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The efficacy of international and regional mediators in African internationalized civil conflicts

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The efficacy of international and regional mediators in African internationalized civil conflicts

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1. Introduction

On the 15th of April 2023 violence flared once again in Khartoum, Sudan. The dispute between the Sudanese government and the Rapid Support Forces restarted a period of violence and uncertainty for the Sudanese people. Due to the violent nature of the conflict, policy makers are scrambling to find a way to end the hostilities as soon as possible. In their recent article in ‘The Conversation’, Nshimbi and Alusala (2023) argue that the current crisis in Sudan should be resolved through third-party mediation by the African Union, because this actor is trusted, committed, and knowledgeable. According to them, international actors are driven by national interests, and are thus unsuitable mediators. However, other scholars have argued that regional mediators might lack coercive powers (Crocker, Hampson & Aall, 1999, p. 29). Therefore, they do not possess the leverage necessary to mediate complex conflicts.

This paper aims at clarifying which mediators are most effective and why, by answering the research question: *Are regional or international mediators more successful in achieving durable peace in internationalized civil conflict?* I analyze data on mediation efforts between the Sudanese government and the Sudan People’s Liberation Army from the African Peace Processes (APP) dataset in conjunction with secondary literature on the Second Sudanese Civil War (1983 – 2005). By doing so, I aim to draw conclusions about the broader patterns of mediation success in African internationalized civil conflicts.

I find that collaborative mediation between regional and international actors is most effective, as it combines knowledge and credibility of regional mediators with the resources and leverage of international actors. This combination was most effective in reaching lasting peace agreements in the Second Sudanese Civil War, and eventually aided in the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005. Therefore, I propose that future mediation efforts on the African continent follow a collaborative mediation structure. The following sections will give an overview of the theoretical expectations surrounding mediation success, describe the method, analyze the mediation efforts in Sudan and finally conclude which mediators are most successful.

2. What makes a successful mediator?

In this section, I will highlight relevant theories on the topic of third-party mediation in internationalized civil conflicts (ICCs) to assess which factors influence its success, and to try to analyze whether international or regional mediators are more likely to achieve mediation success. I will begin by defining the relevant concepts, then I will highlight the identified factors of influence: nature of the conflict, mediation timing, and mediator identity. I will continue by describing which mediation strategies are common in third-party mediation. Finally, I will conclude whether, according to the theory, regional or international mediators are more likely to achieve mediation success in internationalized civil conflict.

2.1 Defining the concepts

This paper evaluates the role of mediators in internationalized civil conflict (ICC). Civil conflict becomes internationalized when the consequences of civil war spill over into other states, and external mediators in turn become involved to address these issues (Lutmar & Bercovitch, 2012, p. 259). ICCs are disputes with a violent and particularly protracted nature and a high level of perceived cultural differences, especially in countries where inequality between different ethnic groups is high (p. 260). These conflicts are often diffuse, meaning they are between the government and highly fractionalized factions. This makes internationalized civil conflict especially sensitive to re-emergence and a high level of violence (p. 261).

Scholars have argued mediation is the most effective form of conflict management in ICCs (Zartman, 2019, p. 162). Mediation is defined by Bercovitch (2011b) as “a method of conflict management in which conflicting parties gather to seek solutions to their problems, accompanied by a mediator who facilitates discussion and the flow of information, aiding in the process of reaching agreement” (p. 94). Mediation is a form of conflict management distinct from the process of negotiations between disputants, as it involves the voluntary inclusion of an external mediator. Bercovitch and Houston (1995) emphasize that both parties should enter the mediation effort voluntarily for it to be effective (p. 36).

Successful mediation efforts should be fair, efficient, satisfactory to all disputants, and effective (Bercovitch, 2011b, p. 95). The ideal outcome of mediation is defined by some scholars as simply achieving a political settlement, reduced fatalities, and an absence of violence

(Elgström, Bercovitch & Skau, 2003, pp. 15, 17). However, this conception of mediation success is quite narrow, and fails to evaluate the durability of mediation outcomes. Therefore, other scholars find that durable peace should be the goal of mediation, meaning it can only be deemed effective if the outcome has laid down building blocks to rebuild and restore the state, allowing peace to remain (Houston & Bercovitch, 1995, p. 39).

2.2 Nature of the conflict

The nature of ICCs can have a strong influence on the rigidity or fragility of peace agreements (Gartner, 2011, p. 382). ICCs are characterized by an asymmetry in power between the state and the opposing disputants. States will resist mediation for longer because they feel they will be able to shut down the insurgency. Additionally, states will resist negotiation to avoid legitimizing their opponent, as mediation awards status to their opponent. However, research has shown that legitimization of disputants increases the likelihood of mediation success (Bercovitch & Houston, 1995, p. 40). Furthermore, insurgent groups have few behavior constraints as they are not held to institutions or strong norms of accountability, which makes them more likely to break agreements (Gartner, 2011, p. 382). Lastly, states may resist mediation on the grounds of sovereignty. Mediation by force, instead of voluntarily, would violate the norm of sovereignty and increase resistance to mediation.

The issues ICCs are fought over further complicate mediation. Bercovitch (2011a) has found that “issues in internationalized civil wars represent the political articulation of some grievance, demands, or strategies” (p. 217). During the cold war, for example, ICCs were commonly fought over competing ideologies (Bercovitch & Lutmar, 2012, p. 262). However, recent conflicts commonly concern secession and autonomy issues. These types of issues are far more difficult to mediate than issues of competing ideology, which explains the protracted nature of recent ICCs (Bercovitch & Houston, 1995, p. 43). This could be due to the fact that sovereignty and security are more zero-sum in character: there is one winner and one loser as territory is hard to share. Mediators will therefore have a more challenging time fostering compromise between the warring parties (Gartner, 2011, p. 382).

2.3 Mediation timing

The literature identifies mediation timing as the second factor of influence on mediation success. Conflict intensity plays a defining role in mediation timing. Conflict intensity refers to material, human and other costs of war (Lutmar & Bercovitch, 2012, p. 271). Some scholars argue that high costs of conflict will lead to a likelihood of mediation as disputants are dealing with conflict exhaustion: Disputants will constantly assess whether the costs of conflict are bearable (Crocker, Osler Hampson & Aall, 1999, p. 28). Parties will opt for negotiation if they are stuck in a stalemate that is mutually painful (Zartman, 2019, p. 163).

However, other schools of thought posit that high conflict costs will reduce the likelihood of mediation due to a sunk cost narrative: disputants might see victory as the only acceptable outcome. This is supported by the findings of Bercovitch and Houston (1995) that suggest that low fatalities and successful mediation have a positive relationship (pp. 42-43). Thus, a clear contention exists within the mechanism of conflict intensity and its effects on mediation salience. Future research should be able to identify the patterns of the cost mechanism at play in ICCs.

The salience of mediation is only one part of the mediation timing puzzle. The entry points to the mediation arena are the other integral factor to mediation success. (Crocker, Osler Hampson & Aall, 1999, p. 28). When violence is low, there are many points of entry as the conflict has not yet polarized the disputants. However, when violence rises, perceptions of the other side are becoming more set in stone, the entry points of the mediator will decrease. This continues until the conflict is at its most violent, resulting in few entry points as polarization is at its highest. In the decline of the conflict, polarization is decreasing and points of entry increase. However salient mediation might (or might not) be during the height of violence, the number of entry points to mediation is a factor that should also be considered in mediation timing.

Alternatively, it can be argued that mediation timing should not be understood through conflict intensity and entry points, but through the relative power differences between disputants. According to this theory, mediation success is likely in three situations. Firstly, when the government is winning the conflict, and thus the insurgents want to negotiate surrender and integration (Zartman, 2019, p. 163). Secondly, when the government's power and legitimacy are decreasing, and the insurgents' legitimacy is increasing, because insurgents are winning,

and a regime change is negotiated. Lastly, when legitimacy of government and insurgents is stable, but the insurgents' power is increasing, because both parties realize the protracted nature of the conflict, and finally agree to reasonable demands of both sides (Zartman, 2019, p. 163; Bercovitch & Houston, 1995, p. 41). This conceptualization also seems to reflect the notion that legitimization of the insurgent increases the possibility of mediation, but this is usually avoided by the government as described in the 'nature of the conflict' section (Gartner, 2011).

2.4 Mediator identity

Another influential factor to mediation outcomes is mediator identity. Different types of mediators can bring different types of resources and influence into the mediation arena (Crocker, Hampson & Aall, 1999, p. 29). These resources are broadly categorized into six types of power: reward power, coercive power, expert power, legitimate power, referent power, and informational power (p. 21). Great power mediators are high in reward and coercive power, as they have a lot of resources and have the dominance to impose sanctions. Legitimate power can be provided by regional and international organizations, as they have authority under the law, but they lack reward and coercive power. Private individuals and non-governmental mediators also lack these but are better at providing expert and referent power through expertise and a desire of the parties to remain in good spirits with the mediator (p. 29).

Within the conceptualization of coercive, legitimate, and referent power, a discussion arises about whether regional or international mediators are more successful. To assess the difference in mediator identity between regional and international mediators it is useful to evaluate the externality and neutrality conception of Wehr and Lederach (1991). Traditional efforts emphasized neutrality as important to effective mediation and thus preferred the outsider-neutral mediator (p. 86). This follows the narrow conception of mediation, being an impartial and external party facilitating direct formal negotiation between disputants. The noteworthy characteristic is that this type of mediator has no investment in the outcome except settlement (p. 87). This role is often fulfilled by international mediators.

Other literature, however, has become increasingly critical of the neutrality condition and thus the authors have put forth the insider-partial mediator (Wehr & Lederach, 1991, p. 87). This role is often filled by regional powers and depends on internality and partiality, as its strength lies in its established relationship with the disputants. Advantages of insider-partial (or regional)

mediators include knowledge of local issues, commitment through inability to leave the post-negotiation situation, proximity allowing quicker reaction time, and an ability to provide informal dialogue through pre-existing relational ties (Elgström, Bercovitch & Skau, 2003, p. 18). Additionally, regional mediators operate within the same system of norms and values (Bercovitch & Houston, 1995, pp. 45-46).

In general, it can be concluded that neutrality is not essential, and that some (relational) partiality towards one or more disputants might even invite more cooperative behavior (Crocker, Hampson & Aall, 1999, p. 21). As also underlined by Bercovitch and Houston (1995), mediators are valued for their influence and persuasive skills (p. 44-45). Effective use of resources in the mediation process is more important than mediator impartiality, and impartiality is deemed unrealistic. Zartman (2019) even posits that past mediation failures are partly due to the absence of pre-existing relationships (p. 170).

In addition to partiality, there are various discussions about the desired personal qualities of the mediator, and whether these are significant to mediation success. The literature has compiled an array of possibly conducive traits, but intelligence, stamina, patience, energy, and a sense of humor have been identified as most valuable (Bercovitch, Anagnoson & Wille, 1991, p. 15). This is notable, since it might provide an alternative explanation to the question of successful mediators: it might not be resources or partiality that determine success, but the personal qualities of the mediator themselves. Empirical evidence for this claim is thin, but it is worth considering when evaluating mediation processes.

The literature on mediation seems to have difficulty reconciling the findings of regional mediation success with the findings on conducive mediation characteristics. On the one hand, regional organizations may be more effective mediators as they have more knowledge, are committed, and have closer proximity. On the other hand, international mediators may be instrumental to mediation success as well. They possess the coercive power and resources necessary to enforce and control peace processes. It might be suggested that some collaboration between international and regional mediators will allow them to combine forces and achieve the best possible outcomes (Nguyen, 2002). However, due to high risk of coordination issues I argue this should be investigated further rather than taken as a given.

2.5 Strategies

Apart from mediator identities, choice of strategy can also significantly influence mediation outcomes (Bercovitch & Houston, 1995, p. 48). The softest strategies are communication-facilitation strategies, in which the mediator functions as a link in communication, without any direct influence on the negotiation process. In procedural strategies, the mediator takes more formal control of processual elements such as the negotiation environment and the agenda. I would argue that regional mediators might be at an advantage here because they can likely engage relational partiality to their advantage. In directive strategies the mediator takes formal control over both the process and substance of the negotiation, which is exemplified through the application of coercive and persuasive methods such as sanctions (Bercovitch & Houston, 1995, p. 48). This last strategy is deemed most effective but, when considering the theory on mediator identity above, regional mediators might lack the coercive power to enforce it. More generally, it seems likely that a combination of coercive strategies with softer methods will lead to successful outcomes (Wallensteen & Svensson, 2014, p. 320).

2.6 Theoretical conclusion

From the theory on mediation success, it can be concluded that the nature of the conflict, mediation timing, mediator identity, and mediation strategy have significant influence over the outcome. The success of these outcomes should not be defined as merely reaching an agreement or cease-fire, but rather a more durable solution to peace. The nature of the conflict is influential as the characteristics of internationalized civil conflict form a substantial obstacle to mediation. However, mediation timing, mediator identity, and strategies are aspects that can be externally controlled and are thus more relevant in the process of optimizing mediation processes. Regional and international mediators possess different qualities, experiences, and powers, and enter conflicts with different intentions. This contention has led me to the research question: *Are regional or international mediators more successful in achieving durable peace in internationalized civil conflict?*

3. Mediation in Sudan: a qualitative evaluation

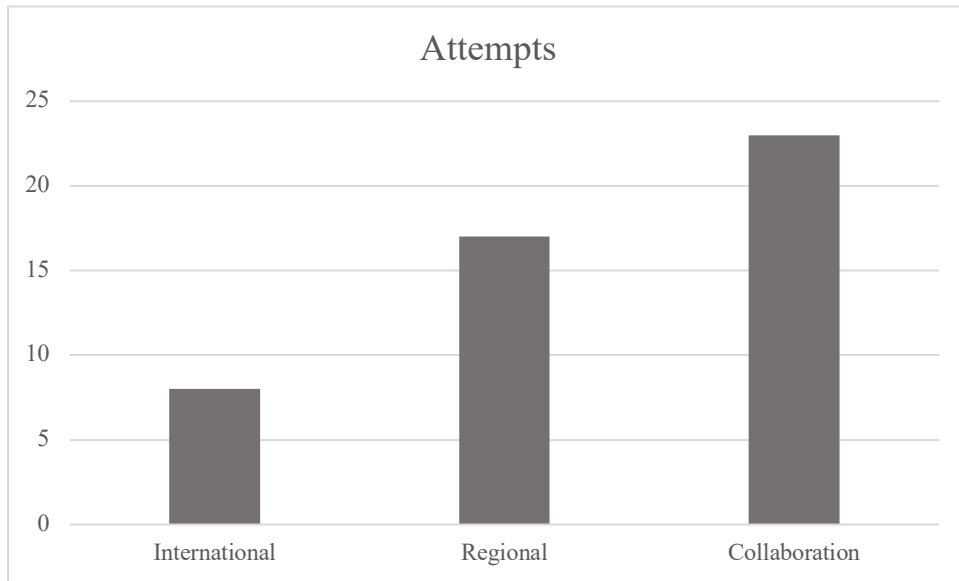
This research project aims to identify whether international or regional actors might be more successful at third-party mediation. The selected case for this research project is the Second Sudanese Civil War (1983 – 2005). This case is a suitable example because it involves multiple mediation efforts by different types of actors and is spread over a relatively long period of time. Due to the extensive length of the conflict, it allows a detailed analysis of the learning process of mediation. Though this conflict is not necessarily a primary example of successful mediation, this case does exemplify an internationalized civil conflict well. The conflict had a violent and protracted nature, strong ethnic differences, concerned zero-sum issues, and took place between a strong government and a relatively weaker opposition (Khadiagala, 2007).

As a starting point, I analyze data from the African Peace Processes (APP) dataset (Duursma & Gamez, 2022). To be more specific, mediation efforts between the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLA) are evaluated to assess the success rates of different actors. An overview of the datapoints derived from the dataset can be found in the appendix (Duursma & Gamez, 2022). It must be noted that this war involved other opposition groups as well. For the sake of consistency, this research project will strictly analyze mediation efforts between the Sudanese government and the SPLA, as this opposition group was most instrumental to the stability in Sudan and was a key player in the peace agreements that ended the war (Khadiagala, 2007, p. 244). The datapoints from the APP dataset are supplemented by secondary literature relevant to the mediation efforts. The use of secondary literature allows an exploration of the true motivations and effects of mediation attempts beyond the reaching of an agreement. Additionally, this will expose the durability of peace agreements.

Initially, it might seem useful to analyze mediation data quantitatively. When analyzing a highly simplified overview of the data below, it appears that international actors are more successful at mediation. Most interestingly, it seems that collaboration between regional and international actors has led to the most successful outcomes. It must be noted that this conception of mediation success is quite narrow: success is merely the achievement of a peace agreement or cease-fire (Elgström, Bercovitch & Skau, 2003, pp. 15, 17).

Figure 1

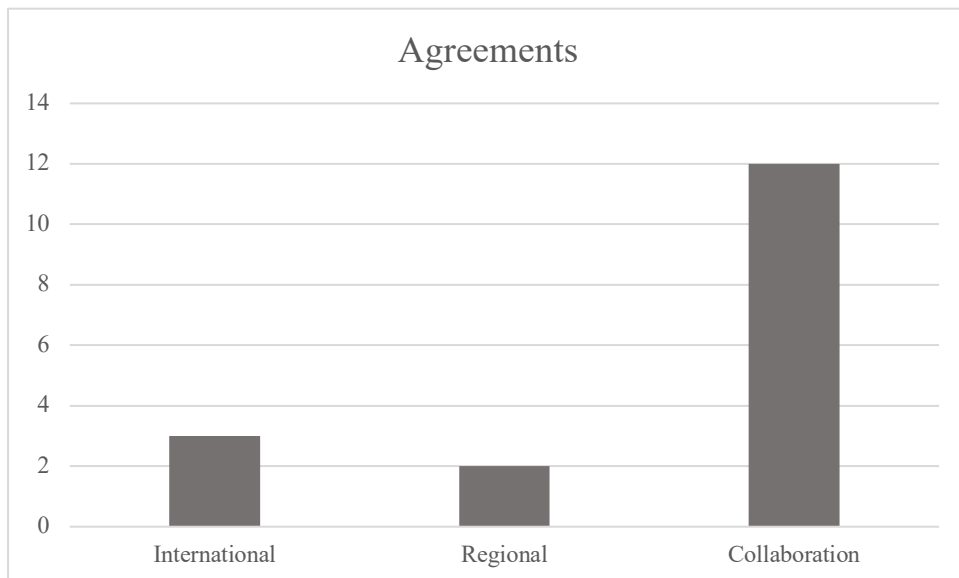
Number of mediation attempts per mediator type



Source: The African Peace Processes Dataset (Duursma & Gamez, 2022)

Figure 2

Number of agreements reached per mediator type



Source: The African Peace Processes Dataset (Duursma & Gamez, 2022)

Quantitative data is useful to establish broader patterns but fails to help us gain a deeper understanding of *why* some actors might be more successful than others. Additionally, it fails to recognize the dynamic nature of the mediation process. The data does not tell us how long the agreements lasted, nor do they illustrate their contribution to the broader peace-making

process. Inversely, negotiations that do not lead to agreements can still contribute to the peace process by alleviating tensions and fostering exchange of information. For peace agreements to have any significant contribution, I argue that a wider conception of mediation success is more valuable, and the following case study of Sudan will follow this definition (Houston & Bercovitch, 1995, p. 39).

By analyzing a peace process on a single case basis, we can ensure a valid starting point. As all mediation efforts took place within the same conflict, the nature of the conflict (as described in the theory section) is constant throughout the full peacemaking process. This allows valid inferences about mediation timing, mediator identity, and strategy that are relevant to the question of regional versus international mediation. Furthermore, it provides the foundation to explore alternative explanations for mediation success, such as personal mediator qualities, or the possibility that collaboration between regional and international actors is most effective.

4. The Second Sudanese Civil War in perspective

The Second Sudanese Civil War was a result of the violation of the Addis Ababa agreement from 1972, which was drafted to end the First Sudanese Civil War (Momodu, 2018). The agreement was violated by Sudanese president Nimeiry for the first time in 1978, when he tried to take control of the oil fields on the north-south border of Sudan. He violated the agreement for a second time in 1983 by imposing Sharia nationally. This elicited an uprising from southern rebel groups who wanted independence from northern Sudan and disagreed with the unilateral imposition of Sharia. The largest opposition group was the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA, sometimes also referred to as Sudan People's Liberation Movement), led by John Garang (Khadiagala, 2007, p. 189). Nimeiry was overthrown by Omar Al-Bashir in 1989, who replaced the fragile multi-party system with a dictatorship. The SPLA was not stable either: the organization split into two factions in 1991 when Garang's competitor Machar started his own branch. Machar's SPLA obstructed Garang's SPLA by negotiating with the government in parallel (pp. 190-191).

The first international mediation effort took place in 1989, when the US attempted to mediate negotiations in Nairobi, which ended in deadlock (Khadiagala, 2007, p. 189). This was followed by attempts in 1990, which were unsuccessful. As a result, the first regional mediation attempts were made by the Organization of African Unity (OAU, later African Union), but these were also ineffective due to the large power differences between the disputants (p. 192). In 1993, IGAD was appointed as a mediator in the conflict, with the first round of mediation taking place in 1994 (pp. 194, 198). The most important aim of the first IGAD rounds of negotiation was the acceptance of the Declaration of Principles (DoP), which stipulated self-determination of the south and national unity as the basis of future negotiations (p. 199). In 1994, the IGAD Partners Forum was informally created, which consisted of Western states with significant coercive power. This organization was instrumental in convincing the Sudanese government to accept the DoP in 1997 (p. 206).

The beginning of the final peace negotiations effectively started at the Machakos negotiations in 2002, which established that Sharia would remain the law in the north, but that the south would be secular and would have an independence referendum after six-and-a-half years (Khadiagala, 2007, pp. 240-241). However, Garang's capture of Torit caused the government to withdraw from the Machakos protocol in September 2002 (p. 242). The relations were

repaired during the Naivasha/Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) negotiations in 2003 (p. 243). These agreements eventually led to the signing of the CPA in January 2005, which mirrored the agreements made in the Machakos protocol and the DoP (Momodu, 2018).

5. The Sudanese path to peace

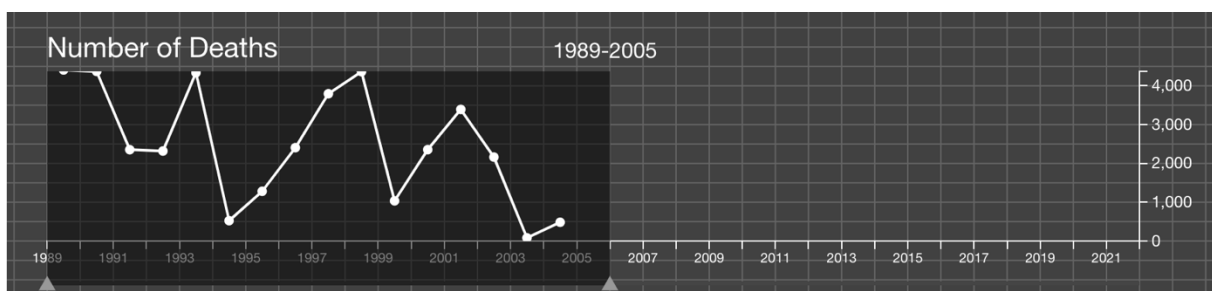
The following section will analyze various mediation attempts by both regional and international actors in the context of mediation timing, mediator identity, and strategies. It aims to highlight the successes and failures of these mediators during the Second Sudanese civil war, to draw conclusions about the broader patterns of mediation success in African internationalized civil conflicts.

5.1 Mediation timing

There are three important factors in determining mediation timing success: entry points, mediation salience, and relative power differences between disputants. It is theorized that high levels of violence are correlated with few entry points, and low levels of violence with many entry points (Crocker, Hampson Osler & Aall, 1999). The theory about mediation salience has failed to reach a consensus about whether high or low levels of violence are correlated with high mediation salience (Crocker, Hampson Osler & Aall, 1999; Bercovitch & Houston, 1995). To make an assessment about the success of each mediator in this conflict in terms of entry points and mediation salience, we can compare the number of mediation efforts and their success to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP, 2022) data of the number of deaths during each year of the war. It should be noted that the Sudanese government was in dispute with multiple opposition groups during this time, which explains its relatively high death rate compared to the SPLA. The UCDP data will serve as an indicator of the incurred costs. These are as follows for the SPLA and the government:

Figure 3

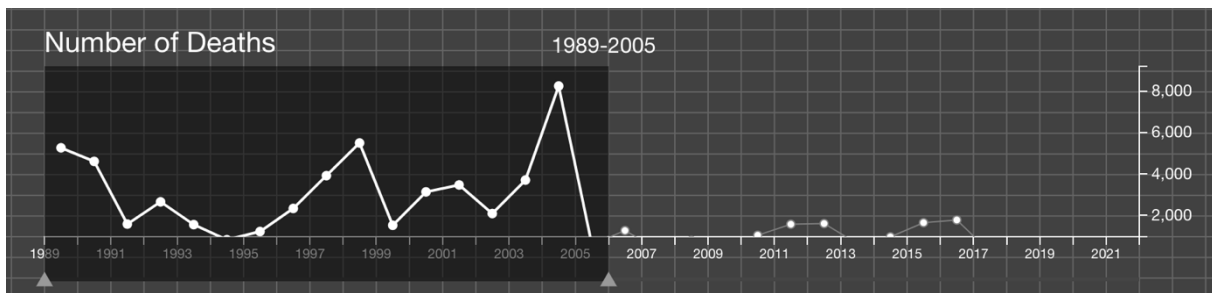
Number of deaths SPLM/A 1989-2005



Sources: UCDP georeferenced event dataset (GED) global version (Uppsala University, 2022); SPLM/A: Number of deaths (<https://ucdp.uu.se/actor/466>)

Figure 4

Number of deaths Sudanese government 1989-2005



Sources: UCDP georeferenced event dataset (GED) global version (Uppsala University, 2022); Government of Sudan: Number of deaths (<https://ucdp.uu.se/actor/112>)

When looking at direct mediation attempts of international mediators, in this case the United Nations (UN) and the United States (US), patterns emerge about their efficacy in terms of entry points. The international actors differed in their ability to identify and utilize mediation entry points. The US was able to successfully identify entry points in 1995 and 2002, during periods of low and de-escalating violence (Duursma & Gamez, 2022). However, seeing as they only mediated twice during these years, this suggests the US missed considerable opportunities to negotiate an agreement. Therefore, they failed to maximize the entry points at hand. The UN appeared to be unable to identify the optimal periods in which to enter into negotiations. The organization mediated twice in both 1989 and 2000, even though the levels of violence were high and escalating respectively. Although this suggests suboptimal mediation timing, they were able to find entry points when these were scarce due to the high levels of violence.

Regional mediators had varying success rates in terms of mediation timing but were generally more successful than international mediators. The OAU was the first regional mediator during the Second Sudanese civil war (Duursma & Gamez, 2022). Though they operated in a period of low-level violence, in 1991 and 1992, they only made two attempts at mediating between the disputing parties. They thus failed to make use of the many entry points that are facilitated by the relatively peaceful period of low violence. IGAD was more successful at timing their mediation attempts. They managed to facilitate six mediated negotiations during the period of low violence in 1994. When violence escalated in 1997 up to high-level violence in 1998, IGAD mediated three and two meetings respectively, which aligns with the theoretical expectations of entry points. This continued in 1999 and 2000, where IGAD mediated two meetings during a

period of volatile levels of violence. IGAD was thus more successful at identifying and utilizing points of entry than the OAU and the US.

However, the most notable finding concerning entry points is the success of collaborative mediation efforts between international and regional mediators. From 2002 onwards, this mediation structure became increasingly popular, with mediation attempts from IGAD with Switzerland and the US, as well as from IGAD with powerful observers (UK, US, Norway, and Italy) (Duursma & Gamez, 2022). These combinations managed to broker five and eleven mediated negotiations in 2002 and 2003 respectively. These findings suggest that collaborative mediation structures might be most successful at timing negotiations in order to utilize the maximum number of entry points. What causes the notable success of collaborative efforts in this structure will be evaluated in later sections.

Entry points to negotiation and mediation paint only part of the picture of appropriate mediation timing. In addition to entry points, it is important to assess the salience of mediation at various levels of violence. Scholars seem to disagree about when mediation is most salient: Bercovitch and Houston (1995) argue that low levels of violence facilitate successful peace agreements, but Crocker, Hampson Osler, and Aall (1999) argue that high levels of violence should enable mediation success. International mediators have been able to broker peace agreements in both high- and low-level violence: the UN mediated a successful cease-fire in 1989 as well as 1995, whilst the former was in a period of high violence and the latter during a period of low violence (Duursma & Gamez, 2022). It is thus hard to determine whether high or low costs of conflict are conducive to successful mediation outcomes.

The salience of mediation attempts by regional mediators paints a slightly clearer picture. When regional actors mediated during low-level violence in 1991 and 1992, they were unsuccessful: both of the OAU endeavors failed (Duursma & Gamez, 2022). The acceptance of the principle of self-determination of the south by the Sudanese government in 1998 (during high levels of violence) also suggests that high costs increase mediation salience. However, there are also indications that low costs are conducive to successful mediation: IGAD mediated six rounds of negotiation in 1994 of which most achieved agreements or were conducive to the broader peace process. Again, the Sudanese case seems to neither confirm nor disconfirm theory on mediation salience. However, there is an alternative conclusion that might explain patterns of mediation salience: outcomes of mediation attempts seem to be most unpredictable during periods where

violence is highly volatile. This suggests that the essential mechanism of mediation salience is not characterized by high or low levels of violence, but rather that violence volatility is an obstruction to successful mediation outcomes.

Another alternative explanation can be provided by collaborative mediation structures. The most successful periods of mediation took place between 2002 and 2004, when collaborative mediators (IGAD & observers) achieved twelve successful outcomes from twenty-one rounds of mediation (Duursma & Gamez, 2022). Of these rounds, only two lead to failure or deadlock, and the other seven rounds facilitated the negotiation needed to achieve tangible peace agreements and cease-fires. These outcomes were achieved during a period where the level of violence was volatile, and thus not necessarily conducive to mediation success (UCDP, 2022). This finding suggests that collaborative mediation efforts might be most effective at capturing mediation salience. Alternatively, it could be argued that the decisive turn in mediation success was caused by the relatively high costs for the Sudanese government compared to the SPLA. This implication of relative power theory will be evaluated below.

Appropriate mediation can be understood through conflict intensity and entry points, but some scholars argue that successful mediation should be understood through the relative power differences between disputants (Zartman, 2019). When looking at the UCDP (2022) data on conflict intensity, it appears that the disputants rarely shared similar levels of human costs. Power equality was identified as being conducive to mediation success by Bercovitch and Houston (1995, p. 41). However, it is hard to determine the effects of power differences when strictly looking at the data. To gain a better understanding of the effect of relative power differences, it is important to consider the unity within the disputing groups. The SPLA became highly fractionalized throughout the war (Khadiagala, 2007, pp. 202-203). Whilst this did not alter their collective costs significantly, the fractionalization did decrease their bargaining position, even if they incurred relatively low costs compared to the government.

Regional mediators had different approaches to the relative power issue. The OAU failed to recognize its importance, whilst IGAD attempted to resolve the issue. The OAU attempted mediation during the Abuja talks of 1992 and 1993 but was unsuccessful because of significant power differences between the Sudanese government and the (weaker) SPLA (Butler, 2019, pp. 95-96). This was caused by a sense of military superiority of the government, making it unwilling to compromise as it continued seeking for the potential of a better outcome

(Khadiagala, 2007, p. 191). Though this was not under the control of the OAU mediators, it did constrain them in creating durable peace. IGAD, on the other hand, recognized that equality of power and military capabilities was essential to create bargaining power. Under the leadership of Eritrea, they opted to unify the fractionalized opposition of Sudan in 1994 in an effort to level the playing field, as part of the Frontline States Strategy (p. 203). However, this approach had the unintended side-effect of mediation competition: IGAD was no longer deemed neutral which caused the Sudanese government to look towards other actors who could act as a mediator (p. 204).

International mediators rarely became directly involved in mitigating large power differences between disputants, but they did support IGAD in ensuring the success of their unification approach (Khadiagala, 2007, p. 204). After the unification strategy of IGAD was met with strong resistance from the Sudanese government in 1994, the IPF stepped in to save the initiative through resources and organizational assistance. Additionally, they pressured the Sudanese government with coercive diplomatic measures. Furthermore, the US assisted by providing military resources to Sudan's neighboring countries (IGAD members) who in turn supported Garang's recapture of strategically important southern cities (p. 206). As a result, Bashir returned to the negotiating table and finally accepted the Declaration of Principles in Nairobi in 1997. It can thus be concluded that negotiation is more likely when disputants are at an equal footing. Mediators can directly or indirectly influence the power of disputants to facilitate this.

The first noteworthy conclusion to draw for all attempts towards successfully timing mediation efforts is the difficulty of applying models such as the conflict cycle to ICCs in practice (Crocker, Osler Hampson & Aall, 1999). In ICCs the protracted nature of the conflict causes levels of violence to cycle continuously. The protraction of the conflict is caused by its source. In the case of Sudan, these were zero-sum issues, namely the establishment of Sharia and the question of the south's self-determination, that caused the cycle to continue (Butler, 2019, p. 97) This makes it difficult for mediators to assess when to time negotiations, as it is impossible to predict how much further violence can escalate in the future.

With this in mind, collaborative mediation structures were most successful at utilizing entry points and optimizing mediation salience, since they brokered the most important agreements (Declaration of Principles, Machakos protocol, Comprehensive Peace Agreement) and were

able to maximize the number of meetings regardless of the level of violence at hand (Khadiagala, 2007). Additionally, combining the leverage and resources of international powers with the knowledge and relations of regional powers resulted in the minimization of power differences, which was instrumental to redirect disputants towards mediated negotiations (p. 206). The Sudanese case does not exemplify either theory on mediation salience, it is thus hard to conclude whether the level of violence has any significant effect on mediation success.

5.2 Mediator identity

Both mediator types possess different strengths and weaknesses related to their identity that aid or damage them in the mediation process. International mediators can positively contribute to the mediation process in two ways: by (1) giving credibility, legitimacy, and weight to regional actors (Khadiagala, 2007, pp. 199, 232, 239), and (2) by providing regional actors with resources, leverage, and coercive power (Khadiagala, 2007, pp. 188, 197, 199, 203, 208; Butler, 2019, pp. 96, 98). It is important to distinguish that the credibility of international actors is mostly linked to their weight on the world stage, and not to actual trust or relationships with the disputants. The 9/11 attacks also functioned as a motivating factor for the American government to exercise their coercive powers in service of the IGAD initiative, as the War on Terror strengthened its goal to punish the Sudanese government for supporting and enabling terrorism (Butler, 2019, p. 98). The sanctions and support of international powers were decisive in pressuring disputants to return to the negotiating table and leveling the playing field between the government and opposition (Khadiagala, 2007, p. 194). This finding underlines one of the most important aspects of mediation success: leverage.

However, international mediators also exhibited several weaknesses due to their identity. Firstly, they faced issues of genuine commitment to the peace process in Sudan. International mediators such as the United Nations and United States often only directly mediated ceasefires for humanitarian assistance (Khadiagala, 2007, p. 191). The US accidentally hindered IGAD mediation when former President Jimmy Carter negotiated a humanitarian cease-fire in 1995 (p. 204). IGAD had been trying to broker a cease-fire for months when Carter started another mediation initiative. The Sudanese government opted to accept the cease-fire under Carter's terms, because it was aware Carter was unable to monitor the cease-fire and would not be addressing the root causes of the conflict. Thus, because the US was mostly concerned with

human rights abuses, they lost track of the broader peace process (p. 192). The Carter agreement essentially illegitimated the IGAD initiative and significantly set back its progress.

Much of the data on the strengths of regional mediators such as IGAD and the OAU in Sudan reflect the expectations from the theory. Most importantly, regional mediators were deemed legitimate because of their commitment to the mediation process (Khadiagala, 2007, pp. 192, 195). This commitment largely stemmed from their inability to leave the post-conflict situation, and thus their wish to stabilize the region and prevent the spread of political Islam (Butler, 2019, p. 96). Regional mediators were deemed more trustworthy and more knowledgeable because of their proximity and similarity in domestic challenges (Khadiagala, 2007, pp. 194 - 195). Additionally, IGAD members had previous relational ties with both the Sudanese government and opposition, further supporting their ability to create Sudanese peace (p. 203). Furthermore, an explicit distrust in international mediators, brought on by their previous colonial relationship with Sudan, furthered the preference of the Sudanese government for a regional mediator (p. 189).

When reflecting on personal mediator qualities, the literature suggests they have a significant effect on mediation outcomes. Sumbeiywo, IGADs principal mediator in the second half of the conflict, personally possessed the relevant knowledge and characteristics to be a suitable candidate (Khadiagala, 2007, p. 240). He was a military officer, which elicited trust from both Garang and Bashir who shared his military history and could thus identify with him. Additionally, Sumbeiywo had previously been involved in IGAD talks and took a personal approach by taking the time to build relational ties with leaders of both sides of the conflict (Butler, 2019, p. 96). Sumbeiywo's ability to leverage resources is shown by the way he utilized his reserve of political capital to convince international actors to support his goals. An example of this is the way in which he convinced the US to provide external pressure during the mediation process of the CPA by playing into their motivation to punish the Sudanese government for enabling terrorism (p. 98). The fact that Sumbeiywo was instrumental to IGADs success, and that there is a significant difference in IGADs mediation progress before and after his involvement, suggests that personal mediator qualities can be heavily influential.

However, regional mediators also faced strong challenges while mediating the Second Sudanese civil war. In the beginning of the conflict IGAD was an uncoordinated and unprofessional organization (Khadiagala, 2007, p. 202). This caused an inability to create

appropriate leveraging and a lack of resources. Additionally, IGAD faced issues common to other multilateral organizations, namely the challenge of aligning multiple members with varying interests and goals (p. 235). After recalibration under the pressure of international partners, IGAD professionalized, which is most clearly exemplified by the appointment of Sumbeiywo (p. 230). Nonetheless, IGAD was still accused of being hypocritical by mediating for pluralistic solutions when regional mediators did not adhere to these principles domestically (pp. 238 – 239). This accusation undermined the legitimacy of many regional mediators and hindered their efficacy. Most importantly, IGAD possessed little pressuring agents and measures, and depended on external partners to provide coercive power (p. 204).

When evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of international and regional mediators, it becomes apparent that they may be able to complement each other. Where regional mediators lack coercive powers, international mediators may provide it. Where international mediators lack credibility and knowledge, regional mediators may provide it. This is also reflected by the increase in mediation success from 2002 onwards (Duursma & Gamez, 2022). When IGAD was supported by powerful observers, who were able to provide external pressure and resources, the efficacy of mediation efforts dramatically increased. Eventually, it was this collaborative structure that was able to end the war by mediating the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (Khadiagala, 2007, p. 245).

5.3 Strategies

International and regional mediators made use of communication-facilitation, procedural, and directive strategies. The UN facilitated communication during the negotiation of a humanitarian cease-fire in February 2000, by shuttling between disputants (Duursma & Gamez, 2022). With this strategy, the UN was able to create a successful mediation outcome even when the parties were unprepared to enter direct negotiations with each other, thereby circumventing the issue of entry points. A similar process was effective in the cease-fire mediated by Jimmy Carter in 1995. An example of a procedural strategy can be found in the proposals of Assistant Secretary of State Herman Cohen in 1990 (Khadiagala, 2007, p. 189). He attempted to exercise procedural control by proposing possible agreements, instead of having the disputants take the lead. However, it seems the American mediators were less successful when executing procedural strategies, as Cohen was unable to bring the negotiations to an agreement. Based on the findings from the ‘mediator identity’ section, I argue this can be attributed to a lack of knowledge and

credibility. When the American mediators moved towards a more directive strategy in 2002, by utilizing financial and diplomatic measures, they started to significantly influence the outcomes of mediation (Duursma & Gamez, 2022).

Regional mediators also engaged in shuttle negotiations (and thus utilized communication-facilitation strategies) throughout their mediation process. IGAD mostly executed this method after a break-down or stalemate of direct negotiations between the disputants, to make sure there was still some form of contact and progress (Duursma & Gamez, 2022). An example of this are the shuttle negotiations after the breakdown of the IGAD October 1997 negotiations. The maintenance of low-level, indirect contact allowed the negotiations to resume in 1998 without significant setbacks in progress. The clearest example of procedural strategy usage by regional mediators is IGAD's Declaration of Principles, which aimed to steer the disputants towards a compromise where national unity would be prioritized, but where the south would have the right to self-determination (Duursma & Gamez, 2022). This document functioned as a commitment which shaped further negotiations, and IGAD thus exercised significant procedural control by having the disputants sign it. Directive strategies were also attempted by regional mediators, though less successful than when executed by international actors. The Frontline States strategy, which aimed to strengthen the southern opposition by offering military support, is one of IGAD's clearest attempts at a directive strategy (Khadiagala, 2007, p. 203).

When assessing the success of different mediation strategies in the Sudanese conflict, it becomes clear that unsuccessful execution of strategies, especially of directive strategies, can have unintended negative side-effects. When IGAD took a directive approach with the Frontline States strategy, this caused mediation competition from other initiatives (Khadiagala, 2007, p. 204). This was mainly due to the fact that the Sudanese government accused IGAD of being partial. This suggests that neutrality remains an important characteristic of mediators. However, upon closer examination, it becomes clear that the Sudanese government used the neutrality narrative to excuse 'mediation shopping' (pp. 198, 201). In the beginning of the Sudanese conflict, the government accepted IGAD mediation because it expected the organization to be partial to the government, as it had pre-existing ties with the IGAD members (p. 194). When IGAD acted against expectations by supporting the SPLA, the Sudanese government went looking for better alternatives (p. 218). This allowed it to gain time to recuperate and protracted the conflict for longer (p. 233).

The issue of mediation competition was solved by international actors. When IGADs partners supported the Frontline States strategy through diplomatic and financial measures, the Sudanese government could no longer ignore IGAD's demands and returned to negotiations (Khadiagala, 2007, p. 206). This suggests that collaboration between international and regional actors can be the most effective way to combine the knowledge and credibility of regional actors with the coercive and reward powers of international actors. However, appropriate use of strategies is not strictly about perfect execution: the choice of what strategy should be executed and when is essential. This is exemplified by the success of Sumbeiywo, who was able to bring the disputants to the final peace agreements by adopting an adaptive mediation strategy (Butler, 2019, p. 97). He was able to foster the creation of the CPA by executing procedural, directive, and communication-facilitation methods based on the status and progress of negotiations at specific times. However, Sumbeiywo would have been unable to execute directive strategies without the support of his international partners (p. 98). Effective adaptive mediation therefore requires strong coordination between international and regional actors.

6. Conclusion

This research project aimed to find an answer to the research question: *Are regional or international mediators more successful in achieving durable peace in internationalized civil conflict?* From the theoretical overview it was concluded that mediators have to be effective in mediation timing, have the right mediator identity, and should be able to select an appropriate mediation strategy. To answer this question, I studied the case of the Second Sudanese Civil War (1983 - 2005). I made use of datapoints from the African Peace Processes (APP) dataset to identify mediation attempts (Duursma & Gamez, 2022). I then studied the efficacy of these mediation attempts with secondary literature. In doing so, I attempted to draw broader conclusions about what makes third-party mediation successful.

The analysis has found that collaborative mediation of regional with international actors is most successful at mediation timing, as they are most effective at utilizing entry points and reaching peace agreements. Findings on whether mediation is most salient during high or low levels of violence were inconclusive from this case study. Additionally, it was found that relative power differences between disputants are significant to the success rate of mediation. Disputants must have a similar bargaining position to foster effective negotiation. Collaborative mediators are most effective at leveling the playing field, as the knowledge of regional actors can be combined with the leverage and resources from international actors. This structure can create power equality without risking collapse of the peace process because of competition from other mediation initiatives.

Furthermore, it was found that adaptive mediation strategies were most effective in mediating peace agreements. This was only possible through collaborative mediation: international actors can exercise directive strength through resources and leverage, but regional actors are stronger in communication-facilitation and procedural strategies because they have credibility, knowledge, and pre-existing relationships with the disputants. In order to execute adaptive mediation strategies successfully it is thus necessary to mediate collaboratively. This is also visible in practice. Mediation efficacy increased drastically around 2002, when the IGAD mediators joined forces with powerful observers (Italy, Norway, UK, US) that were able to support the efforts with coercive power.

Future mediation efforts in the African context should thus exploit the advantages of regional mediators, whilst being realistic about the coercive power of international actors. I propose that regional mediators should be in the lead when it comes to procedural mediation elements, as they have knowledge, credibility, and pre-existing relationships with disputants. Their efforts should be supported by the coercive powers of international actors, who are able to supply the mediation process with leverage and resources. However, conflicting interests of members within multilateral regional mediators should be considered. Additionally, the notion that not all regional mediators have aligned interests which may cause mediation competition should be taken into consideration.

This study is limited in its findings in a few ways. Though a case study can give detailed information on the success and failure of mediation attempts, it is also limited in its general applicability. As Sudan is in the position of being 'part Arab and part African', it is characterized by very specific conflicting interests which might not always be applicable to other African states. Additionally, this research project analyzed mediation of only two disputants: The Sudanese government and the SPLA. Whilst this allows a precise and isolated evaluation of the contributing factors, it should be noted that the Second Sudanese Civil War was immensely complex and involved many actors and groups that influenced the conflict. Their influence on the mediation process is harder to pinpoint when strictly focusing on two disputants. Future research should thus elaborate on other contexts within Africa and should consider the influence of other (smaller) disputants on the mediation process. Additionally, future research should evaluate how to avoid coordination issues within regional organizations, and how to tackle conflicting interests between multiple (regional) mediators.

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8. Appendix

Mediation efforts by international, regional, and collaborative mediators during the Second Sudanese Civil War

Source: The African Peace Processes (APP) Dataset (Duursma & Gamez, 2022)

Third-party mediator	Year	Description of mediation effort
UN	1989	<p>Negotiations between the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) took place for the first time on 31 July 1986, when John Garang and Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi met for talks in which the two key demands of the SPLM/A were discussed: the suspension of the Sharia and the termination of military pacts with Libya and Egypt. However, on 16 August 1986, the peace talks were suspended due to the SPLM/A bombing a civil airplane, which resulted in the death of 60 passengers. Egypt – in spite of its military support to the Government of Sudan – managed to facilitate contacts between the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and SPLM/A in the mid-1988. The DUP was one of the three parties in Khartoum's ruling coalition. Ethiopia subsequently offered to host talks in Addis Ababa between the DUP and the SPLM/A. This led to the signing of what has been referred to as the DUP-SPLM/A Sudan Peace Agreement on 16 November 1988 by DUP leader Mohamed Osman al-Mirghani and SPLM/A leader John Garang de Mabior. However, the agreement soon collapsed as a result of an internal power struggle within the Government of Sudan. The opposition in the coalition government, the National Islamic Front (NIF), did not accept the peace agreement, as it wished to maintain Islamic law and refused to abrogate military pacts with Egypt and Libya. The NIF denounced the talks as a conspiracy to block Islamic law. Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi voted down a DUP amendment to recognise the terms of the DUP-SPLM/A Sudan Peace Agreement. Consequently, the DUP resigned from government on 27 December 1988. In March 1989, a new Government assumed power, which proposed a peace plan that was based on the peace deal that was reached between SPLM/A and DUP in November 1988, calling for a freeze on Islamic laws. The UN became involved in April 1989, trying to make both parties accept a ceasefire.</p>
UN	1989	<p>At a meeting on 1 May 1989, the UN managed to convince the conflict parties observe a “month of tranquility” to allow aid to reach the area where people are threatened with famine. This ceasefire was later extended for another two weeks. The Government of Sudan subsequently accepted the DUP-</p>

		SPLM/A Sudan Peace Agreement, after which it was also ratified by the parliament.
US	1990	<p>Following the collapse of the Carter initiative, Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi invited Bashir and Garang to his Presidential retreat in Nakuru for peace talks. Both Bashir and Garang accepted the invitation and the meeting was set for 27 February 1990. However, at the last minute Garang decided not to go, so only Bashir showed up. Similarly, Zaire and Egypt mediated in 1990, but could not bring the conflict parties to the negotiation table. The Government of Sudan took the initiative in March 1990 to request the US to mediate. The US subsequently initiated a mediation effort. In order to move the conflict parties towards a peace settlement, US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Herman Cohen began to shuttle between the conflict parties in March 1990. Cohen formulated a proposal that stipulated the conclusion of a ceasefire, withdrawal of troops, followed by a constitutional conference that would decide on a federal system. With regard to the withdrawal of troops, Cohen proposed the complete evacuation of the national army to positions north of the 11th parallel, while the SPLM/A had to guarantee that it would not take control of southern Sudan militarily if the government forces would withdraw. With neither conflict party agreeing to this proposal, Cohen subsequently formulated a new proposal, which stipulated that half of the government forces would be pulled out from southern Sudan, while the SPLM/A would in exchange withdraw all its troops 15 kilometres from the besieged towns. Moreover, the withdrawal of troops would be internationally monitored. Cohen also proposed to hold a constitutional conference. Cohen personally presented the adapted proposal to President al-Bashir in Khartoum on 9 March 1990. While al-Bashir promised Cohen to study the proposal carefully, he soon conveyed that he rejected the possibility of a constitutional conference, preferring bilateral talks with John Garrang. The Government of Sudan also refused to withdraw from some garrison towns in areas controlled by the rebels including some oil fields. This terminated his round of shuttle talks in March 1990. In May, Cohen again tried to imitate a peace conference, but the government side officially rejected this option on 4 June 1990.</p>
OAU; Nigeria	1991	<p>The mediation efforts of the US continued in early January 1991. Yet, diplomatic relations between the US and Sudan severely deteriorated due to the US military action against Iraq on 17 January 1991. As a result, the Sudanese-American dialogue felt silent. In March 1991, the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity Salim Ahmed Salim offered his good offices to restart the peace process. Salim shuttled between the conflict parties and his efforts led to the conflict parties accepting mediation by the Organization of African Unity and Nigeria. Nigerian President Ibrahim Babangida,</p>

		<p>who assumed Organization of African Unity Chairmanship on 3 June 1991, acted as the chief mediator of these negotiations. In spite of separate consultations, Nigeria and the Organization of African Unity did not mediate any direct peace talks between the conflict parties in 1991. Although the negotiations were set to take place in the fall of 1991, they were postponed until May 1992 because of divisions within the ranks of the SPLM/A.</p>
OAU; Nigeria	1992	<p>The first phase of what came to be known as the Abuja peace talks started on 26 May 1992 and ended on 4 June 1992 without any progress made. The talks were hosted by the Nigerian president Ibrahim Babangida in his capacity as chair of the Organization of African Unity. Talks focus particularly on issues related to national identity, religion and state, self-determination, and interim security arrangements. The Nigerian mediators suggested to the conflict parties that an effective ceasefire would require a neutral observer team that would ensure all the parties complied with the peace agreement. Although the SPLM/A agreed, the Government of Sudan insisted that such a team would constitute “foreign intervention in the affairs of Sudan.” The first phase of the Abuja negotiations ended with the adoption of the Communique of the Abuja Sudanese Peace Conference.</p>
IGAD; Kenya; Ethiopia; Eritrea; Uganda	1994	<p>IGAD hosted and sponsored several rounds of peace talks throughout 1994. Kenyan president Daniel Arap Moi hosted the talks as chairman of IGAD. Preliminary shuttle peace talks were held in Nairobi in the beginning of January in order to determine the issues that would be put on the agenda for the formal talks.</p>
IGAD; Kenya; Ethiopia; Eritrea; Uganda	1994	<p>Although the parties had not reached a consensus over an agenda for the negotiations, a first round of official negotiations was held in Nairobi between 8 and 23 March 1994.</p>
IGAD; Kenya; Ethiopia; Eritrea; Uganda	1994	<p>Another round of negotiations was held in Nairobi were held between 18 and 20 May 1994.</p>
IGAD; Kenya; Ethiopia; Eritrea; Uganda	1994	<p>Since the conflict parties could not agree on an official agenda for negotiations, the IGAD mediation team drafted a Declaration of Principles (DoP) which the conflict parties were meant to review in preparation for a third round of negotiations in July 1994. The compromise envisioned in the DoP was that while the south would have the right to self-determination because of the high level of polarization in Sudan, priority should be given to unity to be created through a national consensus.</p>
IGAD; Kenya; Ethiopia; Eritrea; Uganda	1994	<p>Another round of negotiations was subsequently held in Nairobi between 18 and 28 July 1994. While the SPLM/A accepted the DoP, the government side rejected the document. Nevertheless, on 23 July 1994, the Government of Sudan declared a unilateral ceasefire. This ceasefire was initially</p>

		rejected by SPLM/A, but was eventually accepted. The ceasefire was later broken, probably by both sides.
IGAD; Kenya; Ethiopia; Eritrea; Uganda	1994	The parties met again for IGAD-sponsored negotiations in Nairobi between 5 and 7 September 1994, but the talks again ended in a deadlock. Earlier in the year, between May and July, various Western diplomatic initiatives were coordinated in a new grouping, named the Friends of IGAD. The goal of this contact group was to increase the leverage of the IGAD mediation efforts.
Carter Center	1995	In 1995, former US president Jimmy Carter managed to conduct shuttle mediation between the conflict parties, which led to a two-month ceasefire that was unilaterally announced by the Government of Sudan on 28 March 1995. The two-month ceasefire would help a health campaign organized by the Carter Center against Guinea worm infestation and river blindness in the south. In addition to the ceasefire, the rebels were offered amnesty if they laid down their weapons. The SPLM/A accepted the ceasefire two days later on 1 June 1995, although some elements within the organisation rejected the ceasefire. The SPLM/A also called for international monitoring of the ceasefire. According to Carter, the ceasefire was holding with a few minor exceptions. Yet, the conflict parties accused each other of violating the ceasefire. In August 1995, the conflict parties agreed to resume peace talks, but not to extend the ceasefire. Yet, the talks never took place.
IGAD; South Africa; Kenya; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Uganda	1997	South African President Nelson Mandela held separate discussions with the conflict parties and succeeded in initiating direct talks, which began on 28 August 1997 in Nairobi under the aegis of IGAD. These talks were chaired by Kenyan Foreign Minister Kalonzo Musyoka, but representatives of Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Uganda were all participating in the mediation process.
IGAD; Kenya; Ethiopia; Eritrea; Uganda	1997	At this IGAD summit in Nairobi in July 1997, Kenyan President Moi succeeded in convincing President al-Bashir to finally accept the DoP and resume direct negotiations with the SPLM/A in October 1997. While the IGAD mediators tried to push the conflict parties to discuss how the DoP could be transformed in a sustained negotiations process, the negotiations that were held in October 1997 remained deadlocked on the issue of secularism, but also on the modalities of a referendum and the length of the transition period. When talks broke down again, the IGAD mediators issue a communique on 11 November 1997, which stated that the IGAD mediators would shuttle between the adversaries, but that direct negotiations would be adjourned until April 1998
IGAD; Kenya; Ethiopia; Eritrea; Uganda	1998	The conflict parties resumed peace talks in Nairobi on 4 May 1998, under the auspices of IGAD. Not wanting to appear as an obstructionist, the Sudanese government accepted self-determination for the south on the basis of a referendum during this round of talks.

IGAD; Kenya; Ethiopia; Eritrea; Uganda	1998	Another round of IGAD-sponsored peace talks was held in Addis Ababa between 6 and 8 August. This round of talks was also attended by Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity Salim Ahmed Salim.
IGAD; Kenya; Ethiopia; Eritrea; Uganda	1999	Up until 1999, the Kenyan minister of Foreign Affairs had acted as the chief mediator of the peace talks, but it was decided in mid-1999 that a mediator needed to be appointed that could lead sustained negotiations. To this end, Daniel Mboya, the former Kenyan Ambassador to Sudan, was appointed. IGAD-sponsored peace talks were resumed in Nairobi on 20 July 1999. The parties agreed on procedural issues for further talks, but they failed to make any progress on substantial issues pertaining to a comprehensive ceasefire, self-determination for the south, defining a border, and the relation between religion and state.
IGAD; Kenya; Ethiopia; Eritrea; Uganda	2000	A round of negotiations mediated by IGAD took place in January 2000. After this round of negotiations, the parties issued a joint communiqué in which they reiterated their commitment to a peaceful solution and said they agreed on self-determination for the people of southern Sudan.
UN	2000	Additionally, the UN was also involved in mediation between the conflict parties in a round of shuttle negotiations in February 2000. The goal of this UN mediation effort was to conclude a humanitarian ceasefire to allow for the vaccination of 54,000 children in the Nuba mountains. This mediation effort was successful. The conflict parties agreed on a three-day ceasefire in February 2000.
UN	2000	Another second three-day ceasefire was brokered in March 2000.
IGAD; Kenya; Ethiopia; Eritrea; Uganda	2000	Another IGAD-mediated round of negotiations took place between 21 and 30 September 2000. During this round of peace talks, the mediators proposed a two-tier arrangement in which all institutions on a national level were to be neutral on religion. This proposal was accepted by the SPLM/A, but rejected by the Government of Sudan.
Switzerland; US	2001	Pre-negotiations took place in Buergenstock in December 2001.
Switzerland; US; IGAD	2002	The Government of Sudan and the SPLM/A met for a week of talks in Buergenstock in January 2002. The mediation team included both American and Swiss diplomats and the Swiss Ambassador Josef Bucher acted as the chief mediator. After six days of negotiations, the conflict parties concluded a ceasefire pertaining to the Nuba Mountains on 19 January 2002. It was agreed that the ceasefire in Nuba Mountains would be monitored by Britain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and the US. The peace talks in Switzerland were coordinated with IGAD and thus complementary to the IGAD-led peace process.
IGAD; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Uganda;	2002	Negotiations mediated by IGAD were resumed in Machakos in June 2002. The mediation team at Machakos was led by

Kenya; UK; US; Norway; Italy		Kenyan General Lazaro Sumbeiywo. Although Kenya chaired the peace talks, diplomats from Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda were also heavily involved. Moreover, there was active engagement from the four official observer countries in the peace process: the UK, the US, Norway and Italy. As soon as the talks at Machakos started, the conflict parties agreed to extend the ceasefire in the Nuba Mountains for another six-month period.
IGAD; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Uganda; Kenya; UK; US; Norway; Italy	2002	On 20 July 2002, the SPLM/A and the Government of Sudan signed the Machakos Protocol. The peace agreement stipulated the general procedures for a transitional process, but also committed the conflict parties to engage in further negotiations to specify the terms of the framework.
IGAD; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Uganda; Kenya; UK; US; Norway; Italy	2002	Negotiations were resumed in Machakos on 12 August 2002, but collapsed on 2 September 2002 after the SPLM/A seized the strategically important town of Torit.
IGAD; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Uganda; Kenya; UK; US; Norway; Italy	2002	Nevertheless, the adversaries engaged in another round of IGAD-mediated negotiations between October and November 2002. At the start of this round, the conflict parties signed an initial ceasefire on 15 October 2002, referred to as the Memorandum of Understanding on Cessation of Hostilities.
IGAD; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Uganda; Kenya; UK; US; Norway; Italy	2002	On 18 November 2002, when negotiations closed for the year, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed, but no comprehensive agreement had been reached. The talks were adjourned until 6 January 2003, due to Ramadan, Christmas, and the Kenyan elections.
US	2002	However, the parties were invited to Washington for informal talks on 19 and 20 December 2002. The US became more involved during 2002. In addition to attending and organising peace talks, it had issued the Sudan Peace Act. This act authorised the President of the US to seek a UN Security Council resolution for an arms embargo and to actively seek other financial and diplomatic methods to influence the conduct of the Sudanese Government. The US held out the prospects of trade and development aid opportunities, as well as a normalization of relations.
IGAD; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Uganda; Kenya; UK; US; Norway; Italy	2003	IGAD-negotiations, led by the chief mediator Lazaro Sumbeiywo, continued in 2003 throughout the entire year. The US, the UK, Norway and Italy all had observer status during the talks and took part in the mediation. Norway also funded the peace talks. The Arab League announced in May 2003 that it would also begin attending the peace talks as an observer. Ambassador Samir Hosni, Director of the Arab-African cooperation at the Arab League subsequently attended the meetings. In spite of some clashes in early 2003, negotiations started on 23 January 2003. The talks focused on power and wealth sharing.
IGAD; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Uganda;	2003	The implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on Cessation of Hostilities signed on 15 October 2002 was further

Kenya; UK; US; Norway; Italy		improved during a round of negotiations in February 2003, with the signing an addendum to the MOU on 4 February 2003, which created a Verification and Monitoring Team (VMT). The VMT consisted of international observers to verify accusations of ceasefire violations. The conflict parties also agreed to cede control of areas captured since the signing of the ceasefire agreement in October 2002. With regard to the issue of power sharing, the conflict parties agreed on a framework of a government of national unity in which the SPLM/A would be a major partner.
IGAD; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Uganda; Kenya; UK; US; Norway; Italy	2003	Another round of negotiations, which started on 4 March 2003, focused on the status of three disputed areas – the Nuba Mountains, Southern Blue Nile, and Abyei – though with limited progress. A major turning point in the peace process occurred at a meeting on 2 April, when President Omar al-Bashir and SPLM/A leader John Garang met and shook hands.
IGAD; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Uganda; Kenya; UK; US; Norway; Italy	2003	A new round of talks, addressing security issues, started on 7 April, but was stalemated on how to unify the national army.
IGAD; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Uganda; Kenya; UK; US; Norway; Italy	2003	A new round negotiations on security issues was held in May 2003.
IGAD; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Uganda; Kenya; UK; US; Norway; Italy	2003	Another round of negotiations was held in June 2003.
IGAD; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Uganda; Kenya; UK; US; Norway; Italy	2003	Yet another round of negotiations on security issues was held in August 2003. None of these rounds of talks resulted in much progress. Nevertheless, the ceasefire, which was due to expire on 30 June, was extended by both parties.
IGAD; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Uganda; Kenya; UK; US; Norway; Italy	2003	The peace process took a positive turn when Vice President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha and John Garang entered into negotiations on 4 September 2003.
IGAD; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Uganda; Kenya; UK; US; Norway; Italy	2003	Subsequent discussions on power sharing and security issues resulted in the signing of the Agreement on Security Arrangements During the Interim Period on 25 September 2003. The ceasefire was also extended by two months.
IGAD; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Uganda; Kenya; UK; US; Norway; Italy	2003	On 7 October 2003, the delegations met again for further talks. After nine days of the beginning of these talks, Taha and Garang arrived to continue negotiations, which lasted until 26 October.
IGAD; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Uganda; Kenya; UK; US; Norway; Italy	2003	Another round of negotiations started again on 30 November.
IGAD; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Uganda;	2003	On 7 December, Taha and Garang arrived to take part in this round of negotiations. This resulted in the parties agreeing in

Kenya; UK; US; Norway; Italy		principle on a 50-50 sharing of oil wealth in the south during the interim period.
IGAD; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Uganda; Kenya; UK; US; Norway; Italy	2004	Throughout 2004, the SPLM/A and the Government of Sudan held negotiations in Kenya based on the process agreed on in the Machakos Protocol signed in 2002. The continuous negotiations resulted in the signing of several protocols and agreements that were to make up the foundation of the final Comprehensive Peace Agreement. During a round of negotiations in Naivasha in January 2004, the Framework on Wealth Sharing During the Pre-Interim and Interim Period was signed on 7 January 2004.
IGAD; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Uganda; Kenya; UK; US; Norway; Italy	2004	The next round of talks in May 2004 resulted in the signing of three agreements in Naivasha on 26 May: the Protocol Between the SUDANESE GOVERNMENT and SPLM on the Resolution of Conflict in Southern Kordofan/Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile States on 26 May 2004, the Protocol Between the SUDANESE GOVERNMENT and SPLM on the Resolution of Conflict in Abyei Area on 26 May 2004, and the Protocol Between the SUDANESE GOVERNMENT and SPLM on Power Sharing on 26 May 2004. The conclusion of the three agreements finalised the political negotiations. The only issues that still needed to be addressed were the more technical issues of a comprehensive ceasefire, security arrangements, and the implementation of the peace agreement. However, during the two months after signing of the three peace agreements, the Government of Sudan claimed to be too busy with the situation in Darfur.
IGAD; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Uganda; Kenya; UK; US; Norway; Italy	2004	On 7 October 2004, Garang and Taha started another round of negotiations.
IGAD; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Uganda; Kenya; UK; US; Norway; Italy	2004	On 19 November, the government and SPLM/A signed a Memorandum of Understanding, committing the conflict parties to sign a comprehensive peace agreement no later than 31 December 2004.
IGAD; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Uganda; Kenya; UK; US; Norway; Italy	2004	Consequently, talks between Garang and Taha resumed again on 7 December 2004 and continued until Christmas Eve. The parties marked the end of the conflict on 31 December 2004 by the signing of a permanent ceasefire.