

Revitalized Agreement On The Resolution Of Conflict In South Sudan: Reflecting Success, Failure, And Potential Consequences

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Abstract

The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS), initiated in 2018 by Sudan and Uganda under the supervision of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), aimed to rectify the shortcomings of the prior Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) from 2015 to 2016. However, the R-ARCSS has faced significant challenges in implementation, primarily due to inadequate logistical and financial support, along with a pervasive lack of political will and mistrust among South Sudan's political leaders. This study explores the critical factors that have led to repeated postponements of democratic elections necessary for alleviating the suffering and economic hardships endured by the South Sudanese people. Utilizing a qualitative approach, the research employs document analysis and in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including policymakers, conflict resolution experts, and civil society representatives, to gather contextual insights. The study integrates conflict resolution theories to analyze the R-ARCSS's successes, failures, and potential consequences. An emphasis is placed on the political leaders' reluctance to commit and their obstructive stances toward implementing the agreement, revealing a deep-seated mistrust among the involved parties. The principles of mediation and negotiation in the peace process are examined, particularly IGAD's role in facilitating dialogues and agreements. The study assesses the R-ARCSS's outcomes, shortcomings, and achievements, evaluating its implications on South Sudan's political, social, and economic landscape. Key areas of focus include the implementation of security arrangements, the integration of various armed forces into a unified national army, and the impact of delays on the progress of the peace process. The potential consequences of these delays, such as ongoing insecurity and conflict, are contemplated. Finally, the research reflects on why the R-ARCSS is seen as a more successful agreement compared to its predecessor, shedding light on the complexities of enforcing comprehensive peace agreements and their implications for South Sudan's future stability and governance.

Keywords: *Revitalized Agreement, Resolution of Conflict, Reflecting Success, Failure and Potential Consequences*

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I. Introduction

Conflict was an inevitable and pervasive aspect of human life. The emergence of the modern world, particularly marked by the devastating impacts of two World Wars, underscored this reality. Nations witnessed the deadly and destructive nature of both interstate and intrastate violent conflicts, which often resulted in widespread destruction, displacement, and death (Miall, 2004). Conflict was typically characterized by physical violence; it was equated with fighting and was generally perceived as destructive, unpleasant, and undesirable. Such conflicts provoked negative responses that could have detrimental effects on individuals, breaking down communication and destroying relationships, often culminating in violence expressed through fists, guns, or bombs (Fisher, 2011).

Contrary to popular belief that conflict solely generated negative outcomes, it also promoted new ideas, fostered a better understanding, strengthened personal relationships, stimulated individual growth, and facilitated more effective problem-solving (Deutsch, 1973). Since the end of the Cold War, power-sharing systems had increasingly become prominent in negotiating settlements for armed conflicts (Zartman, 2000).

A prominent example of conflict within this framework was the civil war in South Sudan, which reignited in 2013 following a skirmish among presidential guard units, segregated along ethnic lines. The country was engulfed in flames as widespread political violence took root. This quarrel spread through security units, reigniting a civil war that had affected the nation since its independence from North Sudan (International Crisis Group, 2018).

The 2018 revitalized Agreement on Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) aimed to be a roadmap for curbing the devastating “party war” that erupted in 2013, largely rooted in political reform within the ruling party (Aalen, 2021). The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and international actors sought to provide a framework that addressed the root causes of party infighting while promoting reconciliation, governance, and socio-economic development during a time of chaos. The wars of December 2013 and 2016 underscored the destructive internal conflicts within the ruling party, leading to ethnic-based violence among factions of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM).

The 2016 conflict erupted in part due to the failure of mediators to provide an effective mediation framework, complicated by the conflicting interests of IGAD’s heads of state and other international stakeholders, such as the complex dynamics between Sudan and Uganda (Afolabi, 2020). The credibility of the IGAD mediators came into question, as some were perceived to be favoring particular sides (Lindsay, 2019). The conflicts primarily involved the SPLM in Government (SPLM-IG) and the SPLM in Opposition (SPLM-IO), leading to significant displacement, social development destruction, political fragmentation, and economic degradation.

The failure to implement key provisions of the 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) resulted in a resurgence of civil war (Salih, 2020). Although mediation efforts were characterized by mistrust and a lack of political will from the parties involved, ongoing regional tensions between Sudan and Uganda created additional hurdles for peace talks in South Sudan (Khan, 2019). Despite these obstacles, IGAD continued to advocate for a peaceful resolution.

The 2018 revitalized R-ARCSS marked a significant milestone in the pursuit of peace and stability in South Sudan, yet multiple postponements related to proposed democratic elections frustrated efforts to conclude the transitional period effectively (European Union, 2021). These postponements often stemmed from distrust and a lack of political commitment, stalling crucial implementations such as security sector reforms and constitutional arrangements.

This article analyzed the successes and failures of the R-ARCSS while exploring its political, social, and economic dimensions. It examined how the agreement impacted relationships between SPLM factions, the broader South Sudanese society, the nation’s economic landscape, and its implications for regional and international stakeholders. Through this analysis, the author aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved in conflict resolution and power-sharing as a potential resolution in South Sudan.

II. Theoretical Review: On Conflict Resolution And Power-Sharing

The implementation process of the R-ARCSS has prompted numerous reflections and discussions centered on conflict resolution theories and power-sharing, which aim to define how various groups distribute political, military, and economic power among themselves based on mutually established rules. These theoretical frameworks significantly shaped the R-ARCSS agreement, intended to foster power-sharing and mitigate the ongoing conflict in South Sudan. This agreement includes provisions related to political, economic, military, or territorial control power-sharing. However, the establishment of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU) showcased that there has been minimal effort put forth to implement the critical components of conflict resolution, highlighting a lack of commitment from involved parties.

Conflict resolution theory encompasses a broad spectrum of research focused on evaluating the effectiveness of agreements and how post-conflict nations are rebuilt. It also critically examines instances where resolutions have failed to adhere to their foundational principles of conflict resolution, emphasizing the repercussions of the inadequate implementation of critical provisions, especially regarding the R-ARCSS. These theories offer insights into the power-sharing remedies employed in post-conflict South Sudan and identify factors that contributed to the postponement of elections. As the frequency and impact of global conflicts continue to escalate, academic institutions have recognized the need to broaden their research interests to explore ongoing international crises, internal wars, and social tensions, leading to studies that facilitate conflict prevention. Research indicates that conflicts can ignite suddenly or simmer for years, sometimes even generations (O’Reilly, 2022).

Power-sharing theories make empirical and normative assertions about the value and effectiveness of power-sharing systems for managing conflicts in divided societies, while conflict resolution theories are seen as instrumental in rebuilding and reconciling fractured communities (Lijphart, 2008). These two provisions align closely with the R-ARCSS framework, which seeks to provide political power-sharing solutions for conflicting parties, encompassing governance rules for the allocation of political offices and decision-making authority. By ensuring all significant factions are represented in the governing cabinet through established grand coalition rules, the framework guarantees that minority and vulnerable groups, including women in South Sudan, can vie for political power through appointments rather than traditional democratic elections. Proportionality theory also supports economic power-sharing, directing the distribution of public resources in accordance with community sizes. However, adopting this model risks generating distrust, ethnic division, and political fragmentation. Mahatma Gandhi’s approach centers on developing peaceful resolutions, emphasizing the pursuit of social truth

and healthier relationships between opposing groups (Gandhi, 1950). Ultimately, while conflict is an unavoidable reality, some conflicts can be entirely resolved, others must be minimized, and many need to be actively managed.

Power-sharing actively rejects unequal distributions of political power, advocating for a fair and equitable partition of both political and economic authority. Some scholars argue that power-sharing effectively reduces the likelihood of conflict in divided societies (McGarry & O'Leary, 2009). The parties involved in the R-ARCSS needed to embrace the Khartoum power-sharing deals, hoping that this new agreement would not lead to negative power-sharing outcomes. Despite ongoing challenges, the R-ARCSS represents a critical foundation for peacebuilding. Yet, without continuous international backing and sincere commitment from all factions, the prospects for success remain precarious.

The Consociationalism theory of power-sharing advocates for democratic distribution of power and resources as a means to address inequalities (Lijphart, 1999). This framework informed the Khartoum Revitalized Agreement of 2018, bolstering cooperation between warring factions. The theory underscores the significance of power-sharing in divided societies like South Sudan, where resource distribution must reflect community size. Additionally, it explains how neopatrimonial systems link political positions closely with economic opportunities, implying that equitable political distributions naturally integrate with economic power-sharing mechanisms. However, the intricate 2018 party power-sharing dynamics remain ambiguous, sometimes illustrating a struggle for power, competition over physical resources, and political disputes that escalate into ethnic-based conflicts. This consociational theory also addresses deep internal divisions along ethnic, religious, or linguistic lines, noting that no single group constitutes a majority, yet stability is maintained through elite consultations (McGarry & O'Leary, 2009). The roots of the internal divisions elucidated in the 2018 Khartoum power-sharing agreement reveal overwhelming support for opposition groups, which felt marginalized within the post-independence government structure. These Consociational states are often contrasted with those employing majoritarian electoral systems.

Centripetalism, or integrationism, is another power-sharing theory designed for divided societies, usually along ethnic, religious, or social lines (Horowitz, 1985). Its goal is to push parties toward moderate, compromising policies that reinforce the political center. This theory diverges from the consociational approach, as it lacks a straightforward formula for resolving conflicts. Instead, it focuses on minimizing destructive aspects of conflicts while maximizing potential resolutions in which opposing parties can reach a win-win solution. Gandhi's teachings on conflict management resonate with centripetalism, encouraging a focus on rational engagement rather than mere needs. While consociationalism aims to ensure inclusion and representation for ethnic groups, centripetalism seeks to depoliticize ethnicity and foster the development of multi-ethnic political parties.

Conflict resolution theories emphasize outcomes that transcend mere management or settlement, advocating for lasting solutions to underlying issues. During the revitalized agreement discussions, the warring factions concentrated on addressing their immediate needs rather than resolving the root causes of the 2013 conflicts. The misapplication of conflict resolution principles has hindered practical implementation, delaying the full realization of the Khartoum declaration. Parties involved often revert to conflict management strategies to avoid reverting to violence. By applying Gandhi's constructive conflict management methods and non-violent philosophies, stakeholders can work to prevent recurrence of disputes.

The parties involved in the Khartoum Revitalized Agreement indicated that wealth-sharing mechanisms should promote inclusivity for all factions; however, according to consociational theory, power-sharing is essential for resolving societal divisions. It is evident that South Sudan's ethnic cleavages and intense political division contributed to the 2013 conflict. The theoretical frameworks aid parties in negotiating power-shared roles, although some factions resisted the mediators' approach to applying these principles. Consequently, the Khartoum revitalized agreement emerged as an immature mediation attempt, with parties feeling coerced into signing premature agreements contrary to their wishes. This impeded effective implementation of both wealth and political power-sharing, as well as security sector reforms, which received little consideration. Reflecting Boulding's perspective, the successful defusion of conflict requires monitoring community behavior through "social data stations," establishing a system akin to a network of weather stations that track societal pulse and enable timely intervention to prevent conflict and subsequent wars (Boulding, 1988).

Additional conflict resolution theories have contributed to understanding that after agreements are signed, parties must utilize resolution strategies to restore governance and uphold the rule of law. Such resolution implies resolving conflicts analytically to address root problems. Nonetheless, a surface examination reveals oversimplification; in the case of R-ARCSS, some factions disengaged from the agreement due to unresolved interests. Meanwhile, those committed to remaining voiced numerous reservations. Theoretical inquiries seek to address who determines the values underlying conflict after agreements are established. Burton (1990) challenges Boulding's assumptions by noting that anticipating domestic violence is often challenging, with military and authoritative control proving ineffective. He asserts, however, that embedding values in relationships and institutions can lead to better behavioural control.

Conflict resolution theory will scrutinize both challenges and successes involved in its implementation. Theories of power-sharing provide insights on implementing provisions for sharing power among divided societies in South Sudan, while Gandhi's conflict management theory explores how parties can prevent conflict recurrence amidst slow implementation and assess the level of confidence and trust between key figures. Effectively resolving conflict is contingent on the surrounding context, including a party's satisfaction with the mediation process, echoing Johan Galtung's distinctions among direct, structural, and cultural violence (Galtung, 1969). Galtung's structural violence identification encompasses subtle forms of violence that reinforce harmful attitudes, correlating to inequitable resource distribution. His theory advocates for addressing diverse forms of violence through changing conflict behaviors and rectifying structural injustices and cultural violence. However, neglecting these factors risks escalating future conflicts with significant costs and destructive consequences.

The theories of conflict resolution exhibit limitations in understanding the nuances of ethnic-based conflicts. To clarify his perspectives, John Burton contemplates whether conflicts arise from human aggression or flawed social institutions and norms (Burton, 1990). He considers two scenarios: if aggression is inherent, conflict must be managed through policing and deterrent measures. Notably, ethnic conflicts in South Sudan cannot be contained solely by law enforcement or military actions. Instead, a fair resource distribution and reliance on social controls are critical for preventing conflict escalation. Addressing ethnic entities like the Jieng Council of Elders necessitates establishing strong democratic institutions that exclude ethnic interference in national governance. When societies are small, conflicts may follow a ritualized pattern; however, population growth leads to increased faces in decision-making resulting in disputes over physical resources and intensified competition over human needs and aspirations. Burton subsequently addresses the core premise that aggression and conflict stem from institutions and social norms that clash with fundamental human needs, asserting that serious consideration of conflict resolution requires societies to adapt to the needs of their people rather than imposing rigid structures.

According to Burton, human needs do not inherently lead to conflict; rather conflicts arise from unfulfilled needs. Frustration stemming from a lack of security, participation, identity, and recognition fuels conflicts. This perspective sheds light on possible consequences of the incomplete implementation of R-ARCSS; if factions feel their needs remain unmet, frustration is likely to surface. Burton posits that imposed values may alienate individuals from their true human values and needs, asserting that alienation manifests in any system where participation and identity are stifled. Such alienation may trigger deviant behaviours and dysfunctional conflicts.

Conflict resolution is fundamentally the strategies and processes employed to conclude disputes through negotiation and mediation, often leading to mutual agreements. In political and civil war contexts, resolution encompasses reconciling adversarial parties and crafting frameworks for peaceful coexistence. The underlying situation of the South Sudan conflict originates from political tensions, but the war's execution, marked by targeted killings and irregular mobilization of fighters, introduced ethnic dimensions from the onset. Many splits in South Sudanese factions since the liberation war stemmed from polarized ethnic nationalism. Power-sharing theories assert that navigating post-conflict arrangements in such divided societies is laden with challenges, fueled by deep-seated mistrust and competing interests. O'Reilly (2022) further supports this notion, noting that implementing essential provisions may lead to cyclical struggles as factions prioritize short-term goals over long-term national stability, ultimately hindering inclusive governance and institutional resilience necessary for sustainable peace and political harmony.

The 2013 conflict regressed into ethnic enclaves characterized by a descent into chaos, lawlessness, and mob rule, complemented by fragmentation of both political and ethnic factions. The relevance of these theories lies in their applicability to South Sudan's intricate conflict history. Despite providing valuable insights, these theories fail to address the unique cultural and historical dynamics that significantly influence the feasibility of the R-ARCSS. Moreover, the theories inadequately account for the role of external actors, particularly international interventions that have historically shaped South Sudan's political framework. These shortcomings highlight the necessity for more context-specific analyses that consider South Sudan's distinct socio-political dynamics and external influences.

III. Methodological Approach

The document analyzing the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) was developed through a comprehensive methodology encompassing extensive research and data collection on the political landscape in South Sudan. Initial efforts included gathering both primary and secondary sources such as government reports, international organization statements, and firsthand accounts from local stakeholders. This multifaceted approach ensured a thorough understanding of the complex issues impeding peace efforts in the region, laying a foundation for the subsequent analyses that would follow.

Incorporating qualitative research methods, the study further enriched its findings through interviews with experts including political analysts and representatives from civil society organizations. These discussions

provided valuable insights into the dynamics of the conflict and the challenges faced in implementing the R-ARCSS. The qualitative data were thematically analyzed to capture common concerns and patterns among various stakeholders, facilitating a deeper understanding of the key issues addressed in the document. This qualitative component was complemented by quantitative data, which included statistical analyses of violence, displacement, and humanitarian needs factors crucial to illustrating the urgency of the current situation in South Sudan.

The study also employed a case study methodology that allowed for interpretive and analytical assessments of factors leading to the postponements of democratic elections, as stipulated in the R-ARCSS. Through examining the failure to implement key aspects of the power-sharing agreement, the research highlighted potential consequences, including the risk of renewed conflict. The analysis scrutinized various conflict theories, particularly Conflict Resolution and Power-Sharing theories, unveiling unexpected motivations behind the parties' decisions to sign the R-ARCSS in 2018. This focus on specific phenomena allowed for an exploration of the intricate elements shaping the post-conflict landscape in South Sudan.

Finally, through a comparative analysis of the earlier 2015 ARCSS and the 2018 Khartoum declaration, the document assessed successes and challenges related to power-sharing arrangements. It underscored the political leaders' failures to implement essential provisions, particularly regarding security and constitutional reforms, and contrasted varied approaches of conflict resolution and power-sharing theories. The study also posed critical questions concerning the factors that led to the signing of the R-ARCSS, the role of third parties, and the implications of potential election failures. The insights drawn from this multifaceted methodological approach not only provided a well-rounded examination of the peace process but also highlighted the urgent need for effective solutions to navigate the ongoing conflict in South Sudan.

IV. The Trend Of Khartoum Peace Initiative

The Khartoum R-ARCSS initiative was initiated by the rival states of Khartoum and Uganda, both members of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), following the collapse of South Sudan's peace agreements and the descent into brutal civil wars in July 2016 and December 2013. During these conflicts, both government troops and rebel forces employed brutal tactics, driving over one million people to seek refuge in neighboring Uganda and destroying oil production facilities. In the wake of the failure of the 2015 ARCSS, IGAD began examining the causes that had led to the failure of the 2015 peace accords.

The Khartoum initiative aimed for a permanent solution to the conflict. In mid-2017, under pressure from the Troika and the EU, IGAD launched the High-Level Revitalization Forum to revitalize the stalled August 2015 power-sharing agreement. Khartoum moved swiftly to broker a deal, involving Uganda to influence the SPLM-IG, while Sudan leveraged its relationships with both warring parties. This mediation process generated a series of smaller agreements from June to August 2018, as Khartoum and Uganda pushed the warring parties to establish a power-sharing framework. Ultimately, the two parties achieved the Khartoum Declaration of Agreement on June 28, 2018. However, competing interests between Uganda and Sudan created obstacles for the previous implementation of the ARCSS in 2016.

From 2017 to 2018, these neighboring countries led peace efforts to end widespread fighting through IGAD. The Khartoum and Uganda initiatives focused on essential elements to restart power-sharing, which included wealth sharing, political reforms, security reforms, and constitutional reforms. Both countries committed to signing the final R-ARCSS document. Their success in this regard frustrated the governments of Kenya and Ethiopia, as Sudan initially rejected the agreement that called for talks to finalize the accords to take place in Nairobi, opting instead to keep discussions in Sudan.

A key question in this context was what factors influenced Khartoum to spearhead the South Sudanese mediation process. Internal political and economic crises in Sudan prompted a reassessment of opportunities for cooperation with Uganda and Juba. The R-ARCSS peace agreement required bringing rebels, including those loyal to SPLM/A-IO, into a political settlement, which necessitated addressing the shortcomings of the peace deal as a crucial first step. For Khartoum, solving the South Sudan problem represented an opportunity to revitalize its economy and stabilize political fragmentation.

Historically, Sudan had supported the enemies of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) during the protracted liberation struggle, creating antagonisms that persisted after independence. Despite the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), tribal militias continued to fight against the SPLA for many years, further complicating the political landscape. The Sudanese government had made the controversial decision to arm rebel factions early in the civil war, resulting in the disintegration of the SPLM/A and deepening ethnic divisions. Khartoum exploited these divisions while also supporting Ugandan rebel groups, particularly the Lord's Resistance Army and the West Nile Bank rebels, taking a counter-strategic approach against the Ugandan government.

Conversely, Uganda had been a legitimate ally to the SPLM and SPLA since President Yoweri Museveni came to power in 1987. Following the CPA, South Sudan became an economic lifeline for Uganda, compensating for years of bilateral relations. During the Sudanese civil war, Kampala actively supported the SPLA by providing

military logistics, including transport. However, the historical turmoil in the Horn of Africa had jeopardized several IGAD peace initiatives, and with Sudan's involvement, their interests aligned for a possible truce. Both sides in the civil war came to understand the need to reset their stances. Regional pressure encouraged the parties to implement a long-term strategy to address South Sudan's systemic political instability. The SPLM-IG accepted an agreement that would solidify its regional legitimacy and improve access to hard currency and economic growth, recognizing that obstructing talks could lead to further financial difficulties and international isolation.

Some African Union (AU) officials believed that threats of sanctions from five African nations, known as the C5 and designated by the AU to support peace efforts, influenced the belligerents to alter their strategies. The UN Security Council's imposition of an arms embargo on the parties also illustrated this dynamic. Collectively, these regional actions effectively isolated rebel leaders, limiting their mobility and ability to operate, thereby reducing their activity significantly.

Initially, Khartoum proposed a radical but thin outline for a new power structure in South Sudan, suggesting the distribution of government officials across three national capitals, which the SPLM-IO rejected. This weakness in regional mediation frustrated several African leaders. On June 27, the parties signed a Declaration of Agreement on a Permanent Ceasefire, known as the Khartoum Declaration. This declaration called for a permanent ceasefire supervised by African forces and committed the parties to a new three-year transitional government with parameters similar to the 2015 peace agreement. Furthermore, it provided for Sudan to coordinate with South Sudan on oil field security and rehabilitation in the former Unity State, including independent verification of associated costs. While the deal rekindled hope for a political settlement between the warring parties, in practice, it offered only a temporary pathway to diminished violence in the country.

V. Reviewing R-ARCSS On Negotiation And Mediation Process

The utilization of mediation in various forms has significantly surpassed traditional methods over the past two decades, offering disputing parties alternatives to lawyers and court systems. Advocates of mediation argue that it yields better outcomes as it fosters cooperative conflict resolution, engaging parties directly in seeking solutions rather than imposing outcomes on them (Moore, 2014). Keiichi noted the importance of reviewing the challenges and achievements of regional mediation mechanisms through an analysis of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) as a mediator influenced by the diverse motives of the participating countries. Despite the conflicting interests of member states, revitalizing regional mediation through IGAD is deemed crucial for achieving stability. The mediation efforts are overseen by the Heads of State (HoS), including representatives from Uganda.

Initially, South Sudanese leaders viewed the Sudanese government with suspicion due to its support for the SPLM-IO. However, the mediation initiative allowed these conflicting parties to participate actively in creating an agreement that met their needs. Throughout the process, both Uganda and Sudan gained trust from regional and international stakeholders, thereby enhancing their mediation capacities. Nevertheless, differing approaches and national interests prevented a unified position in conflict resolution. Responding to this fragmentation, Sudan was appointed in 2017 to broaden the mediation efforts to include more influential parties.

The IGAD mediators produced formal settlement agreements while facing mounting impatience from regional and international leaders regarding the slow pace of negotiations. The UN Security Council backed the IGAD peace process and expressed readiness to impose sanctions upon request from the region. In July 2018, the Council imposed an arms embargo, influenced by the U.S., reflecting growing frustration over the SPLM-IG's perceived intransigence. Although the UN had limited political engagement since the outbreak of civil war, allowing IGAD to take the lead, these sanctions created the perception that certain communities were being unfairly punished, complicating the mediation process.

According to the International Crisis Group (ICG), three primary factors have constrained IGAD's mediation effectiveness: 1) regional rivalries and power struggles, 2) the centralization of decision-making at the HoS level, and 3) difficulties in extending the peace process beyond South Sudan's political elites. The result has been a fragile peace—imperfect, incomplete, and at a high risk of collapse—largely due to a lack of political will from the international community to act collectively in addressing emerging challenges.

The world must recognize the significance of even a wobbly truce if it continuously helps halt the violence between South Sudan's main factions. The civil war has highlighted existing regional tensions, with historic rivalries between Sudan and Uganda, as well as competition between Uganda and Ethiopia, complicating mediation efforts. The effectiveness of negotiation and mediation significantly impacts conflict resolution. However, the relationship between successful mediation and conflict resolution is often tenuous and should be treated with caution. Evidence suggests that a strong correlation exists between effective mediation and successful implementation of agreements (Holt & Tchekmedyian, 2019).

Morton also demonstrated that good mediation fosters effective conflict resolution by holding parties accountable for implementing agreements. Burton emphasized that positive solutions depend largely on the approach taken during mediation, as seen in Khartoum's imposed power-sharing arrangements for conflicting

parties in South Sudan. In 2018, the African Union increased its involvement in South Sudan, issuing strong statements and threatening sanctions at IGAD's request.

Conflict resolution is a prerequisite for effective negotiation among distrustful parties. Without a minimum level of relationship resolution, negotiations may be frustrating and ineffective. Khartoum's imposed power-sharing arrangement resulted in an unprecedented political structure, featuring five vice presidents and a parliament exceeding five hundred members. While innovative, this arrangement lacked adequate preparation, which left many key groups unrepresented and provided opportunities for discontent to grow.

The Khartoum mediation emerged following the failure of previous IGAD initiatives in Addis Ababa, which struggled to implement the 2015 power-sharing agreement. Although the coalition between SPLM-IO and SPLM-IG was broad, it remained fragile and risked unraveling if significant concessions were not made. IGAD's role was often characterized by individual states' interests, delaying key provisions' implementation. Hostilities between Sudan and Uganda also played a crucial role in shaping South Sudan's political landscape. Support for IGAD as a regional mediation mechanism exemplifies the potential of such partnerships for conflict resolution.

Scholars and conflict resolution analysts caution that South Sudan's situation may mirror the challenges faced in Burundi's power-sharing model. The South Sudanese approach imposed a unique arrangement with unclear security modalities, emphasizing the necessity of having capable mediators who possess the appropriate skills to facilitate resolutions. The main challenge lies not within the power-sharing mechanism itself but in the external influences and historical grievances surrounding it.

The structure of the Revitalized Transitional National Legislative Assembly (RTNLA), which included five vice presidents representing various tribes, illustrates the difficulties of governance in a context marked by ethnic diversity. This unique representation raises concerns about effectively managing corruption and fostering economic growth. Horizontal power-sharing within different state organs—legislative, executive, and judiciary—establishes a democratic system where power is distributed among various entities.

While mediation offers a sense of safety and security, it also poses risks. There is a danger that mediation could worsen conflicts, particularly in situations where there is a significant power imbalance. Envisioning a stable South Sudan requires significant devolution of power to subnational units and an end to the manipulation of traditional ethnic boundaries. The early mediation process demonstrated a lack of skills that left both parties feeling coerced into accepting deals, which, in theory, should have promoted inclusivity but often exacerbated tensions.

Participants in the conflict sometimes misused the negotiation process, pretending to cooperate while actually undermining resolutions. This dynamic has contributed to the ineffective implementation of the R-ARCSS peace process and the postponement of democratic elections. Ultimately, effective mediators must demonstrate empathy, humour, and flexibility while maintaining assertiveness and self-control.

This article further discusses the implementation of the R-ARCSS and assess its successes and shortcomings in detail

VI. Implementation And Extension Of R-ARCSS

After a period of time since the beginning of 2013 party war, followed by the failed Agreement on Resolution of the conflict in south in 2016, change the lives of South Sudanese, however, the signing of this revitalized agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, had created hope among the people of South Sudan of which hailed as a breakthrough for reversing the brutal civil conflict that had cost an estimated 400,000 lives and displace more than 4million people since its onset 2013.

The parties had made little progress on key issues, particularly on the following: unifying the national army; resolving the questions over the number and boundaries of states for local power sharing; establishing the R-TGoNU. Furthermore the Africa Union report designated that the revitalized Agreement had foster the establishment of Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU) this indicated that little has been done with this transitional unity government that was inclusive governance and had foster collaboration that reduced the tensions and had promoted a sense of shared responsibility. However, a minimum delay of six to eight months is likely necessary to finish the tasks of the pre-transitional period. In the other scenario, under heavy outside pressure, had help on the formation of the national unity government as it was schedule, and as an evident that the most of the "pre-transitional" issues slip behind. Power sharing is a practice in conflict resolution where multiple groups distribute political, military, or economic power among themselves according to agreed rules. It can refer to any formal framework or informal pact that regulates the distribution of power between divided communities. However technical difficulties may cast doubt on the feasibility of this option. As a newly-born polity South Sudan has focused much on state building, an option requiring concentration on building of necessary capacities and institutions for country rule.

The agreement had laid the ground work for enhancing governance by emphasizing on accountability and transparency within the governmental operation. Although the report did not hinge on the real accountability on the corruption and other cases related to the crimes, but the rampant corruption in South Sudan was active and

imposed a threat not only on the governance, also had delayed the implementation of peace. According to the analysts and mediators the Khartoum accord has succeeded in reducing the fighting between the main belligerents, and has many flaws, some of which replicate the defects of the August 2015 power-sharing deal.

Therefore, the UN has already formulated an approach aimed at avoiding the first scenario by achieving a version of the second by focus on two key goals finalizing the transitional security arrangements in Juba and forming the national unity government. Vehemently the formation of a unity government had little room for opposition figures to return to the country and participated in process of this formation of unity government. The Zimbabwe's power-sharing and Rwanda post-genocide governance structure offers insight into how power-sharing system can aid in healing, national reconciliation and this can draw comparison with South Sudan approach although the direct applicability of these model to South Sudan given its unique political historical and ethnic composition need critical assessment and effectiveness to mitigate conflict in ethnic diverse African States. This approach can be related to Kenya power-sharing as well as the country like Tanzania suggesting parallels and divergences with South Sudan.

For the Consociational theory the power-sharing in ethnically pluralistic societies consists in a set of measures and rules which distribute decision-making rights in order to guarantee fair and equal participation of the representatives of all main ethnic groups and in this way reassures minorities that their interests will be preserved. The political arrangement pave way for international community sought to rebuild the strong institutions that was not materialized themselves, indeed fostered the diplomatic relations and financial assistance by the regional and international community. This had influenced external actors like the Africa Union in shaping power-sharing model in Africa. ICG asserted that although IGAD and its member states have contributed much time and political capital to containing and resolving the civil war, are had not been successful due to internal disruptions and power struggles, centralization of decision-making and lack of institutionalization, and too much focus on political elites with insufficient outreach to wider stakeholders. South Sudan's centralized power structure requires unity governments at constant risk of collapse and infighting. R-RACSS as the Security Council put it is the only framework for the durable peace, reconciliation and national cohesion in South Sudan and a feasible solution would provide an exit from the destructive war and also need to accommodate the many other groups that have taken up arms to protect themselves from the political Centre. The goals of consociationalism are governmental stability; the survival of the South Sudan 2015 power-sharing arrangements, the survival of democracy, and the avoidance of violence are re-constructed in R-ARCSS. In a consociational state, all groups, including minorities, are represented on the political and economic stages of South Sudan power-sharing. Supporters of the consociationalism argue that it is a more realistic option in deeply divided societies than integrationist approaches to conflict management.

The signatories' parties of the revitalized agreement attempted to manage the country resources after the establishment of Transitional of National of Government of Unity but little had been reached. The introduction of mechanism for oversight and financial management is a way toward establishing a more responsible government. However, the success of these discussions was hinged on a genuine commitment to inclusivity and fairness. This need to be handled with care and the future elections could further entrench division rather than resolve them. The 2018 agreement had established a framework for political stability, security and the economic recovery but the failure to achieve the key provisions on the agreement had limited economic growth and investment together with on-going political and security instability. This argument was supported by conflict resolution theories views that one of the key conflict resolution is innovative thinking that is breaking out of habits of assuming that things, must be done in set ways or that there are only limited options in any situation.

VII. Implementing The R-ARCSS: A Path To Social Progress

The implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) has laid the groundwork for social progress, particularly through dialogue and the empowerment of women. Reports indicate that the R-ARCSS has provided opportunities for fostering reconciliation among various communities and has encouraged inter-communal dialogue that promotes collaboration and understanding among South Sudan's diverse ethnic groups. These efforts are vital for healing the divisions created by years of conflict and facilitating potential resolutions. As noted by thinkers such as John Burton, effective conflict resolution requires a comprehensive understanding of human relationships, acknowledging that motivations and values are deeply influenced by the broader social, political, and economic environment.

The new peace deal is approaching its first critical test—the formation of a unity government set for May 2019. However, critical steps toward interim benchmarks, such as unifying the national army and redrawing internal boundaries, have lagged behind schedule. This delay has led to the extension of elections, driven by fears of potential violence. The parties involved have struggled to build trust and confidence during the interim period of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU), necessitating this cautious approach to avoid exacerbating tensions.

One noteworthy advancement under the R-ARCSS is the increased opportunity for women to participate in peacebuilding and political processes, which enhances the representation of diverse voices in governance. This aligns with John Burton's assertion that the study of conflict must take into account the entirety of human relationships. A more inclusive government genuinely reflects the needs of all societal segments and marks progress towards a more equitable political landscape.

However, security sector reform presents significant challenges. Interviews with officials from the Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs reveal that limited advancements have been made in achieving the graduation of unified forces ahead of the anticipated deadline in 2023. While some progress has been made in deploying these forces, the delays in implementation have raised concerns about the sustainability of peace. The graduations have boosted public morale, and reducing large-scale violence is crucial for integrating security forces and maintaining stability. Despite these challenges, external sanctions have been blamed for obstructing progress, underscoring the complexities that surround implementing the R-ARCSS.

In the aftermath of conflict, South Sudan faces severe political, social, and economic challenges. Enhancing governance effectiveness is critical for fostering political stability and economic growth. Good governance emphasizes accountability and transparency in public administration, which is essential for reforming state institutions to better respond to citizens' needs. The World Bank highlights that improved governance can significantly impact developing nations' long-term economic growth and the well-being of their populations. However, since its independence in 2011, South Sudan has grappled with a lack of mature political structures to support good governance, which has historically hampered its social and economic development.

As South Sudan navigates its post-conflict landscape, regional organizations like IGAD have played a vital role, successfully brokering a peace agreement that has reduced violence. One of the agreement's notable successes has been the establishment of a transitional government in February 2020, incorporating representatives from both SPLM-IG and SPLM-IO, thereby promoting a more inclusive governance structure. Socially, the R-ARCSS has facilitated crucial dialogues aimed at reconciliation among communities affected by conflict. Initiatives promoting inter-communal dialogue have been vital in addressing grievances and fostering understanding among South Sudan's diverse groups.

Yet, as the new peace deal progresses, the risk of collapse remains high, and even the most optimistic scenarios suggest only partial peace. Governance plays an essential role in determining why many developing nations lag in their growth compared to developed countries. The success or failure of development policies often hinges on effective governance, which is evident in the R-ARCSS framework that emphasizes inclusive participation from women and marginalized groups in governance processes.

Despite efforts to improve governance, corruption continues to pose a significant barrier. Following Castañeda (2003) and Wolf (2005), it is well established that corrupt practices and poor governance profoundly hinder economic growth in developing countries. South Sudan's Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity has attempted to invest in enhancing governance quality, recognizing its importance for achieving sustainable growth. However, the outcomes have often fallen short of expectations.

Oil revenues, once believed to be the foundation of South Sudan's development, have instead become an obstacle to peace. Transparency International reports indicate that public funds in South Sudan often go unaccounted for, hindering essential service delivery and undermining political stability. The pervasive nature of corruption not only threatens political achievements made under the R-ARCSS but also underscores the urgent need for robust mechanisms to promote transparency and accountability in governance. Rather than being a catalyst for growth, oil revenues have often been monopolized and misused, exacerbating conflict rather than alleviating it. Corruption diminishes economic efficiency, impedes capital formation, and ultimately stunts economic growth, contributing to widespread unemployment and nepotism among the youth.

As we delve into the failure of implementing the R-ARCSS, it becomes clear that addressing these systemic issues is crucial for ensuring a peaceful and prosperous future for South Sudan. The following analysis will explore these challenges in greater depth.

VIII. Failure Of The Implementation Of R-ARCSS

The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) has faced significant challenges in its implementation, primarily due to a lack of commitment and persistent obstacles hindering progress. Despite several attempts by the parties involved to fully realize the terms of the agreement, financial implications and unresolved issues have stymied efforts, perpetuating a cycle of conflict and discontent. According to conflict resolution theories, many implementations fail due to financial constraints; thus, they struggle to resolve existing conflicts, leaving individuals and communities at the mercy of traditional and often ineffective solutions.

The inability of the R-ARCSS to address long-standing questions surrounding power and resource sharing among South Sudan's regions and ethnic groups has resulted in repeated postponements of democratic elections, preventing the conclusion of the interim government of national unity. Like its predecessor, the August

2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS), R-ARCSS has left numerous contentious issues unresolved. Regional governments acknowledge these shortcomings but often feel they have limited options to influence change.

Key provisions around security sector reforms were initially agreed upon, including the cantonment, screening, and unification of armed forces into a national army. However, these critical steps have not been fulfilled. As of now, most armed groups remain unresponsive to the R-ARCSS; significant parts of the population continue to arm themselves, and the process of forming a cohesive national military is considerably behind schedule. The lack of governance in rural areas has rendered a reliable census impossible and exacerbated security and boundary delineation issues.

The protracted civil war has exposed the inadequacies of early donor plans for South Sudan, which failed to account for the region's lack of crucial state institutions and infrastructure. This oversight has manifested in a landscape that remains fraught with ethnic divisions, injustice, and competition for scarce resources. The political instability exacerbated by the collapse of Omar al-Bashir's regime in Sudan has further limited Khartoum's ability to exert influence on the South Sudan peace process. The subsequent political turmoil has distracted regional leaders from properly focusing on resolving South Sudan's crises.

The delays in meeting critical deadlines for constitutional reforms and other key milestones have undermined confidence in the peace process. In a society as ethnically diverse as South Sudan, effective governance necessitates representation from various ethnic groups. Lessons drawn from Ghana and Uganda show that Ghana's ethnic balance leads to more effective governance than Uganda's ethnic competition, providing a cautionary tale for South Sudan's power-sharing arrangement.

Despite the establishment of a National Unity Government, issues of corruption, the need for a hybrid court, and rebuilding public trust within institutions have progressed insufficiently. The R-ARCSS lacks credible assurances for enforcement, and while Sudan and Uganda were assigned oversight roles in the implementation, their involvement was often self-serving. This negligence has left numerous critical issues unresolved and has risked igniting further conflict.

The implementation challenges have led to ongoing clashes between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Government (SPLM-IG) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition (SPLM-IO) forces. The slow pace of implementation has provided ammunition for other armed groups and tribal militias, allowing violence to resurge, complicating efforts for national unity, and stalling the integration of security forces. This cycle of hostilities, driven primarily by competition for resources, such as land and water, continues to impede the formation of trust and social cohesion within the country.

Geopolitical dynamics further complicate the situation rivalries between Sudan and Uganda, as well as Ethiopia and Egypt regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on the Blue Nile River, have influenced the stability of the peace process in South Sudan. Cairo has built relationships with Juba, driven by fears that Ethiopia might support attempts to undermine the South Sudanese government. However, while Sudan and Uganda remain key actors, shifting dynamics among these countries can profoundly affect South Sudan.

As ongoing conflicts and significant internal and external pressures persist, the crucial aspects of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants remain glaring inadequacies. The lack of progress on these fronts permits the continuation of various armed groups, threatening both security and stability. Furthermore, internal rivalries within the SPLM factions contribute to ineffective governance and claims of favoritism, further eroding trust and cooperation among critical political actors.

The provisions of the R-ARCSS, apart from establishing the transitional government of national unity, have largely lagged behind or been entirely neglected. The lack of robust international and regional peace support, combined with parties' unwillingness to embrace collaborative approaches, has perpetuated frustrations. The failure to engage meaningfully with each other during the negotiation and implementation phases has raised questions about the legitimacy and sustainability of the peace process.

Political turmoil within South Sudan, compounded by economic crises and internal conflicts, complicates the full implementation of the R-ARCSS. The ongoing political crises in IGAD member states, particularly Sudan and Ethiopia, have diverted attention from South Sudan, adversely affecting progress on the agreement. The issues surrounding constitutional reforms and electoral processes exacerbate cycles of doubt and despair, impeding the necessary building of trust and confidence conducive to peace.

Moreover, the ambitious reform agenda of the R-ARCSS which encompasses a revamped security sector, financial oversight mechanisms, and justice for war crime victims has remained a non-starter in practical terms. Violations of ceasefires have eroded hard-won gains, perpetuating insecurity that further thwarts cooperation among warring parties.

Deep-rooted political divisions and power struggles within SPLM factions continue to complicate the peace agreement's implementation, as divergent interests and disagreements over key issues create obstacles to establishing a unified army and stable governance. The failure to effectively address the root causes of conflict further escalates tensions, leading to increased violence.

In summary, the delayed implementation of critical reforms, particularly concerning armed forces unification, has exacerbated insecurity, political instability, and economic decline. The resultant loss of public confidence has fueled intercommunal tensions and sparked conflict driven by ethnic rivalries and resource disputes. Local armed groups have become more prominent in this chaotic environment, and factions like the Jieng Council of Elders have exacerbated fears among non-Dinka populations. Unless the peace agreement adequately addresses the roots of the conflict justice, security, and satisfaction of grievous grievances future attempts to stabilize South Sudan are unlikely to succeed.

The next sections, analyze the potential consequences of the failed agreement and discuss its connections with previous unsuccessful peace efforts in the region.

IX. Potential Consequence Of R-ARCSS'S Failure

The repeated postponement of elections in South Sudan is becoming a tangible sign that the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) is on shaky ground. A myriad of reasons contribute to this disintegration: inadequate security arrangements, the absence of reliable outside guarantors, a fragile coalition between opposing forces, unresolved boundary issues, potential spoilers lurking in the shadows, and a conspicuous lack of a viable endgame strategy. Among these, security stands out as a predominant concern, more critical to the peace deal's stability than the arrangements themselves.

In the tumultuous history of South Sudan's political crises, the oppressive marginalization of political participation, coupled with failed security measures, has ignited persistent conflict. The relentless clashes between SPLM-IG and SPLM-IO forces in areas like Nasir, Bentiu, and Maiwut exemplify the ongoing instability. The unmanageable presence of two armies under one government is a clear indication of the R-ARCSS's fundamental failure to unify those forces effectively.

The repercussions of this breakdown are distressing, threatening the very fabric of South Sudanese society. Political instability and economic degradation are looming, alongside catastrophic humanitarian crises. Increased displacement and food insecurity are becoming grim realities for many, leading to severe shortages across markets, schools, and healthcare centers. The implications for youth and vulnerable populations—particularly women—are dire, as unemployment rates rise and instances of violence, looting, and human rights abuses surge.

Historical patterns reveal that women have faced horrendous violence during previous conflicts, and without a reasonable election process, we risk descending into chaos once more. This would not only hinder peace initiatives but could also destabilize international peace and security efforts. The slow pace of political settlements and security reforms is breeding frustration across various factions within the government, heightening the risk of the unity government collapsing and a resurgence of widespread fighting.

If the political elite fails to reconcile their differences before the 2025 election timeline, the specter of civil war could loom once more, leading to immense loss of life and further economic collapse. Currently, the peace parties must act decisively to mitigate the prevailing culture of fear. It seems both sides are attempting to maintain a facade of a workable peace timeline, yet in reality, the likelihood of holding elections in 2025 is grim.

Let's consider two scenarios: First, if disarmament efforts do not materialize, conducting elections while unauthorized individuals retain firearms becomes impossible—coupled with the stalemated demilitarization of state and national capitals, the prospects of 2025 elections look dim. Second, if the parties and the international community push for elections regardless, we risk igniting outright war.

To navigate these fraught waters, the government must embrace a lean administration at least six months ahead of the elections, echoing the prevalent saying, "too many cooks spoil the soup." This approach could not only prevent conflict but also ensure a focus on financial integrity during the elections.

Failing to conduct elections in 2025 could result in significant withdrawal of international support, particularly from Western donors and regional alliances. To regain support, the South Sudanese government must rethink strategies and construct frameworks that effectively address stakeholders' concerns. Frustrations regarding the extension of democratic elections are palpable, especially among the Troika, the EU, and their member states. They have expressed discontent with the lack of inclusivity in finalizing the roadmap, urging the government to bring civil society into negotiations so that marginalized voices can be heard.

While regional organizations may favor the extension to avoid further conflict, the international community advocates for robust institutions and democracy in South Sudan. The ambassadors from the Troika have articulated concern over the insufficient inclusivity of the current processes, emphasizing that legitimacy relies on engaging civil society and ensuring all perspectives are incorporated into the implementation of the roadmap.

While the Troika, the EU, and member states may have previously overlooked the peace process, their recent emphasis on establishing a roadmap highlights their worry about the government's capacity to implement meaningful changes. Failure to tackle key outstanding issues may drive South Sudan back into the depths of large-

scale violence that could devastate social and humanitarian landscapes while jeopardizing international peace and security.

Concerns from the Troika and EU primarily circle around humanitarian aspects, given the brutal toll the past five years of conflict have taken on South Sudanese civilians. They urge the government to use allocated resources judiciously to complete the second phase of peace implementation while calling for transparency, particularly regarding oil revenue and public resources management. Building trust within the international community is crucial, which will only come through tangible and transparent actions.

Despite claims that the lack of international support for the roadmap extension necessitates further assistance, many perceive this as a diversionary tactic by the South Sudanese government. While it has found regional support for extending the roadmap, internal opposition and civil society groups remain critical of the approach. The Troika and EU are demanding that the government demonstrate significant progress toward implementing outstanding elements of the agreement to uphold international confidence.

Ultimately, the resurgence of large-scale conflict in South Sudan remains a pressing threat, with severe implications for the region at large. East Africa could see a meltdown in economic stability, pushing communities into further displacement and insecurity. The time to act is now—as failure is no longer an option. The path to peace requires a renewed commitment to cooperation, dialogue, and the fortification of democratic institutions. Only through shared responsibility can South Sudan hope to navigate the treacherous waters ahead and build a future marked by stability, security, and lasting peace.

X. Conclusion

The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS), initiated in 2018 after an earlier peace deal failed, aimed to stabilize the country and put an end to the devastating civil war that plagued it. However, the agreement's implementation has faced numerous challenges, primarily stemming from a lack of political will among leaders, persistent mistrust, and inadequate security arrangements compounded by financial constraints. These issues have led to repeated postponements of democratic elections and unresolved power-sharing disputes, which have further exacerbated violence and instability within the nation.

The ongoing failure to fully implement the R-ARCSS poses significant risks for the future of South Sudan, heightening fears of renewed conflict and potential humanitarian crises. Factors such as the absence of a united front among political factions and the influence of external actors complicate the peace process further. For the agreement to prove effective, there must be genuine commitment from both the political elite and the international community, paired with robust mechanisms to ensure transparency and foster governance. Ultimately, a broader political settlement that goes beyond simple power struggles is necessary, ideally established well before any upcoming elections.

To achieve a sustainable solution, leadership in South Sudan must be cognizant of the unique dynamics at play within the country, as high-caliber leadership is vital for building institutions and fostering stability in post-conflict societies. Efforts to end the conflict should focus not only on addressing the immediate power struggles but also on tackling the foundational issues contributing to the nation's instability. South Sudan will require tailored solutions that recognize its unique context, rather than generic approaches seen in other post-conflict scenarios. Collaborations among South Sudanese leaders, neighboring states, and donor countries will be crucial in formulating these bespoke solutions, as confronting the underlying desire for power can help facilitate lasting peace and stability.

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