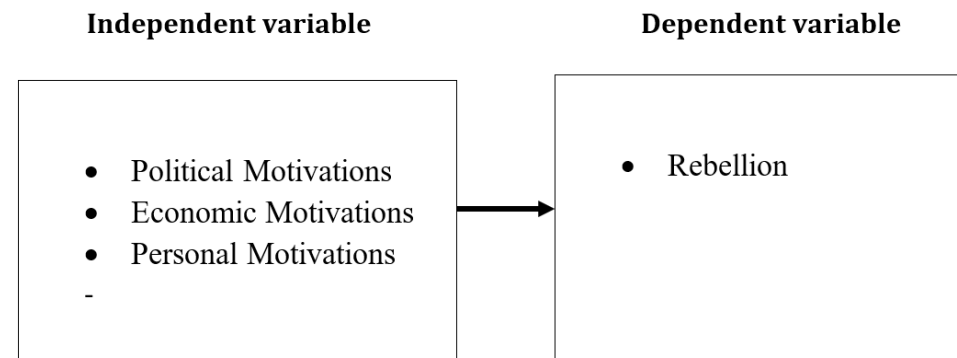
In addition, theoretical advancement is essential by applying and testing theories of political instability, elite behavior, and conflict in the context of South Sudan. The study can refine and expand existing theoretical frameworks. Practical implication is

desirable through detailed insights into elites' motivations and the indirect consequences of elites' actions can inform the design of comprehensive conflict resolution mechanisms that address both visible and hidden dimensions of the conflict. Understanding the less visible impacts of elite rebellions can improve the effectiveness of humanitarian interventions by highlighting areas that may be neglected due to a lack of visibility in media and policy discussions.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The delimitation of the study is that, it relied on secondary data that is more accessible to primary data whose acquisition is limited. The primary data was collected from the accessible population, whereas the general and target population information was acquired through secondary data. The study focused on political elites' rebellion and its impact on South Sudan. The study's limitations include the constrained time, resources, and access to government data.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



Source: Researchers, 2025

The conceptual framework above consists of independent variables and dependent variable. Independent variables consist of political motivation, economic motivation and personal motivations. Dependent variable is the effect and consists of rebellion which is caused by independent variables that led to elite fragmentations and conflicts in South Sudan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

MAIN MOTIVES BEHIND THE REBELLIONS OF POLITICAL ELITES IN SOUTH SUDAN.

ETHNIC TENSIONS AND IDENTITY POLITICS

Ethnicity has historically been a critical factor in the political landscape of South Sudan. Political elites often mobilize their ethnic constituencies as a means to solidify their political influence. In a highly diverse country, this politicization of ethnicity has led to factionalism within the state, with elites frequently competing for power through ethnic lines rather than national cohesion. The rivalry between President Salva Kiir (Dinka) and former Vice President Riek Machar (Nuer) is a prime example of how ethnic politics drive rebellion and conflict. The 2013 civil war, triggered by political disagreements, quickly escalated into an ethnic conflict, largely due to the way political leaders harnessed ethnic grievances for their own advantage. Ethnic tensions and identity politics have played a critical role in shaping the political landscape of South Sudan, both before and after the country's independence in 2011. The politicization of ethnicity is deeply rooted in the country's colonial history and has been exacerbated by successive conflicts, ultimately becoming a powerful force behind political elite rebellions. The manipulation of ethnic identities by political leaders for personal and political gain has contributed to the destabilization of South Sudan, fueling cycles of violence and rebellion. This expanded section will delve deeper into the historical context, the ethnic divide, the role of elites, and the consequences of ethnic politics on rebellion [Rolandsen \(2015\)](#).

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: COLONIAL LEGACY AND ETHNIC FRAGMENTATION

The ethnic divisions in South Sudan can be traced back to the colonial period when the British authorities adopted policies that emphasized and reinforced ethnic identities. During colonial rule, the British practiced a policy of indirect rule, where they governed the southern region of Sudan through local chiefs, often based on ethnic affiliation. This system institutionalized ethnic divisions by privileging certain ethnic groups over others and laying the groundwork for ethnic competition over resources and political influence. The colonial government also geographically and politically isolated the southern part of Sudan from the northern part, fostering deep mistrust between the two regions. Southern Sudanese, many of whom were from ethnic groups such as the Dinka,

Nuer, Shilluk, and Azande, felt marginalized by the northern government, which was dominated by Arab and Muslim elites. This historical marginalization fueled grievances that later found expression in two civil wars (1955-1972 and 1983-2005) between the northern government and southern rebels, including the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

After decades of civil war, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 and South Sudan's subsequent independence in 2011 did not resolve the ethnic tensions but instead provided a new platform for ethnic competition among southern elites. Ethnicity remained a central factor in politics as leaders sought to secure power by mobilizing their ethnic constituencies, which has created new forms of rivalry and distrust [Jok \(2015\)](#).

THE ETHNIC DIVIDE: DINKA AND NUER RIVALRY

The rivalry between the Dinka and Nuer, the two largest ethnic groups in South Sudan, has been one of the most prominent examples of how ethnic divisions drive political conflict. The Dinka, the largest ethnic group, has historically dominated the country's political landscape, particularly since independence. President Salva Kiir, a Dinka from the Bahr el Ghazal region, has used his ethnic base to consolidate power within the government and the military. This has led to accusations of favoritism and marginalization from other ethnic groups, particularly the Nuer. The Nuer, the second-largest ethnic group, has been at the forefront of political opposition to the Dinka-dominated government. Riek Machar, a Nuer leader and former Vice President, has positioned himself as a representative of Nuer grievances against the Dinka-led government. The rivalry between Machar and Kiir came to a head in December 2013, when a political dispute within the ruling Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) escalated into a full-scale civil war. What began as a political struggle quickly took on ethnic overtones, with the Dinka and Nuer mobilizing along ethnic lines [Young \(2016\)](#). The conflict led to horrific violence, with both sides targeting civilians based on their ethnicity. Human rights organizations documented mass killings, rapes, and other atrocities committed against both Dinka and Nuer civilians during the war. The ethnicization of the conflict deepened the divide between the two groups, making reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts even more challenging.

ELITE MANIPULATION OF ETHNICITY FOR POLITICAL GAIN

Ethnicity has been a tool for political elites in South Sudan to mobilize support and gain political influence. Elites have often framed political disputes in ethnic terms, using the grievances of their ethnic groups to justify their claims to power. This tactic not only helps them rally support but also deflects attention from personal ambitions or broader political issues. Salva Kiir's consolidation of power within the SPLM, particularly after the death of John Garang in 2005, has been viewed by other ethnic groups as a way of maintaining Dinka dominance within the government. Kiir's decision to dismiss Riek Machar and other prominent Nuer figures from their positions in 2013 was perceived as an ethnic power grab, leading to Machar's rebellion. Machar, in turn, mobilized Nuer forces by framing his rebellion as a defense of Nuer rights and a response to Dinka dominance. This dynamic has played out repeatedly in South Sudan's history, with political elites using ethnic grievances to justify their rebellions. However, the use of ethnic identity as a political tool has had disastrous consequences, as it has deepened ethnic divisions and created a cycle of violence and retribution between groups. Instead of fostering national unity, the ethnicization of politics has fragmented the state and undermined efforts to build a cohesive national identity [Young \(2016\)](#).

STRUGGLES FOR POWER AND LEADERSHIP

Power struggles among South Sudan's political elites have been central to the numerous rebellions. The country's leadership structure heavily concentrates power in the presidency, leading political elites to view the presidency as the ultimate prize for political and economic control. The 2013 and 2016 civil wars are clear illustrations of how personal ambitions and political rivalries among elites, particularly between Kiir and Machar, have led to violent conflict. Elites who feel excluded from key positions within the government often resort to rebellion as a means of renegotiating power structures or gaining leverage in peace agreements. The struggles for power and leadership in South Sudan have been a major driving force behind political instability, rebellion, and civil war. These power struggles are rooted in the country's complex political landscape, where leadership positions are highly coveted due to their control over resources, military power, and government institutions. The absence of strong democratic institutions, the centralization of power in the executive branch, and personal rivalries among political elites have all contributed to intense competition for leadership. This expands from the historical background, the centralization of power, factionalism within the ruling elite, and the broader consequences of these leadership struggles [De Waal \(2014\)](#).

South Sudan's political landscape is heavily shaped by the legacy of its long struggle for independence from Sudan. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), and its military wing, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), were the dominant forces in this liberation struggle, led by figures like John Garang and Salva Kiir. The SPLM/A's military success and eventual political victory in securing South Sudan's independence in 2011 meant that the movement's leaders became the de facto rulers of the new state. However, the transition from a liberation movement to a civic governing body proved difficult. The SPLM/A was built on a hierarchical, military-style leadership structure, contradictions that lack democratic mechanisms for resolving disputes or sharing

power. As a result, leadership positions within the SPLM/A, and later within the government of South Sudan, became highly contentious, with various factions vying for control [Johnson \(2014\)](#)

The death of John Garang in a helicopter crash in 2005, just months after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that ended Sudan's civil war, created a power vacuum that further intensified the struggle for leadership. Salva Kiir, Garang's deputy, assumed leadership of the SPLM and the presidency of the newly autonomous government of Southern Sudan, but his leadership was immediately challenged by other senior figures within the movement. These internal power struggles, which were largely unresolved at the time of independence in 2011, continued to fester and eventually led to the outbreak of civil war in 2013 and many other small wars in the nascent state.

CENTRALIZATION OF POWER IN THE EXECUTIVE

One of the key factors driving the struggles for leadership in South Sudan is the extreme centralization of power in the executive branch, particularly the presidency. The president appoints and fires at will. He can appoint state officer today and revoke the appointment tomorrow. Thus, Salva Kiir gives and Salva Kiir takes, may his name be glorified. Besides, President Kiir wields significant control over politics, military and country's resources. This concentration of power has made the presidency the focal point of political competition among elites, as controlling the executive office translates into controlling the state apparatus and resources. Under President Salva Kiir, the executive branch has increasingly consolidated power, sidelining other political institutions, such as the legislature and the judiciary, which remain weak and underdeveloped. Kiir's dominance over the military, especially his close ties with top commanders in the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), has allowed him to maintain a firm grip on power. However, this centralization has also created resentment among other political elites, who feel excluded from decision-making and denied access to state resources [Rolandsen \(2015\)](#). The concentration of power in the presidency also means that losing political office can result in a total loss of influence, which incentivizes elites to resist leadership transitions. As a result, South Sudan's political landscape has been marked by attempts to hold onto power at all costs, often through violent means. Political elites who are removed from office or feel threatened by the incumbent government frequently resort to rebellion as a way to renegotiate their access to power.

FACTIONALISM WITHIN THE RULING ELITE

Factionalism within the ruling elite has been a persistent problem in South Sudan's political system. Since independence, the SPLM has been plagued by internal divisions and leadership disputes, particularly between President Salva Kiir and his former deputy, Riek Machar. These divisions have often revolved around personal rivalries, but they have also been exacerbated by ethnic affiliations, with Kiir representing the Dinka ethnic group and Machar representing the Nuer. The rivalry between Kiir and Machar reached its peak in December 2013, when a political dispute within the SPLM escalated into a violent conflict. Kiir accused Machar of attempting a coup, leading to Machar's dismissal as Vice President and the subsequent outbreak of civil war. Machar denied the coup allegations and mobilized forces loyal to him, primarily from the Nuer ethnic group, sparking widespread violence across the country. This conflict was not just about ethnic divisions but also about competing visions for the country's leadership. Machar had long criticized Kiir's increasingly autocratic leadership style and sought to position himself as a reformer within the SPLM. However, his challenge to Kiir's leadership was seen as a direct threat to Kiir's hold on power, leading to a violent confrontation between the two factions. The rivalry between Kiir and Machar is indicative of a broader pattern in South Sudan's political elite, where leadership disputes are often settled through violence rather than negotiation or democratic means. The absence of strong institutions to mediate these disputes has meant that political competition frequently leads to armed conflict, further destabilizing the country [Jok \(2015\)](#)

PERSONAL RIVALRIES AND OPPORTUNISM

While ethnic and political divisions are important factors in the power struggles in South Sudan, personal rivalries and opportunism have also played a key role. Many of the political conflicts in South Sudan have been driven by the ambitions of individual leaders who seek to gain or maintain power for personal benefit. Political office in South Sudan offers access to wealth, patronage networks, and control over the country's hydrocarbon resources, which makes leadership positions highly lucrative. For many political elites, rebellion has become a tool for bargaining. Leaders who challenge the government through rebellion are often offered positions of power in exchange for laying down arms. This pattern of rebellion, negotiation, and co-optation has created a cycle of violence, where political elites use armed conflict as a way to secure their place within the government. Riek Machar's repeated rebellions against the government, followed by peace agreements that offered him a return to power, are a clear examples of this dynamic. After the signing of the 2015 peace agreement, Machar was reinstated as Vice President, only for the peace deal to collapse in 2016, leading to another round of fighting until 2018 peace deal that built shaky and risky coalition. This cyclical pattern highlights the role of opportunism in South Sudan's leadership struggles, where elites use violence as a strategy to advance their personal ambitions [Arnold \(2013\)](#).

CONSEQUENCES OF POWER STRUGGLES ON GOVERNANCE AND STABILITY

The struggles for power and leadership in South Sudan have had devastating consequences for governance and stability. The constant infighting among political elites has weakened state institutions, making it difficult for the government to provide basic services or maintain law and order. As leaders focus on securing their positions within the government, they often neglect the needs of the broader population, contributing to widespread poverty, food insecurity, and displacement. The violent nature of this leadership struggles has also undermined peacebuilding efforts. Peace agreements, such as the 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS), failed because it didn't address the root causes of elite competition. Instead, it offered temporary power-sharing arrangements that were quickly broken when one faction feels excluded or threatened. As a result, the country has experienced repeated cycles of violence and instability, with little progress toward sustainable governance. [Patey \(2017\)](#). This is the same with 2018 Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) which is at the brink of collapse due to deep-seated mistrusts amongst the signatories to the Agreement. The concentration of power in the executive has also stifled the development of democratic institutions. South Sudan's political system remains highly centralized, with little room for opposition or independent views.

RESOURCE CONTROL AND ECONOMIC MARGINALIZATION

South Sudan's wealth in natural resources, particularly, hydrocarbon has been a significant motivator for political elites to rebel. Elites often view rebellion as a pathway to control resource-rich areas, which in turn grants them access to wealth and economic influence. Many of the key oilfields in South Sudan are located in areas where elites have historical claims, creating incentives to challenge central authority for local control of these regions [Le Billion \(2001\)](#). Resource control and economic marginalization are at the heart of South Sudan's conflicts and power struggles. While the country is endowed with significant natural resources, particularly, oil, which constitutes the backbone of its economy, these resources have become a curse, as competition over their control has driven conflict and exacerbated economic inequalities. Economic marginalization, especially of communities living near resource-rich areas, has further deepened grievances, fueling political instability and rebellion. This analysis will explore the role of oil, land control, economic marginalization, corruption, and the broader consequences of resource struggles in South Sudan.

Indeed, South Sudan possesses vast oil reserves, which account for more than 80% of its government. Oil exports are essential for funding public services, infrastructure projects, and the military. The importance of oil to the national economy has made control over oil resources a central issue in South Sudan's political landscape. During the period leading up to South Sudan's independence in 2011, oil played a significant role in negotiations with Sudan. Oil reserves are located primarily in South Sudan, while the infrastructure for exporting oil (including pipelines and refineries) is located in Sudan. This geographic split meant that oil became a key bargaining chip in peace negotiations between the North and the South. Post-independence, disputes over oil revenues between the two countries further contributed to tensions, leading to the temporary shutdown of oil production in 2012 [Le Riche and Arnold \(2013\)](#). Within South Sudan, oil control has fueled political rivalries and violence. The central government, dominated by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), has sought to maintain tight control over oil revenues, which has sparked resentment from other political elites and regions that feel excluded from the benefits. During the civil wars of 2013 and 2016, many of the major battlefronts were located near oil-producing regions, as rebel forces sought to gain control over these vital resources.

EFFECT OF REBELLIONS ON THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH SUDAN

The rebellions in South Sudan have resulted in profound and multifaceted consequences for the country, deeply affecting its social structures, economic conditions, and overall quality of life. Since gaining independence in 2011, South Sudan has grappled with numerous internal conflicts driven by political power struggles, ethnic tensions, and disputes over vital resources. These rebellions have triggered a cycle of violence and instability that has significantly disrupted the lives of millions. The effect of rebellions on the people of South Sudan is discussed on the following areas:

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

The humanitarian crisis in South Sudan has reached alarming proportions due to the ongoing conflicts, significantly worsening food insecurity and health challenges. The prolonged violence has disrupted agricultural production, leading to chronic shortages of food. As a result, malnutrition rates have soared, particularly among vulnerable populations such as children and pregnant women. According to the United Nations, millions have been displaced from their homes due to fighting, which has rendered entire communities vulnerable. By late 2023, it was estimated that over 7.76 million people in South Sudan required humanitarian assistance, with many facing life-threatening hunger [UN OCHA \(2023\)](#). The World Food Programme (WFP) reports that over half the population is in dire need of food aid, exacerbating the crisis as families struggle to meet their basic needs. The effects of this humanitarian crisis extend beyond immediate food shortages; they also have significant implications for public health. The conflict has severely strained the already limited healthcare infrastructure, leaving many without access to essential services. Diseases such

as cholera and malaria have proliferated in areas lacking sanitation and healthcare resources. With the ongoing violence making it difficult for humanitarian organizations to operate effectively, the situation remains precarious. The WFP has noted that the lack of food security not only leads to immediate health issues but also has long-term consequences for the population's resilience and ability to recover from the ongoing conflict [WFP \(2023\)](#). In this context, addressing food insecurity and improving health services are critical for stabilizing the humanitarian situation in South Sudan.

DISPLACEMENT AND MIGRATION

The conflicts in South Sudan have caused massive internal displacements, forcing millions to flee either to neighboring countries or to United Nations camps. This displacement disrupts established communities and leads to the disintegration of social networks and support systems. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) Report, there were over 2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in South Sudan as of 2023, significantly impacting their access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities [IDMC Report \(2023\)](#). Displaced individuals often find themselves living in overcrowded conditions with limited access to basic necessities, making them more vulnerable to diseases and malnutrition. The loss of livelihoods exacerbates the plight of IDPs, as many have been forced to abandon their homes, land, and businesses, plunging them into poverty and increasing their dependence on humanitarian assistance. Additionally, the influx of IDPs into urban areas and refugee camps creates pressure on already strained resources and infrastructure. Host communities often struggle to accommodate the growing population, leading to competition for limited resources such as food, water, and healthcare services. This situation can foster tensions between displaced individuals and host communities, potentially leading to conflict. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has reported that the influx of IDPs and refugees can strain local services, further complicating the humanitarian response and necessitating targeted interventions to address the needs of both groups [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees \(2023\)](#). Addressing displacement requires comprehensive strategies that consider the needs of IDPs while supporting host communities to mitigate tensions and foster social cohesion.

VIOLENCE AND INSECURITY

The rebellions in South Sudan have resulted in widespread violence, including attacks on civilians, sexual violence, and targeted killings. These acts of violence contribute to a climate of fear and insecurity that prevents communities from rebuilding and often leads to cycles of retribution and further conflict. Human Rights Watch has documented numerous cases of violence affecting women and children, who are particularly vulnerable in these situations [Human Rights Watch \(2023\)](#). The prevalence of violence not only endangers lives but also disrupts social fabric, making it difficult for communities to re-establish trust and cooperation necessary for recovery and development. The social repercussions of violence can be long-lasting, as communities struggle to cope with the trauma and loss that result from such acts.

Moreover, the breakdown of law and order exacerbates the security situation, as criminal gangs and armed groups often exploit the chaos for their gain. The power vacuum created by weakened state institutions allows these groups to operate with impunity, undermining efforts to restore stability and governance. Reports indicate that the lack of effective law enforcement has resulted in increased incidents of crime and violence, further eroding public confidence in the government's ability to protect its citizens [Collier and Hoeffler \(2004\)](#). This cycle of violence not only impacts immediate security but also hinders long-term peace-building efforts. The need for comprehensive security sector reforms and community-based initiatives to address the root causes of violence is critical for restoring trust and establishing a safer environment for all citizens.

ECONOMIC DECLINE

The ongoing conflicts have significantly hindered economic development and stability in South Sudan, creating a challenging environment for growth. Frequent disruptions to trade, agriculture, and infrastructure have led to weakening of national currency, South Sudanese Pound (SSP), soaring inflation and increased poverty rates. The World Bank reported that South Sudan's GDP has contracted dramatically since the onset of conflict, resulting in widespread economic hardship and diminishing opportunities for the populace [World Bank \(2023\)](#). The instability has deterred foreign investment, which is crucial for stimulating economic activity and rebuilding infrastructure. As businesses are destroyed or forced to close, unemployment rates rise, leaving many families struggling to provide for their basic needs. Economic decline also exacerbates governance challenges, as the government faces increasing difficulties in delivering essential services. The lack of economic activity limits tax revenues, which in turn constrains the government's ability to fund education, healthcare, and social programs. This creates a vicious cycle in which economic decline undermines governance, while poor governance further hampers economic recovery [African Development Bank Report \(2022\)](#). As a result, public trust in government institutions erodes, making it more difficult to implement policies that promote stability and growth. Addressing the economic decline in South Sudan requires targeted interventions focused on rebuilding infrastructure, fostering investment, and creating jobs to restore public confidence and facilitate recovery.

SOCIAL FRAGMENTATION AND ETHNIC TENSIONS

Rebellions often exacerbate ethnic tensions, leading to social fragmentation and deepening societal divides. Allegiances formed during conflicts can complicate reconciliation efforts, making unity increasingly challenging. Research by the African Development Bank highlights how such fragmentation leads to lasting animosities, perpetuating cycles of violence and instability [African Development Bank Report \(2022\)](#). Ethnic tensions can arise from competition over resources, political representation, and historical grievances, often leading to violence and discrimination against certain groups. This polarization not only weakens community bonds but also hinders collective efforts to address shared challenges, further entrenching divisions. Social fragmentation can also have significant implications for governance and the rule of law. As communities become divided along ethnic lines, trust and cooperation between different groups diminish, making it difficult to promote effective governance and uphold the rule of law [Collier and Hoeffler \(2004\)](#). The lack of social cohesion can lead to increased crime and violence as individuals prioritize the interests of their ethnic group over the common good. Additionally, marginalized groups may resort to informal justice mechanisms, which can lack transparency and accountability, further undermining the formal legal system [Stewart and Fitzgerald \(2001\)](#). Addressing social fragmentation and ethnic tensions requires inclusive policies and initiatives that foster dialogue, promote reconciliation, and encourage collaboration among diverse groups to build a more cohesive and peaceful society.

GOVERNANCE AND RULE OF LAW BREAKDOWN

Rebellions have significantly weakened the governance structures within South Sudan, leading to a decline in the rule of law. Many citizens express a lack of trust in government institutions, attributing this to widespread corruption and ineffective governance exacerbated by ongoing conflict [International Crisis Group Report \(2023\)](#). As a result, communities often turn to local forms of governance, which can vary widely in effectiveness and accountability. This reliance on informal systems can create disparities in access to justice and undermine the ability of the government to maintain order and enforce laws, leading to further instability.

The impact of conflict on governance is multifaceted and far-reaching. The breakdown of state institutions responsible for maintaining law and order creates a power vacuum that allows criminal groups to flourish. Such conditions hinder efforts to establish a functioning legal system and can result in increased violence and human rights violations [Collier and Hoeffler \(2004\)](#). Furthermore, the erosion of trust in government can lead to social unrest and impede efforts to promote good governance. Addressing these challenges necessitates comprehensive support for rebuilding state institutions, enhancing accountability, and restoring public trust in governance structures [Stewart and Fitzgerald \(2001\)](#). Early intervention and assistance can play a vital role in promoting good governance and the rule of law in post-conflict societies, ultimately paving the way for a more stable and just future.

LONG-TERM PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS

The psychological impact of ongoing conflict in South Sudan cannot be overstated, as many individuals suffer from trauma related to violence, loss of family members, and the stress of displacement. Mental health services are scarce in South Sudan, and the stigma surrounding mental health issues can prevent individuals from seeking help [Médecins Sans Frontières \(2023\)](#). The long-term psychological effects of exposure to conflict can manifest in various ways, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety. Children exposed to violence and loss are particularly vulnerable, as these experiences can hinder their development and educational outcomes [Beardslee and Beardslee \(2002\)](#).

THE WAY FORWARD TOWARDS CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEACEBUILDING IN THE CONTEXT OF POLITICAL ELITES' REBELLION IN SOUTH SUDAN

INCLUSIVE GENUINE DIALOGUE

Inclusive genuine dialogue is essential to address the grievances that drive political elites to rebel. In South Sudan, fostering dialogue among key stakeholders—including political elites, rebel groups, civil society organizations, marginalized communities, and women and youth groups—creates a platform to negotiate power-sharing agreements and address grievances constructively. Such dialogue must be comprehensive and inclusive to avoid further fragmentation. According to [Lederach \(1997\)](#), peacebuilding in deeply divided societies must involve a broad base of society in dialogues aimed at reconciliation, including not only political elites but also marginalized groups who often bear the brunt of violence. This ensures that all groups feel represented in the peace process, thus reducing the likelihood of continued rebellion or violence. While South Sudanese national dialogue conducted in 2017 to 2020 was problematic due to un-implementation of its resolutions, conducting genuine national can help in lessening conflicts and rebellions in South Sudan.

GOOD GOVERNANCE REFORMS

Governance reforms are key to addressing the underlying causes of political conflict and rebellion in South Sudan. Corruption, weak state institutions, and unequal distribution of resources fuel grievances among political elites and the general population.

Implementing reforms that promote transformative leadership, transparency, accountability, and the rule of law can address these grievances and lay the foundation for sustainable peace. The [World Bank \(2020\)](#) emphasizes that good governance reforms should prioritize fighting corruption through the establishment of independent anti-corruption commissions and ensuring that public institutions are transparent and inclusive in their service delivery. By enhancing the state's capacity to deliver public goods fairly, political elites and marginalized groups may find fewer reasons to rebel. Additionally, governance reforms that promote decentralization can empower local governments to provide services more effectively, reducing regional disparities [Rotberg \(2014\)](#).

CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES

Confidence-building measures (CBMs) are essential in fragile post-conflict environments, particularly, where mistrust among political elites and rebel groups persists. Implementing CBMs such as cease-fire agreements, humanitarian access provisions, and demobilization programs can help de-escalate violence and restore trust among warring factions. John Paul Lederach (1997) highlights the importance of incremental steps in peacebuilding through CBMs. These measures create an environment conducive to dialogue and negotiations by demonstrating commitment to peace and reducing tensions between conflicting parties. In South Sudan, such measures could include agreements on demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR) of combatants, as well as opening access to humanitarian aid in conflict zones [Höivik and Galtung \(1971\)](#).

RECONCILIATION EFFORTS

Reconciliation is a critical aspect of peacebuilding, particularly in a country where ethnic tensions and historical grievances have fueled conflict. Reconciliation efforts in South Sudan should include Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs) to address past atrocities and human rights violations. By providing a platform for victims and perpetrators to share their experiences, TRCs can contribute to healing societal divisions and promoting national unity. As noted by [Hayner \(2011\)](#), TRCs have played a crucial role in post-conflict reconciliation in countries such as South Africa and Sierra Leone by addressing historical grievances, promoting accountability, and fostering national healing. In South Sudan, reconciliation efforts should also include inter-community dialogues that address the ethnic dimensions of the conflict and promote social cohesion across divided communities [Galtung \(1969\)](#).

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

International support is critical to ensuring the success of peacebuilding initiatives in South Sudan. Regional organizations such as the African Union (AU), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and international partners including the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU) can provide essential technical assistance, financial resources, and mediation efforts. International actors can help facilitate the implementation of peace agreements, monitor ceasefires, and provide training for local peacebuilders. [Lijphart \(1977\)](#) argues that international actors play a crucial role in mediating conflicts in divided societies by ensuring that peace agreements are enforced and by providing the necessary resources for rebuilding good governance institutions. International donors can also support South Sudan by investing in capacity-building initiatives aimed at strengthening state institutions and ensuring effective governance and service delivery, thereby addressing the root causes of conflict [Lederach \(1997\)](#).

POWER SHARING MECHANISMS

Establishing power-sharing mechanisms is an effective way of addressing the political exclusion that fuels rebellion. [Lijphart \(1977\)](#) emphasizes the need for inclusive governance structures that incorporate different societal groups, including rebel factions and political elites. This approach ensures that all stakeholders have meaningful participation in decision-making processes, reducing the likelihood of rebellion. Lijphart's theory of consociational democracy suggests that proportional representation, minority rights protections, and coalition governments can provide political elites with the opportunity to engage in non-violent, democratic processes. In South Sudan, implementing genuine power-sharing mechanisms as part of peace agreements—such as the 2018 Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS)—can help mitigate the political exclusion that often drives elite rebellion [Lijphart \(1977\)](#).

GAP IN THE LITERATURE

In the study of political elites' rebellions and their impacts on South Sudan, the literature often focuses on broad topics such as ethnic divisions, power struggles, and economic disparities. Many studies discuss the general consequences of political instability, but few specifically isolate the impacts of elite-led rebellions on South Sudan's governance, economy, and social fabric. The hidden impacts, such as psychological trauma, social disintegration, and infrastructure damage, remain underexplored. Much of the existing literature addresses the macro-level outcomes, such as displacement and humanitarian crises, without diving into the micro-level impacts, such as how elite rebellions disrupt local governance or community structures. While ethnic loyalty and power struggles are well-researched, more nuanced motivations such as personal ambitions, access to natural resources, and the pursuit of economic control are less studied.

HOW TO FILL THE GAP

This study should focus on the specific less visible impacts of elite rebellions at the community level. This includes studies on how local governance is affected and the psychological and social impacts on civilians. Research should expand on elite motivations beyond the binary ethnic and political narratives, examining how personal ambition, resource control, and economic disparities drive rebellion. A comparative study between different regions within South Sudan or between South Sudan and other post-conflict countries could provide a deeper understanding of the unique drivers of elite rebellions. This approach would deepen the understanding of the multifaceted impacts of elite rebellions, informing more effective peacebuilding and policy interventions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

Garg and Kothari (2014) describe research design as the framework for collecting and analyzing data to ensure relevance to the research purpose while maintaining procedural economy Garg and Kothari (2014). According to Flick (2011), the design influences all aspects of the research, from data collection to data analysis techniques. This study utilized a case study design. Data was collected using questionnaires from individuals working at the study location. The research incorporates both qualitative and quantitative methods, dealing with numerical data and providing descriptive analysis. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) note that qualitative research aims to provide a detailed, holistic view of processes, using inductive analysis and emphasizing descriptions over numerical data. In contrast, quantitative research sought large dataset in producing generalizable results, using deductive analysis and focusing on discrete numerical data. Random sampling was employed to ensure the sample was representative Flick (2011).

TARGET POPULATION

Ochieng (2009) defines the target population as the group of respondents the researcher will interact with. The target population for this study was drawn from the entire population being studied. A total of 120 participants was randomly selected to represent this population, including both males and females from various age groups and educational backgrounds.

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

According to Orodho and Kombo, as cited by Kombo and Tromp (2006), sampling is the process of selecting a subset of individuals or objects from a population so that the selected subset represents the characteristics of the whole group. Ochieng (2009) explains that sampling procedures involve selecting respondents from the study area, which can be done through random sampling.

SAMPLING SIZE

While the target population was 120, sample size was calculated using Taro Yemane formula as given below:

$$N = N / (1 + N \epsilon^2) \quad \text{Where}$$

N is the sample size

N is the population

E is the margin error

Target population = 120

Let the margin area be at the confident interval of 90%

$$100\% - 90\% = 10\%,$$

Where 10% is 0.1

$$N = 120 / (1 + 70(0.1)^2)$$

$$= 120 / (1 + 70(0.01))$$

$$N = 120 / (1 + 0.7)$$

$$120 / (1.7) = 70 \quad \text{Therefore, the sampling size will be 70 respondents.}$$

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) categorize the information collected in a study as either primary or secondary data.

PRIMARY DATA

Primary data is information gathered directly from the subjects in the sample.

SECONDARY DATA

Secondary data includes information obtained from articles, journals, newspapers, and other documented sources. While the researchers collected primary data through questionnaires, interviews, and observations, secondary data was collected through books and other sources of empirical literature.

Questionnaires

[Bell \(1999\)](#) defines questionnaires as structured techniques for collecting primary data, consisting of written questions answered by respondents. The researchers used questionnaires due to their flexibility, allowing respondents time to think and answer without pressure, ensuring honest responses. They are also economical, facilitating large-scale and geographically widespread data collection.

Interviews and Observations

Interviews allow the researchers to gauge the interviewee's reliability, interest, and expressions, providing effective and efficient communication of first-hand information. Observations involve the researchers noting key areas as a method of data collection. Both of them were used in this study.

PILOTING

Piloting helped identify unclear questions for review. After piloting, unclear questions were refined for clarity.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

VALIDITY

Accurate Interpretation: The data should reflect what it is intended to measure. If questionnaires or measurements are being used, they must target the specific concepts or variables central to the research. For instance:

Content Validity: Ensures the questionnaire covers all relevant areas of the subject. **Construct Validity:** Measures whether the tool accurately captures the theoretical concepts. **External Validity:** Determines whether the results can be generalized to other populations, settings, or timeframes. This can be done by distributing questionnaires to different groups or at different times, and assessing if the data remains consistent across various settings. **Face Validity:** Examines if the instrument appears effective in measuring what it claims to measure, based on expert judgment. Overall, validity was measured using Content Validity Index (CVI) which was 0.75, proving that the research instruments were valid.

RELIABILITY

Consistency: a reliable study produces consistent results under the same conditions. To show reliability: **Test-Retest Method:** Conduct the same test or survey multiple times with the same group, ensuring that results are similar across these trials. Any significant changes in results may indicate a lack of reliability. **Internal Consistency:** If using questionnaires, internal consistency (e.g., using Cronbach's Alpha) shows if different items within the same test consistently measure the same construct. **Inter-Rater Reliability:** When multiple observers or raters are involved, consistency between their judgments or scores indicates reliability. By employing methods such as distributing questionnaires across different times (for validity) and comparing results from repeated trials (for reliability), the study will demonstrate both accuracy and consistency of its findings. Given that anything above 0.7 is reliable, the study used Cronbach Alpha Coefficient (CAC) to calculate reliability. The results read 0.8 which indicated that the research instruments were very reliable.

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

[Ochieng \(2009\)](#) describes data analysis as critically verifying the collected data. Prior to data collection, the researchers followed university procedures. Both closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires were designed and distributed to the target population. The researchers then collected and analyzed using tables and charts.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study adhered to several ethical considerations, including voluntary participations, informed consent, confidentiality of collected data, and communication of results. Voluntary participation ensured that no respondents were coerced through

misrepresentation or promises of rewards [Coolican \(2014\)](#). Participants were informed of the study's purpose and asked to voluntarily participate before their involvement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

PRIMARY MOTIVATIONS BEHIND THE REBELLION OF POLITICAL ELITES IN SOUTH SUDAN

Table 1

Table 1 Desire for Control Over Natural Resources Drives Some Politicians to Rebel		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	41	58.6%
Agree	18	25.7%
Not sure	9	12.9%
Disagree	1	1.4%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.4%
Total	70	100%

Figure 1

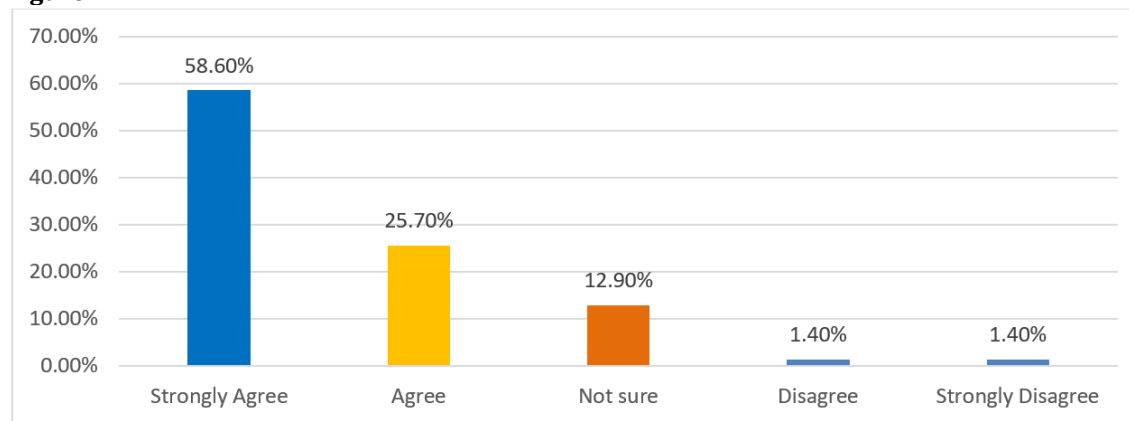
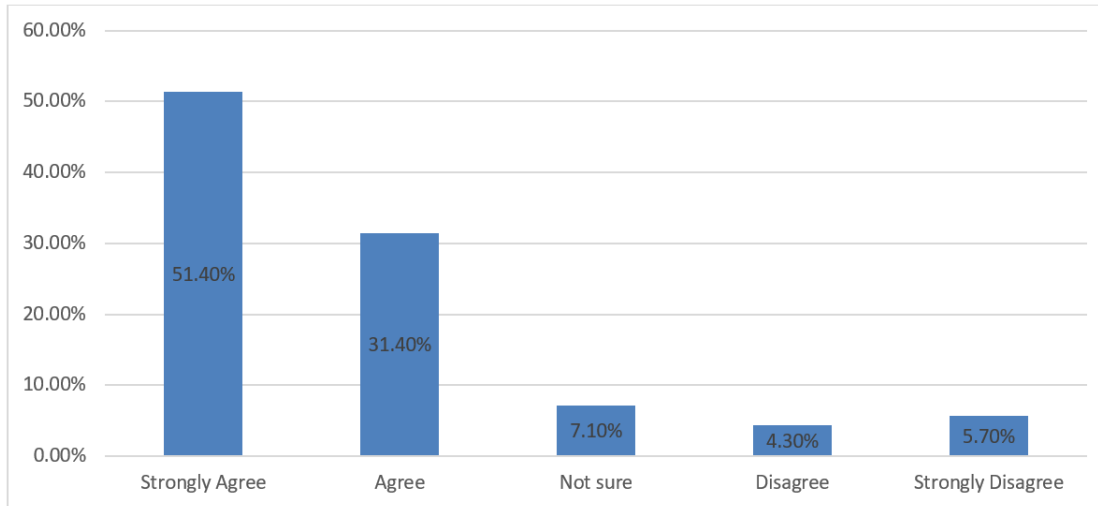


Figure 1 Desire for Control Over Natural Resources Drives Some Politicians to Rebel

[Table 1](#) and [Figure 1](#) shows the respondents' views on whether the desire for control over natural resources drives politicians to rebel. The majority of the respondents, 58.6%, strongly agreed with this statement, while 25.7% agreed. Only 12.9% were unsure, and a very small percentage either disagreed or strongly disagreed (1.4% each). This indicates that most respondents believe that the desire for control over resources plays a significant role in political rebellion.

Table 2

Table 2 Disagreement Over Governance and Distribution		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	36	51.4%
Agree	22	31.4%
Not sure	5	7.1%
Disagree	3	4.3%
Strongly Disagree	4	5.7%
Total	70	100%

Figure 2**Figure 2 Disagreement Over Governance and Distribution**

In Table 2 and Figure 2, 51.4% of respondents strongly agreed that disagreements over governance and distribution are key drivers of rebellion, and 31.4% agreed. Only 7.1% were not sure, while 4.3% disagreed and 5.7% strongly disagreed. This shows that a majority of the respondents support the idea that governance and distribution disputes contribute to political elites' rebellion.

Table 3

Table 3 Corruption Within Government Fuels Discontent		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	34	48.6%
Agree	18	25.7%
Not sure	11	15.7%
Disagree	3	4.3%
Strongly Disagree	4	5.7%
Total	70	100%

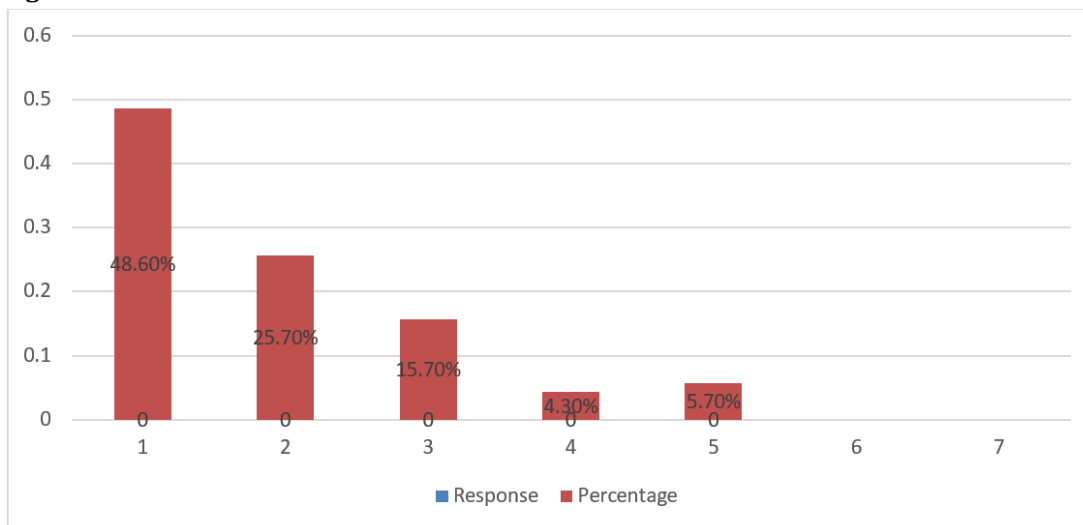
Figure 3**Figure 3 Corruption Within Government Fuels Discontent**

Table 3 and Figure 3 highlights that 48.6% of respondents strongly agreed that government corruption fuels discontent, and 25.7% agreed. A smaller group of 15.7% were unsure, and only 10% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. This suggests that the majority of the respondents believe corruption within the government plays a significant role in causing discontent.

Table 4

Table 4 Lack of Trust Between Rival Political Factions Contributes to Ongoing Conflicts		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	44	62.9%
Agree	12	17.1%
Not sure	6	8.6%
Disagree	7	10.0%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.4%
Total	70	100%

Figure 4

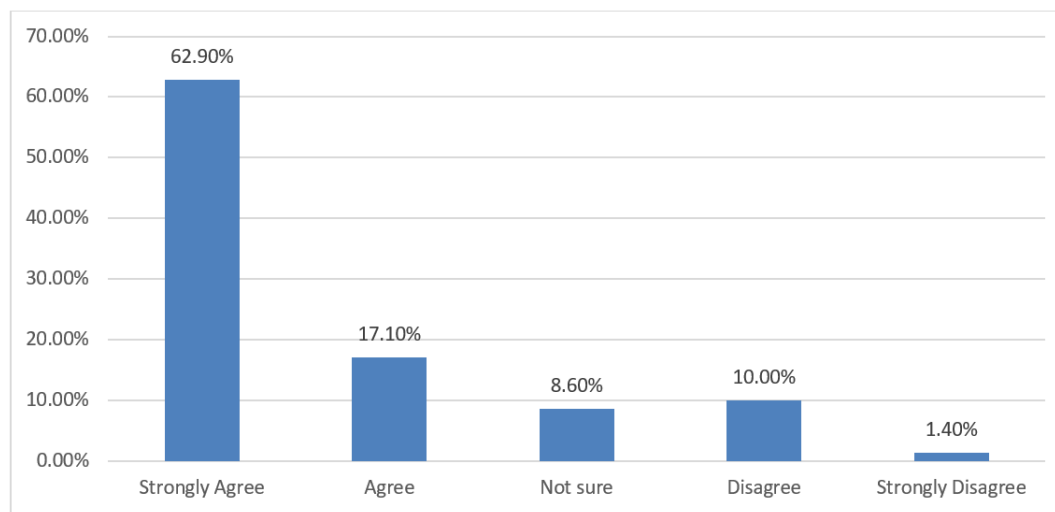


Figure 4 Lack of Trust Between Rival Political Factions Contributes to Ongoing Conflicts

In Table 4 and Figure 4, 62.9% of the respondents strongly agreed that a lack of trust between rival political factions contributes to ongoing conflicts, while 17.1% agreed. Around 8.6% were not sure, and 10% disagreed. Only 1.4% strongly disagreed. This shows that the lack of trust among political factions is a widely recognized issue among the respondents.

Table 5

Table 5 Socioeconomic Disparities Contribute Significantly Towards Elite-Led Uprisings		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	21	30.0%
Agree	21	30.0%
Not sure	14	20.0%
Disagree	10	14.3%
Strongly Disagree	4	5.7%
Total	70	100%

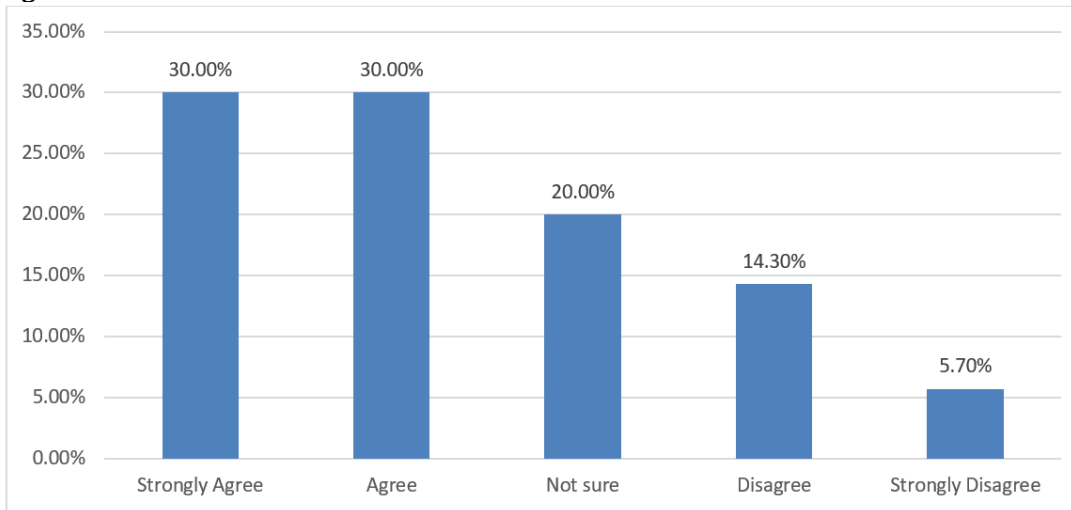
Figure 5**Figure 5 Socioeconomic Disparities Contribute Significantly Towards Elite-Led Uprisings**

Table 5 and Figure 5 reveals that 30% of respondents strongly agreed and another 30% agreed that socioeconomic disparities play a significant role in elite-led uprisings. About 20% were not sure, while 14.3% disagreed, and 5.7% strongly disagreed. This indicates a general consensus that socioeconomic disparities contribute to rebellions, though there is still some uncertainty among respondents.

Table 6**Table 6 The Pursuit or Consolidation of Power is One Key Motivation Behind These Rebellions**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	30	42.90%
Agree	26	37.10%
Not sure	4	5.70%
Disagree	3	4.30%
Strongly Disagree	7	10.00%
Total	70	100%

Table 6 shows that 42.9% of respondents strongly agreed and 37.1% agreed that the pursuit or consolidation of power is a key motivation behind political rebellions. Only 5.7% were unsure, and a small proportion (4.3% disagreed and 10% strongly disagreed) thought otherwise. This highlights the strong belief that power dynamics are a driving force behind the rebellions.

Table 7**Table 7 Frustration with Lack of Progress Towards Peace**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	33	47.1%
Agree	16	22.9%
Not sure	4	5.7%
Disagree	5	7.1%
Strongly Disagree	12	17.1%
Total	70	100%

Table 7 indicates that 47.1% of respondents strongly agreed that frustration over the lack of progress toward peace is a major factor behind rebellion, while 22.9% agreed. Around 5.7% were unsure, while 7.1% disagreed and 17.1% strongly disagreed. This suggests that frustration with the peace process is viewed by many as a contributing factor, though some respondents disagree.

Table 8

Table 8 Loss or Displacement of the Civilian Population		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	49	70.0%
Agree	12	17.1%
Not sure	1	1.4%
Disagree	5	7.1%
Strongly Disagree	3	4.3%
Total	70	100%

Table 8 reveals that 70% of the respondents strongly agreed that rebellion leads to the loss or displacement of civilians, while 17.1% agreed. A small percentage (1.4%) were unsure, and 7.1% disagreed, with 4.3% strongly disagreeing. This indicates that most respondents acknowledge civilian displacement as a significant effect of the rebellion.

Table 9

Table 9 Destruction of Infrastructure and Services		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	33	47.1%
Agree	25	35.7%
Not sure	1	1.4%
Disagree	6	8.6%
Strongly Disagree	5	7.1%
Total	70	100%

In **Table 9**, 47.1% of respondents strongly agreed that rebellions result in the destruction of infrastructure and services, and 35.7% agreed. Only 1.4% were unsure, and a smaller group (8.6% disagreed and 7.1% strongly disagreed) did not agree. This shows that most respondents perceive infrastructure destruction as a significant impact of political rebellion.

Table 10

Table 10 Economic Hardship and Poverty		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	30	42.9%
Agree	28	40.0%
Not sure	5	7.1%
Disagree	6	8.6%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.4%
Total	70	100%

Table 10 indicates that 42.9% of respondents strongly agreed and 40% agreed that rebellion leads to economic hardship and poverty. A smaller group of 7.1% were unsure, while 8.6% disagreed, and only 1.4% strongly disagreed. This highlights the widespread belief that rebellion has a major negative effect on the economy.

Table 11

Table 11 Psychological Trauma		
Response	Frequency	Percentage

Strongly Agree	25	35.7%
Agree	20	28.6%
Not sure	9	12.9%
Disagree	10	14.3%
Strongly Disagree	6	8.6%
Total	70	100%

Table 11 reveals that 35.7% of respondents strongly agreed and 28.6% agreed that rebellions cause psychological trauma. Around 12.9% were unsure, while 14.3% disagreed and 8.6% strongly disagreed. This shows that the psychological effects of rebellion are recognized, although some respondents expressed uncertainty or disagreement.

Table 12

Table 12 Disruption to Education and Healthcare Services		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	31	44.3%
Agree	23	32.9%
Not sure	6	8.6%
Disagree	6	8.6%
Strongly Disagree	4	5.7%
Total	70	100%

In Table 12, 44.3% of respondents strongly agreed and 32.9% agreed that rebellions disrupt education and healthcare services. A smaller group of 8.6% were unsure, and 8.6% disagreed, while 5.7% strongly disagreed. This indicates that a majority of the respondents perceive significant disruptions in essential services due to rebellion.

Table 13

Table 13 Violation of Human Rights Including Abuse and Exploitation		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	45	64.3%
Agree	15	21.4%
Not sure	1	1.4%
Disagree	8	11.4%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.4%
Total	70	100%

Table 13 shows that 64.3% of respondents strongly agreed that rebellion leads to human rights violations, and 21.4% agreed. Only 1.4% were unsure, while 11.4% disagreed, and 1.4% strongly disagreed. This suggests that most respondents view human rights abuses as a common consequence of rebellion.

Table 14

Table 14 Social Disintegration Due to Conflict		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	39	55.7%
Agree	18	25.7%
Not sure	3	4.3%
Disagree	5	7.1%
Strongly Disagree	5	7.1%
Total	70	100%

In [Table 14](#), 55.7% of respondents strongly agreed and 25.7% agreed that rebellion causes social disintegration. A small group of 4.3% were unsure, and 7.1% each disagreed or strongly disagreed. This shows that the majority of the respondents believe that social structures break down due to conflict.

Table 15

Table 15 Negotiations and Dialogue		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	43	61.4%
Agree	15	21.4%
Not sure	5	7.1%
Disagree	4	5.7%
Strongly Disagree	3	4.3%
Total	70	100%

[Table 15](#) indicates that 61.4% of respondents strongly agreed that negotiations and dialogue are important for resolving conflicts, and 21.4% agreed. Only 7.1% were unsure, while 5.7% disagreed, and 4.3% strongly disagreed. This suggests that negotiations are viewed positively by most respondents as a solution to conflict.

Table 16

Table 16 Truth-Seeking Processes		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	25	35.7%
Agree	32	45.7%
Not sure	6	8.6%
Disagree	3	4.3%
Strongly Disagree	4	5.7%
Total	70	100%

In [Table 16](#), 35.7% of respondents strongly agreed and 45.7% agreed that truth-seeking processes are essential for conflict resolution. About 8.6% were unsure, while 4.3% disagreed, and 5.7% strongly disagreed. This shows that truth-seeking is widely supported, though a small percentage of respondents are skeptical.

Table 17

Table 17 Reconciliation Initiatives		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	37	52.9%
Agree	28	40.0%
Not sure	3	4.3%
Disagree	2	2.9%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	70	100%

[Table 17](#) shows that 52.9% of respondents strongly agreed and 40% agreed that reconciliation initiatives are key to resolving conflict. Only 4.3% were unsure, and 2.9% disagreed. This highlights that reconciliation is highly favored as a path to peace among the respondents.

Table 18

Table 18 Power-Sharing Agreement		
Response	Frequency	Percentage

Strongly Agree	31	44.3%
Agree	19	27.1%
Not sure	9	12.9%
Disagree	7	10.0%
Strongly Disagree	4	5.7%
Total	70	100%

In Table 18, 44.3% of respondents strongly agreed and 27.1% agreed that power-sharing agreements are necessary for resolving rebellion-related conflicts. A smaller group of 12.9% were unsure, while 10% disagreed and 5.7% strongly disagreed. This shows that power-sharing is considered a viable solution by many respondents.

Table 19

Table 19 Security Sector Reform		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	44	62.9%
Agree	18	25.7%
Not sure	4	5.7%
Disagree	3	4.3%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.4%
Total	70	100%

Table 19 reveals that 62.9% of respondents strongly agreed that security sector reforms are essential, and 25.7% agreed. Only 5.7% were unsure, while 4.3% disagreed and 1.4% strongly disagreed. This indicates strong support for security reforms as a solution to political conflicts.

Table 20

Table 20 Good Governance Reforms		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	40	57.1%
Agree	21	30.0%
Not sure	3	4.3%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	6	8.6%
Total	70	100%

In Table 20, 57.1% of respondents strongly agreed and 30% agreed that good governance reforms are necessary for peace. Only 4.3% were unsure, and 8.6% strongly disagreed. No respondents disagreed. This shows that most participants recognize the importance of governance reforms.

Table 21

Table 21 Economic Development Programs		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	41	58.6%
Agree	14	20.0%
Not sure	5	7.1%
Disagree	4	5.7%
Strongly Disagree	6	8.6%
Total	70	100%

Table 21 shows that 58.6% of respondents strongly agreed that economic development programs are vital for resolving conflict, and 20% agreed. About 7.1% were unsure, while 5.7% disagreed, and 8.6% strongly disagreed. This suggests that economic programs are widely seen as a solution, though some respondents remain uncertain or disagree.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

MOTIVATIONS BEHIND POLITICAL REBELLIONS IN SOUTH SUDAN

The study revealed several primary motivations behind political elites' rebellion in South Sudan:

- **Desire for control over natural resources:** A significant portion of respondents (58.6%) strongly agreed that control over natural resources is a key driver of rebellion, emphasizing that political elites often rebel to access or maintain control over valuable resources.
- **Disagreements over governance and distribution:** Over 82% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that disagreements over governance structures and the distribution of resources contribute to rebellion, indicating that inequity in governance is a fundamental issue.
- **Corruption within the government:** Nearly 75% of respondents believed that corruption fuels discontent among political elites and the population, highlighting the role of poor governance and corruption in exacerbating political tensions.
- **Lack of trust between rival political factions:** The most prominent finding was that 80% of respondents believed the lack of trust between political factions contributes to ongoing conflicts, showing the deep-rooted distrust as a key factor in political instability.
- **Socioeconomic disparities and pursuit of power:** Socioeconomic disparities (60%) and the pursuit of power (80%) were also identified as critical motivators of rebellion, with respondents suggesting that inequity and power struggles are central to elite-led uprisings.

EFFECTS OF POLITICAL REBELLIONS ON THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH SUDAN

The consequences of political rebellions on the civilian population were also significant:

- **Displacement of civilians:** An overwhelming 87.1% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that rebellions lead to civilian displacement, marking it as the most visible effect.
- **Destruction of infrastructure and services:** More than 80% of respondents indicated that rebellions lead to the destruction of infrastructure, hindering essential services such as education and healthcare.
- **Economic hardship and poverty:** 82.9% of respondents acknowledged that rebellion exacerbates economic hardship, which compounds the already fragile economic conditions in the country.
- **Psychological trauma:** Over 60% of respondents identified psychological trauma as a significant impact, showing that the conflicts affect both the mental and emotional well-being of the population.
- **Violation of human rights:** The majority of respondents (85.7%) agreed that rebellions lead to human rights violations, including abuse and exploitation, further worsening the humanitarian crisis in South Sudan.

PATHS TOWARDS CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEACEBUILDING

Several strategies were identified as important for conflict resolution and peacebuilding in South Sudan:

- **Negotiations and dialogue:** A vast majority of respondents (82.8%) supported negotiations and dialogue as critical paths toward resolving the conflicts, suggesting that open communication between rival factions is essential.
- **Truth-seeking processes and reconciliation initiatives:** Over 80% of respondents believed that truth-seeking and reconciliation processes are crucial in healing the divisions between rival political factions.
- **Power-sharing and security sector reform:** Power-sharing agreements (71.4%) and security sector reform (88.6%) were identified as necessary for addressing the root causes of rebellion and ensuring sustainable peace.
- **Good governance and economic development programs:** The importance of governance reforms (87.1%) and economic development (78.6%) was highlighted by respondents, showing that both political and economic changes are necessary for peacebuilding.

CONCLUSIONS

Political elites in South Sudan rebel primarily due to competition for control over natural resources, corruption, and disagreements over governance. The lack of trust between rival factions exacerbates the conflicts, making power struggles and socioeconomic disparities even more pronounced. The effects of political rebellions on civilians are devastating, including widespread displacement, destruction of infrastructure, economic hardship, psychological trauma, and human rights abuses. These impacts not only worsen the humanitarian situation but also hinder any prospects for long-term peace. Paths toward resolving these conflicts require a multifaceted approach that involves political dialogue, truth-seeking processes, and reconciliation initiatives. Security sector reforms and power-sharing agreements are essential for addressing the distrust among political elites, while governance and economic reforms are necessary to tackle the underlying inequities driving the rebellions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed to address the political rebellions and their effects on South Sudan:

- **Strengthen political dialogue and negotiation efforts**

To resolve ongoing conflicts, the government, opposition factions, and international mediators should prioritize sustained political dialogue and negotiations. This can help restore trust and foster peaceful power-sharing agreements.

- **Implement governance and anti-corruption reforms**

The government should focus on improving transparency and accountability within its institutions to reduce corruption. Reforming governance structures to promote equitable distribution of resources and opportunities is essential to address one of the main drivers of rebellion.

- **Undertake truth-seeking and reconciliation initiatives**

Establishing a truth and reconciliation commission would help in addressing the grievances of both civilians and political elites. Such processes can also heal deep-seated mistrust among rival factions and contribute to social cohesion.

- **Prioritize Security Sector Reform**

The government should undertake comprehensive reforms in the security sector to build trust, professionalism, and neutrality in the armed forces. This can help stabilize the country and prevent future elite-led uprisings.

- **Promote Economic Development and Address Socioeconomic Disparities**

Economic development programs aimed at reducing poverty and inequality should be a priority. These programs can provide opportunities for the population, reducing the appeal of rebellion as a means to achieve socioeconomic mobility.

- **Enhance Support for Victims of Rebellion**

The government and humanitarian organizations should focus on providing psychological support, shelter, and basic services to displaced civilians and victims of conflict. A focus on mental health services, trauma counseling, and rebuilding infrastructure will be essential in post-conflict recovery.

- **Engage Regional and International Support**

Given the complexity of the conflict, regional and international actors should continue to play a supportive role in mediation efforts and provide financial and technical support for governance reforms and economic development.

AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research could focus on:

- The role of international actors in supporting long-term peace in South Sudan, examining the impact of external interventions in facilitating negotiations and economic development.
- A deeper investigation into the socio-economic disparities that drive political elites' rebellion, especially the connection between poverty, inequality, and political instability.
- The psychological impact of prolonged conflicts on the civilian population and how mental health interventions can support healing and reintegration in post-conflict societies.

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