SAYING IT RIGHT, DOING IT WRONG: AN ANALYSIS OF THE FAILURE OF THE AFRICAN UNION'S MEDIATION IN DARFUR (2004-2006), A DECOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE

By

TSHENOLO MATLALA

Student Number: 17194009

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Supervisor:

Samuel Ajogwu Igba

Co-Supervisor:

Professor Cori Wielenga

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DEDICATION

This mini-dissertation is dedicated to the scholars, the dreamers, and the thinkers of the past, present, and future. May we continue to strive to achieve our dreams and contribute to the growth and development of academia.

ABSTRACT

The Darfur crisis persists to the present day despite the African Union's (AU) intervention. This mini-dissertation analyses the failure of the AU's mediation in Darfur from 2004 to 2006. It uses a decolonial lens to investigate: how and why deadline diplomacy guided the mediation efforts by the AU, how the AU addressed the colonial legacy of Darfur during the mediation, and the consequences of the absence of multi-track diplomacy in Darfur. The key findings are that the AU had initially followed a classic integrative approach to their mediation at the beginning of the negotiations, but was coerced by their external donors to use deadline diplomacy in April 2006, to conclude the talks (known as the Abuja peace process) and settle the crisis with the signing of an agreement. This reduced the mediation process to the signing of a document that has never been implemented. The AU's understanding of the colonial underpinnings of the conflict was limited. The AU mainly focused on settling the current conflict on the ground, which was propagated as being ethnically-charged by the Sudanese government and the international community. This created an arbitrary understanding of the complexities of Darfurian society. The AU only utilised track 1 diplomacy and did not utilise the other tracks of the multi-track system, which created a distance between the negotiations at the table and the realities and interests of the local population on the ground. The AU's mediation in Darfur is characterised by the prioritising of the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement and a disconnect between the interests of the Darfurian people and the interests of the parties involved in the negotiations. It may be concluded that the lack of financial capacity of the AU, the reliance on external funding, and the use of the same problem-solving mediation method employed by the West weakens the implementation of any solutions that are proposed, by Africans for Africans. It is recommended that the mediation process in Darfur needs to be more inclusive. Civil society, women's groups, religious leaders, NGOs, and politicians outside of the Darfurian government (the opposition) should be included in the mediation process as their participation would not only increase the legitimacy of the mediation process but would also ensure that the official mediation team are well-informed about the concerns of the affected local population.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AMIS	African Union Mission in Sudan
AU	African Union
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DDDC	Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation
DPA	Darfur Peace Agreement
EU	European Union
ICC	International Criminal Court
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPDs	Internally Displaced Persons
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
NCP	National Congress Party
NIF	National Islamic Front
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
SLM/A	Sudan Liberation Movement/Army
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
WWII	World War Two

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Identification of Research Theme

The Darfur crisis, propagated by the conflict between the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) and the government-sponsored Janjaweed, remains unresolved despite the African Union's (AU) mediation efforts from 2004 to 2006 (Ani 2016: 10; de Waal 2007: 1039). The most pivotal moment of the AU's mediation in Darfur was the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement on 5 May 2006, signed by the Sudanese government and the Zaghawa-dominated wing of the SLM. The AU considered this moment to be reflective of successful mediation and conflict resolution, despite the absence of the JEM and the Janjaweed from the signing (da Rocha 2017: 161; Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 102).

The AU's mediation in Darfur primarily consisted of track 1 and track 8 diplomacy which created distance between the Darfurian people on the ground, the mediators, the leadership of the parties, and international diplomats. Civil society actors in the traditional sense of NGOs (Track 2) and ordinary citizens (Track 4) are traditionally excluded from Track 1 level negotiations due to the perceived necessity of avoiding complex negotiations and speeding up the peace process (Paolucci 2012: 1). The inclusion of traditional leaders in the Abuja peace process is viewed as time-consuming and unfocused to the main political issues of the crisis from a Western and liberal peace perspective; however, the psycho-social and spiritual dimension of conflict resolution are important for the spiritual and mental rehabilitation of perpetrators and victims. Reconciliation is less likely to be natural without including track 7 diplomacy (da Rocha2017: 170; Paolucci 2012: 48). The different tracks within the multi-track system of multi-track diplomacy will be discussed further in the conceptual framework.

Their exclusion demonstrates that the mediation was not successful for all of those affected by the conflict. Thus, the AU mediation failed to have an understanding of the complexities of the crisis (Mansaray 2009: 36; Nathan 2006b: 75). Ultimately the AU's use of deadline diplomacy is what culminated in the signing of an agreement perceived as the true aim of the mediation and not the establishment of peace (Marchal 2008: 429-430; Nathan 2007: 499).

The liberal peace framework is the top-down approach that is the preferred method of mediation in the international community (Autesserre 2011: 5; Cruz 2021: 12; Iglesias 2019: 206). The AU has emphasised the idea of African solutions to African problems as a guiding principle for mediation; yet, the use of deadline diplomacy to please the financial obligations of European funders does not reflect this principle (Gardachew 2021: 241; Keith 2007: 155; Lipman 2010: 87).

The AU's current mediation methods are arguably based on Eurocentric rhetoric (Gardachew 2021: 241; Keith 2007: 152; Nathan 2017: 9). It is for this reason that the research uses a decolonial lens to understand the failure of the mediation process. Within this research, the concept of decolonial peace is used to challenge the liberal peace framework as well as the concept of African solutions to African problems. Decolonial peace may be understood as acknowledging the colonial underpinnings of conflict in the post-colonial nation-state while highlighting the views, histories, experiences, and knowledge from the periphery (Dastile & Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013: 109; Grosfoguel 2011: 17; Mesa-Vélez 2019: 98; Mignolo 2007: 13; Zondi 2017: 106-107). The literature to date has not yet analysed the AU's mediation in Darfur from a decolonial perspective.

This research aims to use the lens of decolonial peace to understand the failure of the AU's mediation efforts in Darfur and to analyse why deadline diplomacy guided the mediation efforts by the AU. This study is a qualitative research study that is grounded in a conceptual framework of three concepts: the liberal peace framework, African solutions to African problems, and decolonial peace. This conceptual framework will be applied to the case study of the AU's mediation of the Darfur crisis to contextualise the study and meet the research objectives.

1.2. Formulation of Research Problem

The AU's mediation in Darfur had failed. This is due to three areas of concern: the use of deadline diplomacy, the absence of multi-track diplomacy, and a lack of understanding of the colonial underpinnings of the conflict.

Deadline diplomacy is defined as "the belief that time pressure (deriving from either artificial or pre-existing deadlines) has a positive impact on peace negotiations" (Pinfari 2011: 684). This is to coerce the resolution of the mediation process imposing

deadlines that have to be met no matter the circumstances. The external donors of the AU's mediation (most notably the US and UK) threatened to pull funds if an agreement had not been signed by the imposed deadline (Brooks 2008: 425; Nathan 2006b: 75). The withdrawal of funds would bring the mediation process to a complete standstill as it is not possible to continue without funding (Nathan 2006b: 75; Nathan 2007: 499). The imposition of deadlines during the AU's mediation in Darfur forces the mediation team to limit which parties were brought to the table for negotiations, as it becomes logistically impractical to engage with too many parties such as traditional leaders, religious leaders, youth groups and women's groups in Darfur (da Rocha2017: 170; Nathan 2006b: 75; Nathan 2007: 499).

The exclusion of certain groups affects the AU mediation team's understanding of the Darfur crisis because people that are familiar with Darfur's colonial history and its subsequent socio-economic consequences are excluded. This results in an absence of multi-track diplomacy, where civil society groups and non-governmental organisations are not as involved in the mediation process as official state actors and international mediators (Institute for Multi-track Diplomacy 2019; da Rocha 2017: 107). Instead, the concerns of the population affected by the conflict are overridden by the rush to sign an agreement by an agreed deadline (Bah 2010: 15; Duursma 2020: 11; Mc Donald 2012: 67; Nathan 2007: 499-500; Wehrenfennig 2008: 85). As the signing of the document becomes the main priority, the interests of the affected population are placed in the background. A lack of engagement with the interests of the local population coincides with a lack of understanding of the complexities of the crisis. This includes the historical factors contributing to the conflict (Mignolo 2007: 72; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013a: 8; Zondi 2017: 118).

The modern Darfur has inherited its neo-colonial state from its colonial past. This colonial past has shaped the political and social dimensions of modern Darfurian society, from its political system, to the neglect of outlying provinces like Darfur. Tensions between ethnic groups in the region also have their roots in Darfur's colonial history. The AU did not explore the consequences of this colonial history in modern Darfurian society, which impacted the AU's understanding of the complexities of the conflict (Mignolo 2007: 72; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013a: 8; O'Fahey & Tubiana 2009: 10-11; Osman *et al.* 2005: 5; Zondi 2017: 118).

1.3. Demarcation of the Research

This research is demarcated in conceptual, temporal, and geographical terms. The conceptual demarcation will consist of an understanding of decolonial peace as articulated in an article by Zondi (2017), supported by articles articulating decoloniality by Cruz (2021), Grosfoguel (2011), and Mignolo (2007). The temporal demarcation, sees the study paying attention to the AU's meditation in Darfur from the peace talks beginning in March 2004 to the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement on 5 May 2006. The geographical demarcation sees the use of the region of Darfur as a case study, paying attention to the colonial historical underpinning of the conflict.

1.4. Research Question

Bearing in mind that a universal approach to mediation is imposed in an African context, the primary research question that this research will cover can be captured as follows:

1. Using the lens of decolonial peace, how can we understand the failure of the AU's mediation efforts in Darfur?

This leads to the secondary questions below:

a) Why did deadline diplomacy guide the mediation efforts of the AU?

b) How did the AU address the colonial legacy of Darfur during the mediation?

c) What were the consequences of the absence of multi-track diplomacy to mediation efforts in Darfur?

1.5. Research Aim and Objectives

This research aims to analyse the failure of the AU mediation in Darfur using the lens of decolonial peace. The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. Analyse why deadline diplomacy guided the mediation efforts by the AU.
2. Analyse how the AU addressed the colonial legacy of Darfur during the mediation.
3. Explore the consequences of the absence of multi-track diplomacy in mediation efforts in Darfur.

1.6. Literature Overview

Existing literature on the AU's mediation in Darfur argues for the reasons for its failure, which falls into three themes: the failure of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) (Fisseha 2016; Heleta 2008; Kalu 2009; Keith 2007; Kreps 2007), failure due to mandate constraints (Agena 2011; Baldo 2006; Ifediora 2019; Mansaray 2009; Nathan 2017; Pinfari 2011) and failure due to state-centrism and political factionalism (Ani 2016; Gardachew 2021; Mansaray 2009; Palsson 2020). The key concept to be discussed here is the liberal peace framework, which emphasises the relationship between interveners understood as being part of a distinct global-polity culture, which relies on Western liberal values that orientate interveners toward the implementation of a liberal peace framework (Autesserre 2011: 4; Iglesias 2019: 205). This includes the principle of R2P. This will be discussed further in the next chapter, which is the Literature Review.

The principle of R2P rests upon three equal pillars, entailing the responsibility of the protection of a population by the state, the international community assisting in this regard, and international intervention when a population is threatened by the state (United Nations 2021b). Intervention due to the R2P is usually by use of military personnel (Bellamy 2008: 618; Bellamy 2010: 143; Weiss 2011: 7).

Although the AU pioneered the concept that the international community should have a right to intervene in crisis situations when the state is failing in its responsibility to protect the population from mass atrocity crimes, it was the UN that adopted the R2P at the 2005 World Summit (African Union 2000: 7; United Nations 2005: 30 & 32). The concept of the right to intervene is included in the third pillar of the R2P and the AU welcomed the R2P as a tool for the prevention of mass atrocities in its Ezulwini Consensus (African Union 2005: 6; United Nations 2021a). The AU promotes the UN's R2P as a peacekeeping framework.

Mandate constraints were another theme in the existing literature. Agena (2011: 19) and Mansaray (2009: 37 & 42) argued that the AU failed to make good use of existing mechanisms and that there was a need for a Standby Force with a mandate prioritising peace enforcement rather than peacekeeping. Nathan (2017: 7) described the AU's mediation mandate as a 'donor's mandate', which compelled the mediation team to

prioritise drafting an agreement rather than facilitating negotiations. Deadline diplomacy, which is defined as "the belief that time pressure deriving from either artificial or pre-existing deadlines has a positive impact on peace negotiations" (Pinfari 2011: 684), was the preferred method of the AU mediation in Darfur (Baldo 2006: 16). This was exacerbated by the ICC arrest warrant for President Omar al-Bashir, which prompted coercive accountability and compromised the AU's strategic restraint and its principle of peace over justice, and immunity for serving heads of State (Ifediora 2019: 188).

The original mandate of AMIS was limited to monitoring the ceasefire and peacekeepers protecting themselves (Afewerky 2021: 40; Mansaray 2009: 37). The later mandate of AMIS and the mandate of AMIS II were enhanced to include improve the Darfur region's general security, to use its resources and capacity to protect civilians facing imminent threats within their vicinity, oversee the return of internally displaced persons and refugees, improve confidence-building between conflicting factions, and monitor the compliance of parties that signed the Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement (N'Djamena Agreement) on 8 April 2004 (Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 102; Mansaray 2009: 37). Yet these mandates were ambiguous because AMIS was supposed to protect civilians that were the victims of the Khartoum government and the Janjaweed, while recognising that the same government has the responsibility to protect the citizens it was terrorising (Afewerky 39; Agena 2011: 19; Mansaray 2009: 42-44). But the AU's poor planning of its peacekeeping mission resulted in poor implementation of the mandates (Baldo 2006: 14). The 'donor's mandate' of the AU's mediation mandate (brought on by the AU's lack of financial resources and the donation of funds from the US and UK) compelled the mediation team to prioritise drafting an agreement than facilitating negotiations.

The AU was also divided over imposing sanctions on the Sudanese government due to its complicity towards the Janjaweed (Ani 2016: 15; Gardachew 2021: 252; Mansaray 2009: 38 & 43; Palsson 2020: 40). The hierarchy within the member states of the AU, where more powerful countries have an economically afforded leeway to sway the AU agenda to meet their purported national interests that are in reality, the interests of some African leaders or political elites brings into question the plausibility of 'African solutions to African problems' in a context where there is disunity and inequality in the AU (Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 106-107).

These analyses do not employ a decolonial lens. An organisation that presents itself to be African-orientated is dependent on Western donors that enforce a donor's mandate and act as 'Big Brother' to the AU; yet, fails to meet all of its commitments in resource allocation to AMIS (Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 107; Gardechew 2021: 252). The regional hegemons of the African continent who bear the burden of funding the majority of the AU's budget also use their economic contributions to sway the AU's agenda. This makes it difficult to bring the African solutions to African problems concept to fruition. Some African countries wished to protect their economic-political interests and were reluctant to condemn the Khartoum government's complicity in human rights violations. The use of the liberal peace framework in the analyses of the AU's mediation fails to recognise that the Darfur crisis is not an African problem at all, but is a result of years of tensions brought by the cycle of violence in the neo-colonial African state (Ani 2016: 15; Gardechew 2021: 254).

The use of Afrocentricity as a theoretical framework offers a better analysis from an African perspective but focused on the dependence on external sponsoring, a lack of popular political participation in Africa in decision-making, a lack of infrastructure, a lack of competent African leaders, and Africa's continued surplus of war and conflicts; while failing to address the colonial underpinnings of these arguments. Inadvertently, the Afrocentric perspective to the AU's mediation in Darfur reiterates the Eurocentric rhetoric of criticising Africans for being Africans (Mazama 2002: 218-222; Mugambiwa 2021: 650-651; Schiele 1994: 13-17). This reveals the need for a decolonial lens particularly paying attention to decolonial peace.

Another gap was revealed in this literature review. The majority of the literature on the AU's mediation in Darfur analyses AMIS and AMIS II without including the pre-negotiation and negotiation process (Afewerky 39; Agena 2011: 19; Mansaray 2009: 42-44). This research aims to analyse the failure of the AU mediation in Darfur using a decolonial lens, with particular attention to the concept of decolonial peace. This will be an analysis of the mediation process, including pre-negotiations. The AMIS, peacekeeping period, and post-negotiations period are beyond the scope of this research, as this study is a mini-dissertation and would not allow a comprehensive analysis on those elements of the mediation process. An analysis of AMIS not be

included in the analysis of the failure of the AU's mediation in Darfur as this research aims to contribute to the gap in the literature mentioned above, and an analysis of AMIS is not within that gap.

1.7. Conceptual Framework

This research will be framed by the concepts of the liberal peace framework, African solutions to African problems and decolonial peace. The AU's adoption of the principle of 'African solutions to African problems' was intended to be an African alternative policy to conflict resolution and mediation that differs from the UN's liberal peace framework. The concept of decolonial peace offers an alternative lens to these concepts and intends to offer an African perspective that delves further than the principle of African solutions to African problems.

Galtung's concept of positive peace contributed to the development of the field of peace studies and introduced the dual definition of peace as being 'negative peace' or 'positive peace' (Cortright 2008: 7; Diehl 2016: 1; Galtung 1969: 170; Galtung 2012: 1; Kappler 2017: 1; Lawler 2013: 80-82). Positive peace in particular has many interpretations that go beyond the absence of war and incorporates many elements of societal life such as cultural violence, structural violence, and physical violence, which allows for conflict resolution to migrate to peacebuilding (Shields 2017: 10-11). This interpretation of positive peace was then expressed by the UN and multilateral organisations based on the idea that the best foundation for building and sustaining peace is a "liberal democratic polity" and a market-orientated economy (Iglesias 2019: 205).

The liberal peace framework aims to see the creation of a market economy, the organisation of elections, and the promotion of the rule of law and human rights (Autesserre 2011: 4; Iglesias 2019: 205). This peace operations model silences the existing mechanisms for non-violent conflict resolution in traditional societies. The liberal peace framework is advertised as being the only solution to peace in Africa, reiterating the colonial rhetoric that Africa is a backwards dark continent that needs to be rescued by the West from its savagery. Thus, A decolonial understanding of the liberal peace framework is that of a hegemonic iteration that reproduces the coloniality

of power in the global political international system (Bouralou & Menaceur 2021: 1365-1368; Cruz 2021: 12).

The coloniality of power is based on the hierarchical arrangement of society that places Europeans at the top and non-Europeans as sub-human. This notion was universalised to the point that those in the periphery ended up internalising and instrumentalising Eurocentric thinking to assimilate into the social ladder of colonial society, by rejecting their own culture, languages, and practices, to accommodate their masters (Grosfoguel 2011: 15; Quijano 2000: 216). Therefore, decoloniality is understood as the process that aims to erode and surpass the coloniality of power and knowledge to open room for alternate knowledge, practices, and ways of living and being (Iglesias 2019: 203-204;).

In trying to define what a decolonial peace entails, it is necessary to explore its roots in the decoloniality. Decoloniality is centred around unravelling the hegemonic Eurocentric perspective of knowledge and the coloniality of power that it drives (Cruz 2021: 2; Grosfoguel 2011: 15; Iglesias 2019: 203; Mesa-Vélez 2019: 98; Mignolo 2007: 23; Zembylas 2020: 2). Coloniality is understood as the persistence of the effects of colonialism in every aspect of society. It is a matrix of power that serves as the foundation for colonialism, the colonial political system, and the modern international system. It is the persistence of systems of racialised hierarchies of knowledge and power, and the othering of non-Western systems of knowledge production and development (Cruz 2021: 1; Dastile & Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013: 109; Grosfoguel 2011: 11; Iglesias 2019: 203; Zembylas 2020: 2; Zondi 2017: 106-107). Decoloniality is the acknowledgement of local histories and experiences marked by coloniality to understand them not just in the direct legacies of colonisation, but in the current organisation of knowledge and power systems in the modern world. It strives for the liberation of the other through the de-centring of the colonial matrix of power. It is not static and is an ongoing and evolving thought process. It is also more than a mere reaction to colonialism or its opposite. Decoloniality intends to think beyond the colonial framework and highlight the simultaneous existence of multiple sources and frameworks of knowledge (Grosfoguel 2011: 17; Mesa-Vélez 2019: 98; Mignolo 2007: 13; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013a: 3-4; Richardson 2012: 470; Zondi 2018: 8). Thus,

decolonial peace aims to unravel the hegemonic Eurocentric power dynamics inherent in coloniality.

The decolonial project advocates for the bottom-up approach, where peace operations are guided by alternative understandings of peace and challenges the lack of cultural competence in the liberal peace top-bottom approach (Autesserre 2011: 5; Dastile & Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013: 109; Mignolo 2007: 13). This bottom-up approach arguably includes the use of multi-track diplomacy in the mediation process. The inclusion of all of the tracks of the multi-track system would allow for better involvement of the population and the integration of their interests in the mediation process. This can assist in improving African autonomy in mediation efforts on the African continent. 'African solutions to African problems' is a guiding principle that aims to improve that African autonomy (Abdulrahman & Tar 2008: 189; Roeder Jr. & Simard 2013: 196; The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy 2012: 68).

The AU's mediation approach is framed by the concept of African solutions to African problems which refers to solutions to crises in Africa being proposed and implemented by Africans themselves. The UN's approach to peacemaking assumes that the track 1 actors are the only actors that should be included in the mediation process. The problem-solving approach is not inclusive of civil society and declares the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement as the main goal of the mediation process (Peck 2009: 416). This is applied as a one-size-fits-all model that is applied to all UN-led mediation processes. 'African solutions to African problems' implies context-specific peace operations (Zondi 2017: 114). Yet, the inability to fund this approach and the reliance on external funding weakens the implementation of this concept. Furthermore, the AU's employed the same problem-solving mediation method in its mediation in Darfur. This undermines the applicability of African solutions to African problems and demonstrates the persistence of coloniality in Africa and African-led peace operations (Zondi 2017: 114-126). Decolonial peace may be understood as acknowledging the colonial underpinnings of conflict in the post-colonial nation-state while highlighting the views, histories, experiences, and knowledge from the periphery (Dastile & Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013: 109; Grosfoguel 2011: 17; Mesa-Vélez 2019: 98; Mignolo 2007: 13; Zondi 2017: 106-107).

The AU's mediation in Darfur was guided by the concept of African solutions to African problems which is an African reiteration of the liberal peace framework. Coloniality not only persists in society but in the mediation efforts as well. The concept of decolonial peace will be pitted against these two concepts and will be teased out further in the subsequent chapters of the mini-dissertation.

1.8. Research Methodology

The purpose of this study is to analyse the AU's mediation failure in Darfur, and to answer the research question: using the lens of decolonial peace, how can we understand the failure of the AU's mediation efforts in Darfur? The conflict between the JEM, SLM/A and the Janjaweed in Darfur was selected as a case study because of the persistence of the conflict in the present, despite mediation efforts by the AU and UN (Kleinfeld & Amin 2021; PBS 2021; United Nations 2021a).

The research design of this study is qualitative which is used for the identification and explanation of social phenomena (Blaikie 2010: 204; Thomas & Hodges 2010: 21; Wagner, Kawulich & Garner 2012: 8). This allows for a full immersion into the research subject. This is appropriate as it employs the inductive approach to the application of the decolonial lens to an analysis of the AU's mediation failure in Darfur. An inductive approach employs a specific observation to produce theories and draw conclusions from research (Blaikie 2010: 155; Hawkins 2017: 3).

The data for this research will be largely secondary due to the conceptual nature of the study. Data collection for this research will consist of the use of journals, library search engines, and the internet.

1.9. Data Analysis

The approach to data analysis for this research will be a critical analysis. This is appropriate because a critical approach investigates the relationship between the historical and socio-political context of the Darfur conflict and the persistence of conflict in Darfur, post-mediation. The purpose of a critical analysis is to expose and challenge existing power structures that are taken for granted and offer alternative perspectives to social reality (Allen 2017: 295; Amoussou & Allagbe 2018: 11; Bhavnani, Chua & Collins 2014: 169; Mullet 2018: 116-117). A thematic literature review will be employed

for the analysis of the secondary data. This is where a summary and synthesis of the literature is organised around themes rather than chronology (Harris 2019: 150; Snyder 2019: 336; Tight 2019: 76-77).

1.10. Ethical Consideration

The research is a literature review of secondary data. With such kind of research, there is a minimal ethical risk, except for plagiarism (Bouville 2008: 3; Helgesson & Eriksson 2015: 93; Roig 2006: 2). Concerning this, the research will take necessary steps to avoid plagiarising, and all sources will be duly referenced. The selection of secondary sources will not be biased to avoid a distortion of reality which can affect the validity and reliability of the research findings.

1.11. Chapter Outline

The chapters will be structured as follows. Chapter one introduced the study. The second chapter offers a thematic literature review. The third chapter outlines the conceptual framework. The fourth chapter offers a historical background to the Darfur conflict. The fifth chapter has three sub-sections: an analysis of how deadline diplomacy guided the mediation efforts by the AU, the exploration of the consequences of the exclusion of multi-track diplomacy in mediation efforts in Darfur, and an analysis of how the AU addressed the colonial legacy of Darfur during the mediation. The last chapter provides concluding remarks on the research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The Darfur crisis has been ongoing to the present day ever since it began in 2003. Despite efforts by the AU-led mediation, a sustainable solution has not yet been achieved (Afewerky 2021: 43). The existing literature on the AU's mediation in Darfur argues for the reasons for its failure (Agena 2011; Ani 2016; Fisseha 2016; Gardachew 2021; Ifediora 2019; Nathan 2017; Palsson 2020). Three main themes are evident in the literature. Scholars like Afewerky (2021), Grunfeld & Vermeulen (2014), de Waal (2007), and Weiss (2011) focus on the failure of the United Nation's (UN) Responsibility-to-Protect (R2P) principle. Other scholars including prominent scholar on mediation Nathan (2017), focused on mandate constraints. State-centrism and political factionalism is the third theme in the literature.

The key concepts to be discussed here are the liberal peace framework and African solutions to African problems. The liberal peace framework, emphasises the relationship between interveners understood as being part of a distinct global-polity culture, which relies on Western liberal values that orientate interveners toward the implementation of a liberal peace framework (Autesserre 2011: 4; Iglesias 2019: 205). The principle of the R2P is based on Western liberal values. The AU hailed R2P as a tool for the prevention of mass atrocities, following the adoption of the Ezulwini Consensus in 2005 (African Union 2005: 6). The AU wished to achieve greater African autonomy in addressing conflicts in Africa. The concept of 'African solutions to African problems' is reiterated by African leaders as a guiding principle for AU-led mediation. Mediation by Africans for Africans. Despite the reiteration of this mantra, the AU has not achieved a sustainable solution to the crisis (Brooks 2008: 414).

There is a gap in the literature that warrants a different lens. This research is framed by the concept of decolonial peace, which finds its roots in decoloniality. This lens will be explored in the next chapter which discusses the conceptual framework. Articles by decolonial scholars such as Grosfoguel (2011), Iglesias (2019), Mignolo (2007), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013a) and Zondi (2017) will be discussed in this chapter. In conducting this literature review, sources from 2006 to the present were selected. Even though the AU-led mediation officially concluded in 2006, analyses of the

mediation have continued to the present, which warrants the inclusion of recent contributions to the literature.

The following subsections explore the different reasons for the failure of the AU's mediation in Darfur provided within existing literature. These are: failure of the R2P, failure due to mandate constraints and a lack of resources, and failure due to state-centrism and factionalism within the AU. The first subsection's R2P is part of UN peacekeeping, and the second and third subsection concerns UN peacemaking, both of which are part of the liberal peace framework (United Nations 2021a). The liberal peace framework will be explored further in the next chapter. These subsections will not only explore the main themes of the literature, but will expose the gap that warrants a decolonial lens. The liberal peace framework is a Western development that is arbitrarily applied to African crises (Gelot 2012: 47; Traore 2020: 16-17). This research aims to provide a decolonial lens to an analysis of the AU's mediation in Darfur, to contribute development to decolonial debate but also to provide a lens that is different to the liberal peace framework.

2.2. Failure of the R2P

The principle of R2P rests upon three equal pillars: "the responsibility of each state to protect its populations; the responsibility of the international community to assist states in protecting their populations; and the responsibility of the international community to protect when a state is manifestly failing to protect its populations" (United Nations 2021a) The implementation of the R2P is through humanitarian intervention, usually by use of military personnel (Bellamy 2008: 618; Bellamy 2010: 143; Weiss 2011: 7). The norm of the R2P stems from the international community's failure to adequately respond to tragedies such as the 1994 Rwandan genocide and 1995 Srebrenica genocide. In 1998, Kofi Annan (the then Secretary-General of the UN and assistant Secretary-General at the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations during the Rwandan genocide) insisted that the traditional notions of sovereignty should be redefined in the wake of the tragedies (Annan 1998).

The AU pioneered the concept that the international community should have a right to intervene in crisis situations when the state is failing in its responsibility to protect the population from mass atrocity crimes. This is echoed in article 4(h) in the AU's Constitutive Act which declares: "the right of the Union to intervene in a Member State

pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity" (African Union 2000: 7). The R2P was unanimously adopted at the 2005 World Summit and can only be applied to mass atrocity crimes that the UN outlines as being: genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. The UNSC was also made to be the only body that can authorise intervention under R2P (United Nations 2005: 30 & 32). Although the concept pioneered by the AU was included in the third pillar of the R2P, R2P is a doctrine and global political commitment that was adopted and is endorsed by the UN (United Nations 2021a). The Ezulwini Consensus (adopted by the AU in 2005) welcomed R2P as a tool for the prevention of mass atrocities (African Union 2005: 6).

In terms of international intervention, Article 2(7) of the UN Charter states that "nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state… but this principle shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII" (United Nations 1945: 3). This means that for the UN to intervene in a state's domestic affairs, Chapter VII of the UN Charter must be applied, and the conditions that warrant intervention must be present. Chapter VII of the UN Charter concerns "action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of peace, and acts of aggression" (United Nations 1945: 9).

UNSC Resolution 1556 of 30 July 2004 cited the Darfur crisis as a "threat to international peace and security" (UNSCR 2004: 2). The crisis was not cited as a genocide by the UN and was not explicitly deemed a direct threat to international peace and security. This means that the Darfur crisis does not meet the conditions that warrant international intervention from the UN through R2P, but its referral as a "threat to international peace and security" in UNSC Resolution 1556 implies that any intervention has to be by invitation. The UN also could not just deploy troops to Darfur without invitation, as it cannot use R2P and Chapter VII of the UN Charter as a legal basis to intervene. The deployment of troops without the consent of the Sudanese government may be perceived by the Sudanese government as a threat to their right to sovereignty and would be deemed an act of aggression (United Nations 2008).

The Sudanese government invited AU troops to be deployed in Darfur to curb the conflict and violence, after expressing its reservation about an UN-led deployment of

troops. AMIS was deployed but faced difficulties from the Khartoum government from the start. These difficulties included Khartoum not honouring the terms of the ceasefire agreement and continuing to be complicit in human rights violations, and attacking AU personnel or civilians while disguised as AU personnel (Afewerky 2021: 39-40; de Waal 2007: 1054; Weiss 2011: 7). Thus, the violence against civilians continued. When the mandate was re-evaluated for AMIS II to appease the humanitarian appeals in March 2005, it also satisfied the Sudanese government, foreign donors and the AU members favouring operating under the auspice of the Sudanese government. The AU Peace and Security Council gave an amended mandate on 20 October 2004 for civilian protection while understanding that the responsibility to protect the civilian population is the responsibility of the Sudanese government (Afewerky 2021: 40-41; Bellamy 2008: 618; Grunfeld & Vermeulen 2014: 171).

The Darfur crisis needed to be labelled as a genocide to warrant the use of the R2P to intervene. The R2P principle rests on labels being placed on conflicts and crises by the UN. Thus, if the predominantly European states of the UNSC choose to label a conflict or crisis in Europe as a genocide (such as the conflict in Bosnia) while not choosing to do the same to the Darfur crisis in Africa, it demonstrates the perpetuation of the 'othering' of African states that is intrinsic to the colonial hierarchy within the UN (Afewerky 2021: 40-41; Bellamy 2008: 618).

The post-AU mediation period in Darfur emulates the same factors that led to the eruption of violence and the threat of a resurgence of the level of violence seen in 2003 persists. The crisis is still ongoing to the present day (Afewerky 2021: 43). The UN failed to acknowledge the gravity of the crisis and had no legal basis to implement the R2P. The AU-led mediation failed to achieve a sustainable solution. Yet, the failure of the R2P is not the only theme in the existing literature.

2.3. Failure due to Mandate Constraints and a Lack of Resources

Mandate constraints was another theme in the existing literature. The AU failed to make good use of existing mechanisms and there was a need for a Standby Force with a mandate prioritising peace enforcement rather than peacekeeping (Agena 2011: 19; Mansaray 2009: 37 & 42).

The AU's initial mandate for AMIS in 2004 was restricted the deployed forces to monitoring the ceasefire agreement between rebels and the Khartoum government, as well as protecting themselves (Afewerky 2021: 40; Mansaray 2009: 37). AMIS II's March 2005 mandate was enhanced to improve the Darfur region's general security, oversee and monitor the return of internally displaced persons and refugees, improve confidence-building between conflicting factions, and monitor the compliance of parties that signed the Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement (N'Djamena Agreement) on 8 April 2004. A particularly significant addition to the mandate was to use its resources and capacity to protect civilians facing imminent threats within their vicinity (Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 102; Mansaray 2009: 37).

This new mandate was even more ambiguous than the last. On one hand, AMIS was supposed to protect civilians that were the victims of the Khartoum government and the Janjaweed, while recognising that the same government has the responsibility to protect the citizens it was terrorising (Afewerky 39; Agena 2011: 19; Mansaray 2009: 42-44). As more human rights violations were being committed AMIS's mission became more challenging as it tried to protect civilians. The prime responsibility of the mandate should have been the protection of civilians while recognising the Khartoum government's complicity in the ongoing violence, but it was task number seven. In the end, the protection of civilians with limited resources and troops proved impractical especially when the forces of the Khartoum government and Janjaweed began to turn on AU personnel (Afewerky 39; Agena 2011: 19; Mansaray 2009: 42-44).

The AU's inexperience in peacekeeping demonstrated itself in the poor planning of the mandate's implementation. At the time of the explosion of the Darfur crisis in 2003, the AU was putting in place its new peace and security architecture with the launch of the Peach and Security Council in May 2004, an integrated peace and security strategy, an early warning system, a Panel of the Wise, and the Africa Standby Force. Thus, when it was suddenly called upon to send personnel to monitor the N'Djamena Agreement, AMIS demonstrated a lack of capacity and preparedness (Baldo 2006: 14). Agena (2011: 19) further argued that not only was the mandate constrained, but it should also have been centred on peace enforcement rather than peacekeeping.

The AU's mediation mandate was a 'donor's mandate', which compelled the mediation team to prioritise drafting an agreement than facilitating negotiations. Numerous

mediations headed by the AU, SADC or ECOWAS have been funded by Western donors. During the AU mediation, the British government set unrealistic deadlines and threatened to pull funding if these deadlines were not met. Deadline diplomacy is defined as "the belief that time pressure (deriving from either artificial or pre-existing deadlines) has a positive impact on peace negotiations" (Pinfari 2011: 684). This was the preferred method of mediation propagated by the British government (Nathan (2017: 7). This compelled the AU mediation to primarily focus on drafting an agreement than facilitating negotiations (Baldo 2006: 16; Nathan 2017: 7). Western coercion in an African context has long been criticised by African mediators. This was exacerbated by the ICC arrest warrant for President Omar al-Bashir, which prompted coercive accountability that compromised the AU's strategic restraint and its principle of peace over justice, and immunity for serving heads of state. Criticism of the ICC arrest warrant included the argument that the ICC was quick to issue arrest warrants for African leaders that commit human rights violations while overlooking their European counterparts who do the same, or leaders from countries that share economic interests with the EU and the UN (Ifediora 2019: 188).

The AU's donor mandate still faced financial and resource challenges. AMIS was authorised to deploy 7000 troops but was unable to fulfil that expectation. Africa's wealthier countries had to fund the AU's regular peacekeeping budgets despite foreign funding. The numerous conflicts and crises on the continent inevitably limited the number of troops and funds. Countries that contributed the most funds and troops to the AU were also facing domestic political factors that affected their commitment to the Darfur crisis. South Africa had received domestic backlash over its peacekeeping expenditures amid a major crime wave and Rwanda's government expressed concern over its growing peacekeeping budget risking it missing its spending targets with the IMF (Keith 2007: 155). AMIS was highly dependent on fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters and vehicles provided by foreign donors. However, the mission lacked military pilots, expertise, equipment, attack helicopters, adequate intelligence, professional medical services, and suitable communications technology. Donors did not follow through with providing AMIS with attack helicopters on the recommendation of the March 2005 Assessment. The dependence on external resources also denied the AU the freedom to independently make tactical, operational and strategic decisions during the mission (Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 106). This was a convenient way for Western donors to

dictate the mediation agenda from the side-lines while pointing fingers at the AU when the deadline diplomacy failed.

2.4. Failure due to State-Centrism and Factionalism within the AU

Another theme is state-centrism and factionalism in the AU. States that at the time accounted for the majority of the financial contribution of the AU's budget (Nigeria, South Africa, Libya, Egypt and Algeria) play a prominent role in steering the AU's agenda in its response to the Darfur crisis. AMIS was forced to operate under the dictation of the Sudanese government and the AU was divided over imposing sanctions on the Sudanese government due to its complicity towards the Janjaweed (Ani 2016: 15; Gardachew 2021: 252; Mansaray 2009: 38 & 43; Palsson 2020: 40). Some African leaders that share political interests with the Khartoum government were unwilling to agree on condemning the complicity of the government towards the Janjaweed. Especially those that are major trading partners with Sudan (Keith 2007: 155).

There was disagreement among troop-contributing African countries to AMIS. President Kagame of Rwanda sent 155 troops and insisted that Rwandan troops would intervene if citizens were threatened. Other AU members expressed that such an action would compromise the mission as AMIS had to intervene under the consent of the Khartoum government. President Obasanjo of Nigeria disagreed with President Kagame and insisted that Nigerian troops would operate under the consent of the Sudanese government (Afewerky 2021: 40-41). At the time Egypt, Libya, South Africa, Nigeria, and Algeria accounted for 75% of the AU's entire budget which enables them to have a prominent role in designing the AU's agenda. Angola and Botswana also had significant financial resources but contributed little to the AU budget (Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 106-107). This already creates a hierarchy within the member states of the AU, where more powerful countries have an economically afforded leeway to sway the AU agenda to meet their purported national interests that are in reality, the interests of some African leaders or political elites. This brings into question the plausibility of 'African solutions to African problems' in a context where there is disunity and inequality in the AU.

'African solutions to African problems' is a concept that African leaders reiterate as a principle that advocates for African autonomy in addressing conflicts in the African

continent. Yet, African organisations fall short of the resources and capacity to realise this concept without financial support from external donors. African autonomy in addressing African conflicts entails ownership, capacity, and sustainability (Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 107; Gelot 2012: 59). Most African countries are not keen to spend their resources (exceeding deployment of military personnel) to create effective capacities focused on conflict resolution. This concept is reiterated by African leaders out of necessity initiated by Western non-confidence and ideological justification. African leaders who favour state-centrism use this concept to fend off international condemnation of their policies (Gardechew 2021: 252; Mansaray 2009: 43).

As the AU lacks the capacity and resources, the involvement of external donors are in African peace and security matters is on the rise. African solutions to African problems contrast with a dependency on external donors. European countries claim to support an African-led peace and security strategy while using the threat of withdrawing funds as handcuffs to dictate the direction of the mediation process from the side-lines (Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 107; Gardechew 2021: 252; Gelot 2012: 57).

Despite the concept of ‘African solutions to African problems’, African leaders don’t always easily reach consensus when addressing conflicts in Africa. Some African countries have different cultures and ethnic groups with different values. In Darfur, the society is comprised of a multitude of ethnic groups, some of which are nomadic. Some are Arab and some are non-Arab. The nomadic ethnic groups prioritise the freedom of movement, whereas other non-nomadic ethnic groups are wary of others infringing on their territory (Ani 2016: 15; Gardechew 2021: 253; Nielson 2008: 427-429; Willemse 2005: 14-15). Their differences in lifestyle and language contribute to the differences in interests and the solutions that they wish to see in relation to the conflict. It is the same within the AU. African leaders belong to different languages, cultures, and lifestyles that guide their interests and the solutions they propose. There is no guarantee that African leaders would reach a consensus to implement the AU’s peace and security goals in cases such as the Darfur conflict. In the cases of Libya, Cote d’Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Mali and many more there has been factionalism in the AU. Thus, in the persistence of disunity, an African solution is unclear (Ani 2016: 15; Gardechew 2021: 254; Nielson 2008: 427-429; Willemse 2005: 14-15).

2.5. The Absence of a Decolonial Lens and a Gap in the Literature

Few sources within the literature analyse the entire mediation process by the AU. The majority of the literature analyses AMIS and AMIS II and presents the mission's challenges and failures. Few sources like Agena (2011: 21-29) and Badescu and Bergholm (2010: 101-105) include an analysis of the peacekeeping mission as well as the negotiations.

Analyses by some African scholars have used Afrocentricity as a theoretical framework. Afrocentricity focuses on traditional African philosophical assumptions. Cultural values predate European and Arab influence in Africa. This is the iteration that despite the alteration of African values due to colonialism, certain values maintained by kinship systems among Africans persisted. Central to the axiological and cosmological features of Afrocentricity is the emphasis on the collective, spirituality, and interdependency. This includes the experiential communality of Africans (Mazama 2002: 218-222; Mugambiwa 2021: 650-651; Schiele 1994: 13-17).

Afrocentricity addressing epistemic injustice was used as a theoretical framework by Sethole and Rapanyane (2021: 117-119) to analyse the challenges faced by the AU in the Darfur mediation. These authors argue that the dependence on external sponsoring, a lack of popular political participation in Africa in decision-making, a lack of infrastructure, a lack of competent African leaders, and Africa's continued surplus of war and conflicts are the primary reasons for the failure of the AU mediation in Darfur. The author does not explicitly address coloniality as an underlying factor in these arguments and inadvertently reiterates the Eurocentric rhetoric of criticising Africans for being Africans. Criticising the incompetence of African leaders without addressing the underlying reasons for the behaviour of the political elite in the neo-colonial African state. The underlying cause of the conflict is not adequately included in the analyses of the Darfur crisis and the AU's mediation.

The inherited neo-colonial state, organisation of society and the economy, the political structure and embedded cycle of violence need to be included in the understanding of the complexities of the conflict, to adequately develop solutions that will not create a temporary peace or a break from conflict (Mignolo 2007: 72; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013a: 8; Zondi 2017: 118). Thus, Afrocentricity also does not fully address the colonial underpinnings of the Darfur crisis and the AU's mediation process. An Afrocentric

theoretical framework focuses on emphasising the shared African experience and basic cultural values, whereas the decolonial lens (particularly decolonial peace) as a conceptual framework aims to unravel the hegemonic Eurocentric power dynamics inherent in coloniality. Including the underlying colonial causes of the conflict also reveals that these African problems that the AU aims to tackle aren't African at all, but are a demonstration of the coloniality of the African state (Mignolo 2007: 72; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013a: 8; Zondi 2017: 118). This gap warrants a decolonial lens in the analysis of the AU's mediation in Darfur.

Decolonial scholars such as Mignolo (2007), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013a) and Zondi (2017) argue that African conflicts are more than just conflicts driven by ethnic differences, and that post-colonial African states are not marred by conflicts because Africans are inherently violent and unable to govern themselves. They argue that African conflicts are indicative of the coloniality of knowledge and power. It is not just the post-colonial African state that is inherited from colonisation. It is the systems of political power and the re-marginalisation of populations by leaders that had once been hailed as heroes of the resistance against colonial rule.

2.6. Conclusion

In analysing the literature from 2006 to the present, the three main themes were apparent. Criticism of the R2P, a constrained mandate and lack of resources, as well as the presence of state centrism and political factionalism are arguments that focus on the promotion of the values of the liberal peace framework (Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 107; Gardechew 2021: 252).

Although the AU pioneered the concept that the international community should have a right to intervene in crisis situations when the state is failing in its responsibility to protect the population from mass atrocity crimes, it was the UN that adopted the R2P at the 2005 World Summit (African Union 2000: 7; United Nations 2005: 30 & 32). The concept of the right to intervene is included in the third pillar of the R2P and the AU welcomed the R2P as a tool for the prevention of mass atrocities in its Ezulwini Consensus (African Union 2005: 6; United Nations 2021a). The AU promotes the UN's R2P as a peacekeeping framework.

The original mandate of AMIS was limited to monitoring the ceasefire and peacekeepers protecting themselves (Afewerky 2021: 40; Mansaray 2009: 37). The later mandate of AMIS and the mandate of AMIS II were enhanced to include improve the Darfur region's general security, to use its resources and capacity to protect civilians facing imminent threats within their vicinity, oversee the return of internally displaced persons and refugees, improve confidence-building between conflicting factions, and monitor the compliance of parties that signed the Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement (N'Djamena Agreement) on 8 April 2004 (Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 102; Mansaray 2009: 37). Yet these mandates were ambiguous because AMIS was supposed to protect civilians that were the victims of the Khartoum government and the Janjaweed, while recognising that the same government has the responsibility to protect the citizens it was terrorising (Afewerky 39; Agena 2011: 19; Mansaray 2009: 42-44). But the AU's poor planning of its peacekeeping mission resulted in poor implementation of the mandates (Baldo 2006: 14). The 'donor's mandate' of the AU's mediation mandate (brought on by the AU's lack of financial resources and the donation of funds from the US and UK) compelled the mediation team to prioritise drafting an agreement than facilitating negotiations.

The AU was also divided over imposing sanctions on the Sudanese government due to its complicity towards the Janjaweed (Ani 2016: 15; Gardachew 2021: 252; Mansaray 2009: 38 & 43; Palsson 2020: 40). The hierarchy within the member states of the AU, where more powerful countries have an economically afforded leeway to sway the AU agenda to meet their purported national interests that are in reality, the interests of some African leaders or political elites brings into question the plausibility of 'African solutions to African problems' in a context where there is disunity and inequality in the AU.

None of these analyses employs a decolonial lens. An organisation that presents itself to be African-orientated is dependent on Western donors that enforce a donor's mandate and act as 'Big Brother' to the AU; yet, fails to meet all of its commitments in resource allocation to AMIS (Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 107; Gardechew 2021: 252). The regional hegemons of the African continent who bear the burden of funding the majority of the AU's budget also use their economic contributions to sway the AU's agenda. This makes it difficult to bring the African solutions to African problems concept to fruition. Some African countries wished to protect their economic-political

interests and were reluctant to condemn the Khartoum government's complicity in human rights violations. The use of the liberal peace framework in the analyses of the AU's mediation fails to recognise that the Darfur crisis is not an African problem at all, but is a result of years of tensions brought by the cycle of violence in the neo-colonial African state (Ani 2016: 15; Gardechew 2021: 254).

The use of Afrocentricity as a theoretical framework offers a better analysis from an African perspective but focused on the dependence on external sponsoring, a lack of popular political participation in Africa in decision-making, a lack of infrastructure, a lack of competent African leaders, and Africa's continued surplus of war and conflicts; while failing to address the colonial underpinnings of these arguments. Inadvertently, the Afrocentric perspective to the AU's mediation in Darfur reiterates the Eurocentric rhetoric of criticising Africans for being Africans (Mazama 2002: 218-222; Mugambiwa 2021: 650-651; Schiele 1994: 13-17). This reveals the need for a decolonial lens particularly paying attention to decolonial peace.

Another gap was revealed in this literature review. The majority of the literature on the AU's mediation in Darfur analyses AMIS and AMIS II without including the pre-negotiation and negotiation process (Afewerky 39; Agena 2011: 19; Mansaray 2009: 42-44). This research aims to analyse the failure of the AU mediation in Darfur using a decolonial lens, with particular attention to the concept of decolonial peace. This will be an analysis of the mediation process, including pre-negotiations. The AMIS, peacekeeping period, and post-negotiations period are beyond the scope of this research, as this study is a mini-dissertation and would not allow a comprehensive analysis on those elements of the mediation process. An analysis of AMIS not be included in the analysis of the failure of the AU's mediation in Darfur as this research aims to contribute to the gap in the literature mentioned above, and an analysis of AMIS is not within that gap.

The application of a decolonial lens to the failure of the AU's mediation in Darfur will offer a different lens to the liberal peace framework aforementioned.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Introduction

Ever since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, liberal peace has been the dominant framework for peace operations by the United Nations and its associated institutions such as the European Union (EU) and African Union (AU). The field of peace studies gave fruit to Galtung's concept of positive peace and its elements were used to frame the UN's development of the liberal peace framework. Yet, the liberal peace framework and its use as an approach to peace operations in Africa have a dark underbelly. Coloniality persists in Africa and in the international peace operations that aim to resolve conflict on the continent (Galtung 1969: 170; Galtung 2012: 1; Kappler 2017: 1). A decolonial lens has not yet been employed in an analysis of the failure of the AU's mediation in Darfur, in particular the concept of decolonial peace has not been utilised for analysis. The application of a decolonial lens to the failure of the AU's mediation in Darfur includes an exploration of the consequences of the absence of multi-track diplomacy in the mediation process. Multi-track diplomacy is part of a more transformative mediation[1] approach and was not employed in the AU's mediation process. Despite this, the AU stated that its mediation in Darfur would be guided by the idea of African solutions to African problems, but this was not evident in the AU's mediation approach, which is the same as the UN's interest-based or problem-solving mediation approach (Lanz 2008: 71-72; Paolucci 2012: 48; Roeder Jr. & Simard 2013: 196). These concepts will be explored in the subsequent subsections of this chapter.

3.2. Peace Studies

Peace studies is primarily concerned with the reduction of war and its eventual eradication, and the resolution of conflict by peaceful means. Another key focus of peace studies is the definition of peace itself, which is highly contested (Cortright 2008: 7; Diehl 2016: 1; Lawler 2013: 80-82). The interdisciplinary origins of peace studies

[1] Transformative mediation is a mediation approach that centralises the people and the experiences of all who have been affected by the conflict, and not just political elites and rebel leaders. This includes addressing the cultural and structural roots of the violence. This approach aims to achieve sustainable peace and not a quick fix to the conflict. This approach is mostly found at grassroots-level mediation by religious leaders, community leaders, and NGOs and usually employ indigenous processes of conflict resolution (Folger & Simon 2017: 75-76; Goodhardt *et al.* 2005: 317; Lewis 2015: 3-5).

make defining peace difficult. Most scholars develop a definition based on their respective fields which can be the natural sciences, psychology, anthropology, economics, sociology, education, or political sciences. There is disagreement about the conditions that constitute peace. Galtung (1969: 170) introduced the dual definition of peace: negative peace is “the absence of war and physical violence”, and positive peace is described as “the integration of human society” (Cortright 2008: 7; Diehl 2016: 1; Galtung 2012: 1; Kappler 2017: 1; Lawler 2013: 80-82).

Today within peace studies, the practical and intellectual concern with defining peace overlaps with conflict resolution at all societal levels, human rights, global exploitation, environmental security, international social justice, and intersectionality. Galtung (1969: 170) has had a great influence on peace studies by creating the distinction from conflict studies. By introducing the concepts of positive and negative peace, as well as cultural and structural violence (Azarmandi 2021: 3; Galtung 2012: 1; Lawler 2013: 80-82) The dualism within the concepts of positive and negative peace was based on the premise of two global empirical inclinations that undermined the realist image of an anarchical global climate that is constantly anticipating war. The first is that individuals see themselves as being part of a group where there the norm of reciprocation and cooperation is a ruling mode of interaction. While Galtung acknowledged that outside of this sphere was mutual destruction and enmity, the result was that the ability to interact and identify with others is universal. Galtung (1969: 170) also made sure to avoid referring to states, favouring the more flexible ‘groups’ and ‘spheres.’ The second is that there is a capacity to show restraint in resorting to violence, as an individual is unlikely to the entirety of their means of destruction against all enemies at all times. There is restraint due to resources, troops, and morale. The global empirical tendency links to negative peace, as the capacity to limit the possibility to violence, produces the condition of negative peace. Furthermore, the first global empirical tendency that focuses on cooperation within the group produces the condition of positive peace. This serves as the foundation of the method of mediation inherent in the liberal peace framework (Azarmandi 2021: 3; Diehl 2016: 2-4).

3.3. The Liberal Peace Framework

Galtung’s concepts of negative and positive peace were influential in the development of framework of the UN’s liberal peace. The term negative peace encourages the

tendency to assume that the job is done once the fighting has ended. It undermines efforts to rival the status quo and potentially creates the opportunity to leave human rights violations unabated. This is less compatible with the post-Soviet Union, and post-9/11 security environment because negative peace easily fits into the tendency to frame security risks in absolute terms (Shields 2017: 6-7). Positive peace has many interpretations, unlike straightforward negative peace. While the disparities within the interpretation of the nature of positive peace make it more difficult to make sense of the concept, they also provide more opportunities to understand the postmodern security environment. Many cultures have an understanding of peace that goes beyond the absence of war. Such as the Japanese *heiwa* which is to "align oneself to the common good and social order", or the Hebrew *shalom* which can be translated as "a sense of wholeness and prosperity" (Shields 2017: 8). The Zulu (South African) *ubuntu* speaks to "the essence of being human" and that "a person is a person through other people" (Murithi 2009: 226). These different cultural understandings of peace demonstrate the different interpretations inherent in the postmodern post-Soviet Union security environment.

The field of conflict resolution is a field that developed within the peace research community and was largely dominated by the concept of negative peace. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the field was orientated towards positive peace. The reconceptualization led to shifts from conflict resolution to conflict transformation, to peacebuilding. In 2005, the UN picked up on these ideas with an institutionalised peacebuilding structure concurrent with its traditional peacekeeping operations (Shields 2017: 10-11).

The concept of liberal peace is founded on the idea of positive peace introduced by Galtung. Positive peace is a peace that addresses cultural, structural, and physical violence. This concept of positive peace was then expressed by multilateral organisations and the UN (in its peacekeeping framework and policy) based on the idea that the best foundation for building and sustaining peace is a "liberal democratic polity" and a market-orientated economy (Iglesias 2019: 205). In 1992, Secretary-General of the UN Boutros Ghali introduced the *Agenda for Peace* which retook the ideas of positive peace, and included them in the articulation of a market-orientated economy and a "liberal democratic polity" and also developed an agenda for

peacebuilding in war-torn countries, which accounted for social injustice, economic inequality, and political oppression (Iglesias 2019: 205).

3.3.1. *The Liberal Peace Framework and the Market Economy*

The liberal peace framework aims to see the creation of a market economy, the organisation of elections, and the promotion of the rule of law and human rights (Autesserre 2011: 4; Iglesias 2019: 205). This is called the top-down approach to peace intervention (Autesserre 2011: 5; Iglesias 2019: 206; Cruz 2021: 12). This relies on the notion that international interveners, the diplomats and civil servants working for the AU, UN, IMF, World Bank and various NGOs, share a world-polity culture (Autesserre 2015: 4). International actors in peace operations adopt the liberal peace framework as an approach to 'cure' violence by promoting democracy and the free market. This is because achieving peace has been presented as a materialistic goal that can be measured through indicators of democracy, and the post-conflict economy integration into the global economic system (Bouralou & Menaceur 2021: 1363; Cruz 2021: 6).

3.3.2. *The Generations of UN Peacekeeping*

The liberal peace framework is a part of peacekeeping[2] and peacekeeping has evolved in its complexity and purpose since the creation of the UN. Scholars divide this evolvement in generations, although the term can be misleading as it implies a clear chronological development rather than the parallel existence of different kinds several peacekeeping missions. In this conceptual framework, the three generations refer to both a specific time-period and a type of peacekeeping (Richmond *et al.* 2011: 452-454; Sävström 2010: 11).

First generation peacekeeping (also referred to as traditional peacekeeping) is suggested to be from the end of WWII to the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The main characteristics are: the use of force only in self-defence, impartiality, political neutrality, support of sovereignty, state security over human security, a commitment to the mandate, and requirement of consent from conflicting parties prior to deployment

[2] Peacekeeping is the "deployment of national…or multinational forces for the purpose of helping to control or resolve an actual or potential armed conflict between or within states" (Princeton University 2022)

(Richmond *et al.* 2011: 450 & 454; Sävström 2010: 14). Most missions of first generation peacekeeping monitored borders and ceasefires in interstate conflicts and were authorised under Chapter VI of the UN Charter that concerns "pacific settlement of disputes" (Sävström 2010: 12; United Nations 1945: 8), and of which Article 33 states "The parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall, first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice" (United Nations 1945: 8). This entails that the UN's peacekeeping missions would be deployed to assist in the implementation of the recommendations (towards the pacific settlement of the dispute) from the UNSC and of any agreements agreed to by conflicting parties, but could not enforce them (Sävström 2010: 12). The rise of intrastate conflicts and political chaos due to civil war in the era after the dissolution of the Soviet Union required the change of UN peacekeeping to adapt to the changing international environment.

Second generation peacekeeping came after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Characteristic of second-generation peacekeeping is the inclusion prioritising of intrastate conflicts, not only because of the rise of intrastate conflict at this time period but also because of the growing focus on human security in the international environment (Richmond *et al.* 2011: 450; Sävström 2010: 17). There is also a shift away from authorising peacekeeping missions under Chapter VI of the UN Charter to Chapter VII (which was mentioned in the literature review in the subsection: Failure due to the R2P) of which Article 42 states that the UN: "may take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security" (Sävström 2010: 16; United Nations 1945: 9). This entails of coercive measures to enforce peace and allows peacekeepers to use more force than in first generation peacekeeping (Richmond *et al.* 2011: 450; Sävström 2010: 12). Failures of some peacekeeping missions in the 1990s lead to the debate that peacekeeping needed to change, especially after the failure of UN peacekeeping in the Rwandan Genocide (Sävström 2010: 19).

Third generation peacekeeping sees an even greater focus on human security, individual persons and the distinction between perpetrators and victims. The Brahimi

report[3] (published on 17 August 2000) called for drastic changes in peacekeeping and more robust peace operations. The argument for this was based on UN peacekeeping missions in the 1990s that had failed to protect civilians. The Brahimi report can be understood as the theoretical start of third generation peacekeeping on which civilian protection – so as not to repeat the UN's failure to appropriately respond to the genocides in Rwanda and Srebrenica – is further prioritised (Sävström 2010: 20). The R2P and the liberal peace framework is part of third generation peacekeeping ((Richmond *et al.* 2011: 450; Sävström 2010: 20). Thus, referrals to the liberal peace framework in this mini-dissertation includes third generation peacekeeping. Yet, this research aims to employ a decolonial lens to an analysis of the AU's failure, and warrants a decolonial understanding of the liberal peace framework.

3.3.3. *A Decolonial Understanding of Liberal Peace*

Violence in the developing world, according to proponents of the liberal peace framework, is due to a lack of three main pillars: liberal institutions that can guarantee democracy, irreplaceable universal values known as human rights, and the state's development is dependent on its economy's full integration into the capitalist global economy. This peace operations model silences the existing mechanisms for non-violent conflict resolution in traditional societies. The traditional societies' perceptions of peace have been marginalised in favour of the Western perception of peace. This clash of cultural differences and imposition of one culture onto another explains why, in certain aspects, many peace agreements in Africa find difficulty in maintaining sustainable peace. The liberal peace framework is advertised as being the only solution to peace in Africa, reiterating the colonial rhetoric that Africa is a backwards dark continent that needs to be rescued by the West from its savagery. Thus, A decolonial understanding of the liberal peace framework is that of a hegemonic iteration that reproduces the coloniality of power in the global political international system (Bouralou & Menaceur 2021: 1365-1368; Cruz 2021: 12).

[3] The Brahimi report, which was named after the Chairman of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations that produced it: Lakhdar Brahimi (and also known as the Report of the Panel on United Nations Peacekeeping) makes a number of recommendations that were designed to improve the doctrinal and operational aspects of peacekeeping. It also questioned the appropriateness of 'traditional peacekeeping' in an era where non-state actors and intrastate wars are on the rise (United Nations 2000: 6-14).

3.4. A Decolonial Lens

Coloniality is understood as “a colonial matrix of power” (Blanco & Delgado 2019: 601-605; Iglesias 2019: 203; Quijano 2000: 216) that was established during a period of colonialism and continues to be reproduced in a post-colonial society. It affects the production and reproduction of knowledge and the arrangement of the living conditions of the population (Blanco & Delgado 2019: 601-605; Iglesias 2019: 203). It is an organising principle that underpins domination and exploitation in multiple dimensions of life, including sexual and gender relations, households and spirituality, structures of knowledge and political and economic organisation (Blanco & Delgado 2019: 601-605; Quijano 2000: 216; Zondi 2016: 20). The coloniality of power is based on the hierarchical arrangement of society established in terms of those that are humanised and those that are dehumanised, to govern and control them. Europeans were placed at the top of the hierarchy and the inhabitants of conquered land or those who were enslaved and brought to the West were considered sub-human and the ‘other’. This ‘otherness’ comes from the classification of race as a structured pillar that sustains the colonial system (Blanco & Delgado 2019: 601-605; Grosfoguel 2011: 15; Quijano 2000: 216). Thus, European knowledge (especially scientific knowledge) was considered superior and knowledge from the periphery or ‘other’ was considered to be uncivilised, backwards, primitive and barbarian. This notion was universalised to the point that those in the periphery ended up internalising and instrumentalising Eurocentric thinking to assimilate into the social ladder of colonial society, by rejecting their own culture, languages, and practices, to accommodate their masters. (Blanco & Delgado 2019: 601-605; Grosfoguel 2011: 15; Quijano 2000: 216). An example of this phenomenon is the *françeafrique* policy, which describes a complex model of military, economic, cultural, and social ties that link France to its former colonies known as francophone countries. This includes the use of the French language as the primary language of government affairs, education and communication, French military support for francophone countries, and the payment of colonial tax to France to its former colonies. This persistence of French presence in its former African colonies makes its conducive for Africans of francophone countries to view societal and economic development from a French perspective, to an extent that majority of Africans of francophone countries primarily speak French and not the languages of their forefathers. In this instance, Eurocentrism continues to influence relations

between Europe and Africa in the post-colonial era. (Chafer 2005: 14; Chukwuokolo 2010: 31; Uchehara 2014: 34;) The coloniality of power and knowledge established a racial classification that infiltrated all aspects of social life and is being sustained in the post-colonial society (Blanco & Delgado 2019: 601-605; Grosfoguel 2011: 15; Quijano 2000: 216).

Therefore, decoloniality is understood as the process that aims to erode and surpass the coloniality of power and knowledge to open room for alternate knowledge, practices, and ways of living and being (Iglesias 2019: 203-204;).

Africa's colonial identity as 'the dark continent' has its roots in British colonial ideology, where the African continent is described as an unknown wasteland with strange customs, strange people, and an inherent backwardness that is nothing like European sophistication and civility. This sees a Western articulation of Africa as a land of deficits (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013b: 337; Omobowale 2015: 110). The African continent and African people are contextualised in a range of dualities that opposes European society: dark/light, savage/civilised, wild/tame, and violent/peaceful. These dualities were iterated in European literature, mass media, discourse, film, education, and travel journals. The metaphor of the dark continent was a means of providing legitimacy to the European invasion of Africa. Western involvement in Africa was characterised as a mission of salvation, that it is the European's god given right to tame the African problem. This reduces African people and African crises as projects that are to be overcome and essentially silences African agency in resolving its own problems. African voices and African methods of conflict resolution are ignored and placed in the periphery (Bassil 2011: 381; Jarosz 1992: 106 & 108; Ngaruka 2007: 138; Omobowale 2015: 110). This rhetoric also exists in the use of the term 'tribal conflict' when referring to conflicts in Africa. The tribe in the colonial context carries the stigma of what colonial discourse considers to be barbaric or primitive behaviour. Hence, the absence of the word 'tribe' in this mini-dissertation. In essence, the reduction of the conflict as being merely characterised by ethnic differences reiterates the colonial metaphor of the dark continent, in that ethnicity is what constitutes 'otherness' in society (Bassil 2011: 381; Ngaruka 2007: 138; Omobowale 2015: 110). This ideology persists in the modern international system. Africa continues to be entrapped within the global colonial matrix

of power and knowledge (Ndlovu Gatsheni 2013b: 332 & 336; Ngaruka 2007: 138; Tucker 2018: 215-216)

The advancement of peace in the periphery – of the contemporary system where coloniality persists – acts as an "emptied signifier" (Grosfoguel 2011: 17; Iglesias 2019: 205) and is led by the hegemonic iteration of liberal peace. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali's 1992 *Agenda for Peace* was proposed as an agenda for peacebuilding that would account for political oppression, economic inequalities, and social justice. Yet, the foreign interventions that work under the conditions of the liberal peace framework foists a one-size-fits-all paradigm. The liberal peace framework also misses that the design of colonialism and the coloniality of power and knowledge are often the underlying roots of the conflict. The divide-and-conquer model of colonial rule purposely instigates divisions within local populations along ethnic lines, usually by giving preferential treatment to one ethnic group over another. This creates political elitism within the ethnic group given preferential treatment and contempt from the other ethnic group(s) that are excluded from political privileges. These divisions persist in the post-colonial state. The underlying roots of the conflict traverse the ongoing process of nation-building, the conflicts of identities, the division of labour, the means of production, and the modes of production. A decolonial understanding of the ideology of the liberal peace framework exposes the coloniality that sustains it (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013a: 3-4). The global matrix of power inherent in the articulation of the liberal peace framework stems from the composition of the coloniality paradigm (Quijano 2000: 216).

The liberal peace framework aims to see the creation of a market economy, the organisation of elections, and the promotion of the rule of law and human rights (Autesserre 2011: 4; Iglesias 2019: 205). Liberal peace is an articulation that reproduces the coloniality of knowledge and power that is present in the modern Western global system and utilises the trident of capitalism, liberalism, and the security of the neo-liberal nation-state. Liberal peace praises individualism, free trade, rationalism, and institutions as its core values. The imposition of this model into the periphery reproduces the values of the colonial state in a post-colonial society while perpetuating a political, economic, and social norm against the racialised other (Iglesias 2019: 205-206; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013a: 3-4). International peace operations

guided by the liberal peace framework impose a Western model that limits the space for alternative approaches rather than a co-existence of different approaches to conducting peace operations. The UN's approach to peace operations tends to view local populations as homogenous and with a common understanding of peace (Iglesias 2019: 212).

The decolonial project advocates for the bottom-up approach, where peace operations are guided by alternative understandings of peace and challenges the lack of cultural competence in the liberal peace top-bottom approach (Autesserre 2011: 5; Dastile & Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013: 109; Mignolo 2007: 13). Achieving better cultural competence in mediation affords the opportunity to employ multi-track diplomacy.

3.5. Multi-Track Diplomacy

The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy (2012: 67) defines the multi-track system "a way to view the process of international peacemaking as a living system". It concerns the web of individuals, communities, institutions, and activities that are interconnected and work together to reach a common goal: a world at peace. The concept was developed and put into practice by the co-founders of the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy John W McDonald and Louise Diamond. The concept is an expansion of the original articulation made by Joseph Montville in 1982 (Abdulrahman & Tar 2008: 189; Roeder Jr. & Simard 2013: 196).

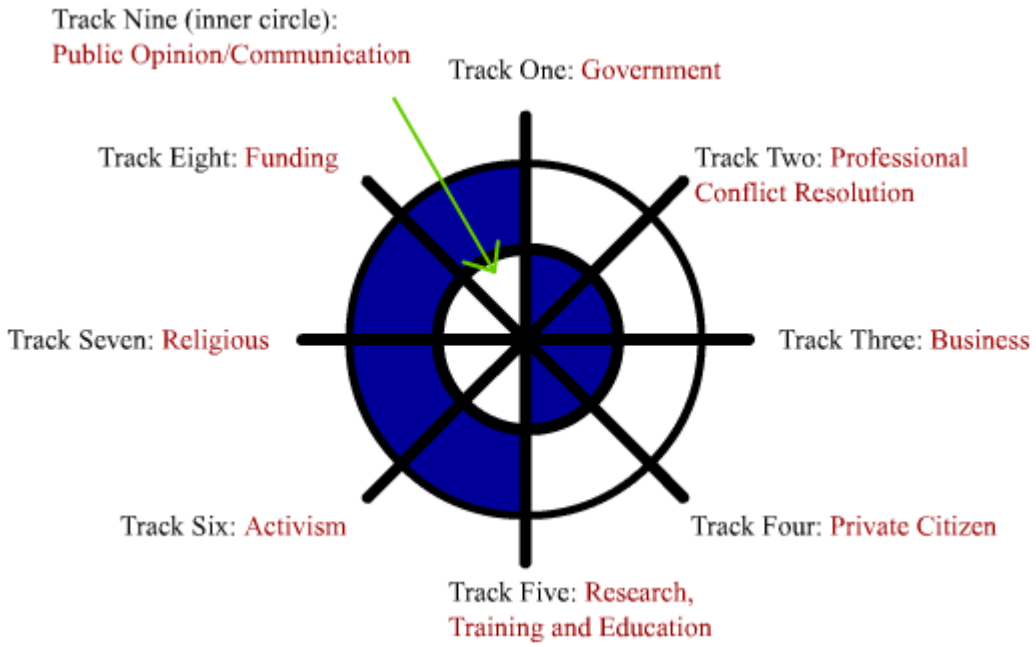

Figure 1 - The Multi-Track System (The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy 2012: 67).

Diamond and McDonald developed the multi-track system shown above and it includes nine tracks of diplomacy. Track 1 concerns the world of official governmental diplomacy, peacemaking and policymaking. Track 2 concerns professional non-governmental conflict resolution and peacemaking of conflicts. Track 3 concerns businesses as conflict resolution and peacemaking actors. This is peacemaking through commerce. Track 4 sees the private citizen as a conflict resolution and peacemaking actor. This is done through exchange programs, special interest groups, private voluntary organisations and citizen diplomacy. Track 5 is conflict resolution and peacemaking through research, training, and education. This includes research centres, think tanks, and training programs specialising in practical skills of negotiation, mediation, and conflict resolution. Track 6 is diplomacy through activism on issues such as human rights, social and economic justice, and disarmament. Track 7 concerns diplomacy through religion. This includes the peace-orientated actions of religious communities usually through pacifism and non-violence. Track 8 concerns conflict resolution and peacemaking through funding and providing resources. Track 9 is conflict resolution and peacemaking through media communication. This is the area of the shaping and expression of public opinion through media prints, the internet, radio, film, video, the arts, and electronic systems. Diamond and McDonald argue that the system requires all tracks to work together to build a sustainable peace process, but that this is not an easy feat (Abdulrahman & Tar 2008: 189; Roeder Jr. & Simard

2013: 196; The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy 2012: 68). Multi-track diplomacy is a method of mediation that allows for better involvement of the population and the integration of their interests in the mediation process. This can assist in improving African autonomy in mediation efforts on the African continent. African solutions to African problems is a guiding principle that aims to improve that African autonomy.

3.6. African Solutions to African Problems

The AU's mediation approach is framed by the concept of African solutions to African problems which refers to solutions to crises in Africa being proposed and implemented by Africans themselves (Gelot 2012: 47). This calls for better African autonomy in international intervention in the African continent. The concept stemmed from a desire to revive a continent that has been devasted by imperialism and colonialism. However, the approaches to mediation that the AU utilises under the concept of African solutions to African problems is not wholly different to the approaches to mediation employed by the UN (Jensehaugen 2022: 9).

The UN Guidance for Effective Mediation defines mediation as "a voluntary process whereby a third party assists two or more parties, with their consent, to prevent, manage or resolve a conflict by helping them to develop mutually acceptable agreements" (United Nations 2012: 4). The UN also outlines the term peace mediation as the entire process of mediators supporting negotiations. This includes initial contact between conflicting parties and the mediators, to negotiations of ceasefires, and the implementation of peace agreements (United Nations Peacemaker 2017: 1). The UN embodies a problem-solving approach to mediation. UN mediators are encouraged to propel the conflicting parties to agree to a comprehensive peace agreement (Peck. 2009: 416). The problem-solving approach to mediation (also known as the classic integrative approach or interest-based approach) is a strategy that focuses on achieving mutually beneficial agreements based on the needs and interests of the parties involved. The mediator seeks opportunities for joint-gains to reach the mutually beneficial agreement. This is a 'win-win' strategy (Brian 2013: 2; Shonk 2022; Spangler 2003; Traore 2020: 20). This approach includes facilitation and formulation. Facilitation is when the mediation team focuses on facilitating communication between the conflicting parties making note of the interests and needs of each party. Formulation is when the mediators gather proposed solutions from the parties and

offers different options in attempting to reach an agreement. A document in the form of an option paper or agreement will also be drafted. In some UN mediation processes power-sharing is employed, where mediators use their leverage to reach an agreement. An assertive mediator will display their power and encourage parties to meet to their demands through threats and promised rewards. Negotiations are between political elites and groups opposing the government and civil society is excluded from the mediation process (Traore 2020: 16-17; United Nations Peacemaker 2017: 2). This was evident in the UN's 2006 mediation of the Israeli-Palestine conflict, where the UN, EU, USA, and Russia demanded that they would only engage in a Palestinian government that recognised Israel as a country and adhered to previous diplomatic agreements (Jensehaugen 2022: 9).

The AU also employed the interest-based approach in its mediation in Darfur and mainly focused on facilitation until international diplomats from the US, UK, EU and UN took over the mediation in the final stages and relegated the AU mediation team to primary formulators, and then proceeded to employ a power-based approach to reach a signed agreement. In a power-based approach, a time limit is determined and deadlines are set to encourage parties to move from stage to stage. (Back 2016: 64; Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 102; Brooks 2008: 415).

Despite the AU's African solutions to African problems mantra, its preferred mediation approach is the same as the UN's preferred mediation approach, as is evident in the case of Darfur. The AU's mediation in Darfur, also known as the Abuja peace process was also structured in stages, with set deadlines and with the Sudanese government and rebel groups at the forefront, with the exclusion of civil society from the mediation process (da Rocha2017: 170; Gelot 2012: 47; Traore 2020: 16-17). This will be further discussed in the fifth chapter which will provide the main analysis of the AU's mediation in Darfur. This demonstrates that the AU reiterates the UN's Western model of mediation, which contradicts the proposed African solution. This is a reiteration of the Eurocentric values of the liberal peace framework undermines the concept of African solutions to African problems and demonstrates the persistence of coloniality in Africa and African-led peace operations (Gelot 2012: 47; Traore 2020: 16-17; Zondi 2017: 114-126).

Decolonial peace may be understood as acknowledging the colonial underpinnings of conflict in the post-colonial nation-state while highlighting the views, histories, experiences, and knowledge from the periphery (Dastile & Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013: 109; Grosfoguel 2011: 17; Mesa-Vélez 2019: 98; Mignolo 2007: 13; Zondi 2017: 106-107). Therefore, the use of decolonial peace as a conceptual framework will offer an alternative lens to the AU's mediation in Darfur, opposing the liberal peace framework and the concept of African solutions to African problems.

3.7. Conclusion

Galtung's concept of positive peace contributed to the development of the field of peace studies and introduced the dual definition of peace as being 'negative peace' or 'positive peace' (Cortright 2008: 7; Diehl 2016: 1; Galtung 1969: 170; Galtung 2012: 1; Kappler 2017: 1; Lawler 2013: 80-82). Positive peace in particular has many interpretations that go beyond the absence of war and incorporates many elements of societal life such as cultural violence, structural violence, and physical violence, which allows for conflict resolution to migrate to peacebuilding (Shields 2017: 10-11). This interpretation of positive peace was then expressed by the UN and multilateral organisations based on the idea that the best foundation for building and sustaining peace is a "liberal democratic polity" and a market-orientated economy (Iglesias 2019: 205).

The liberal peace framework aims to see the creation of a market economy, the organisation of elections, and the promotion of the rule of law and human rights (Autesserre 2011: 4; Iglesias 2019: 205). This peace operations model silences the existing mechanisms for non-violent conflict resolution in traditional societies. The liberal peace framework is advertised as being the only solution to peace in Africa, reiterating the colonial rhetoric that Africa is a backwards dark continent that needs to be rescued by the West from its savagery. Thus, A decolonial understanding of the liberal peace framework is that of a hegemonic iteration that reproduces the coloniality of power in the global political international system (Bouralou & Menaceur 2021: 1365-1368; Cruz 2021: 12).

The coloniality of power is based on the hierarchical arrangement of society that places Europeans at the top and non-Europeans as sub-human. This notion was universalised to the point that those in the periphery ended up internalising and instrumentalising Eurocentric thinking to assimilate into the social ladder of colonial society, by rejecting their own culture, languages, and practices, to accommodate their masters (Grosfoguel 2011: 15; Quijano 2000: 216). Therefore, decoloniality is understood as the process that aims to erode and surpass the coloniality of power and knowledge to open room for alternate knowledge, practices, and ways of living and being (Iglesias 2019: 203-204;).

The foreign peace interventions that work under the conditions of the liberal peace framework imports a one-size-fits-all paradigm. The liberal peace framework also misses that the design of colonialism and the coloniality of power and knowledge that are often the underlying roots of the conflict (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013a: 3-4; Quijano 2000: 216). The UN's approach to peace operations tends to view local populations as homogenous and with a common understanding of peace (Iglesias 2019: 212).

The decolonial project advocates for the bottom-up approach, where peace operations are guided by alternative understandings of peace and challenges the lack of cultural competence in the liberal peace top-bottom approach (Autesserre 2011: 5; Dastile & Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013: 109; Mignolo 2007: 13).

The AU's mediation approach is framed by the concept of African solutions to African problems which refers to solutions to crises in Africa being proposed and implemented by Africans themselves. The UN's approach to peacemaking assumes that the track 1 actors are the only actors that should be included in the mediation process. The problem-solving approach is not inclusive of civil society and declares the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement as the main goal of the mediation process (Peck 2009: 416). This is applied as a one-size-fits-all model that is applied to all UN-led mediation processes. 'African solutions to African problems' implies context-specific peace operations (Zondi 2017: 114). Yet, the inability to fund this approach and the reliance on external funding weakens the implementation of this concept. Furthermore, the AU's employed the same problem-solving mediation method in its mediation in Darfur. This undermines the applicability of African solutions to African problems and demonstrates the persistence of coloniality in Africa and African-led peace operations

(Zondi 2017: 114-126). Decolonial peace may be understood as acknowledging the colonial underpinnings of conflict in the post-colonial nation-state while highlighting the views, histories, experiences, and knowledge from the periphery (Dastile & Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013: 109; Grosfoguel 2011: 17; Mesa-Vélez 2019: 98; Mignolo 2007: 13; Zondi 2017: 106-107). Therefore, the use of decolonial peace as a conceptual framework offered an alternative lens to the AU's mediation in Darfur, opposing the liberal peace framework and the concept of African solutions to African problems.

Effective mediation in a crisis includes a comprehensive understanding of the crisis. This includes understanding the roots to the conflict. Darfur is a region with a colonial history that has been reflected in Darfur's current political system and the current tensions between different ethnic groups in Darfur. An understanding of Darfur's colonial history provides a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying roots and catalysts of the Darfur crisis. This will be explored in the next chapter.

4. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE DARFUR CONFLICT

4.1. Introduction

The historical underpinnings of the Darfur crisis were not given greater significance during the African Union's (AU) mediation. This resulted in a lack of understanding of the roots of the crisis. The crisis was proclaimed to be an ethnic conflict propagated by resource scarcity. Climate change and resource scarcity are some of the aspects that have acted as catalysts or have aggravated the crisis but are not the foremost aspects of the crisis (Marchal 2008: 429-430; Nathan 2007: 499). Tensions within the region arise from the colonial era and the various regime changes that followed. The change from an ancient kingdom to a colonial state, and a post-colonial state saw various deliberate actions to create divisions and tensions between the various ethnic groups in Darfur. Exploring this history provides a better understanding of the roots of the conflict and the persistence of coloniality in modern Darfur society.

4.2. Pre-colonial Darfur, an Ancient Kingdom

4.2.1. *The Fur Sultanate (1650)*

Sulayman Solongdungo established the Fur Sultanate in 1650, a kingdom ruled by a Sultan of the Fur people, an ethnic group of African descent. He is traditionally seen as the founder of the Darfur state. Earlier eras of the Fur Sultanate known as the Tunjur and Daju eras remain largely unknown. The 7th Sultan Mohammed Tayrab extended the territory of the kingdom to the Nile through a combination of peaceful incorporation and conquering, reaching the East and introducing Darfur to the economic commerce of the 17th and 18th centuries. Its location between West Africa and the White Nile resulted in the constant flow of migration. The Sultanate also encouraged migration into Darfur to increase needed manpower. Scholars, holy men, travelling merchants and poor immigrants were encouraged by offers of land and positions from the Sultan (Grunfeld & Vermeulen 2014: 51; Osman et al. 2005: 2-3).

4.2.2. *Ottoman-Egyptian Rule (1874 – 1883)*

The Kheviate of Egypt, an autonomous tributary state of the Ottoman Empire, invaded and occupied Northern Sudan in 1821 and overthrew the Sultanate in 1874. Under Ottoman-Egyptian rule, the slave trade within Southern Sudan was exploited by Arab

and European traders who also introduced unwelcome taxation. This was the birth of a north-south divide in Sudan. This exploitation reduced the significance of previous external trading relations with Darfur, marking the beginning of the marginalisation by the central power in Sudan. Revolts from the Fur people and Baggara[4] people were supplemented by the Mahadiya a group led by Muhammad Ahmad bin Abdullah, who defeated the Ottomans in 1883 after promising to expel the foreign rulers. (O'Fahey & Tubiana 2009: 10-11; Osman *et al.* 2005: 5).

4.2.3. *The Mahdist State (1885-1898)*

Muhammad Ahmad bin Abdullah declared that he is the *Mahdi*, 'the awaited one' in 1883, with a mission to restore Islam's original purity. The *Ansar* and his followers rallied behind him from all over Sudan. The *Madhi's* forces overthrew Ottoman rule in 1885, after failed attempts by the Ottomans to curb the movement. The *Mahdi* was succeeded by the Abdullahi, a *Khalifah* ('leader' and 'successor') of the Ta'aisha people, but did not garner the support of the entirety of the Ta'aisha and received no support from the Fur, rest of the Baggara and other groups of the Darfur region. There were revolts against the new *Khalifah's* rule from the Fur and specifically the Ta'aisha from 1885-1888. At the same time, the state enforced a policy of forced migration of the nomadic Baggara people from Darfur to Omdurman (East of Darfur and West of the Nile).

[4] The Baggara ('cattle people') grouping is a collection of nomadic ethnic groups of Arab descent that began to settle in Darfur in 1391, after raiding and enslaving some indigenous people of the region (Britannica 2022a).

Figure 3 - Map of Sudan, South Sudan, and the Darfur Region (Britannica 2022b).

Figure 2 - Map of Darfur region in relation to Omdurman (Sikainga 2009).

There was resistance from the Baggara which had now mobilised an army, yet this was short-lived. After the devastation from the military power of the *Khalifah*, two Baggara contingents migrated to Omdurman (Osman *et al.* 2005: 5-6).

4.2.4. *The Restoration of the Fur Sultanate (1898-1916)*

Ali Dinar, a supporter of the Fur who was serving the *Khalifah* in Khartoum (which was established as the capital city by the *Mahdi*), liberated Darfur from the Mahdist state in 1898. He declared himself Sultan and intended to restore the Fur Sultanate. Darfur became a de facto independent state (Osman *et al.* 2005: 6).

4.3. Colonisation (1916-1956)

Although Khartoum was captured by an Anglo-Egyptian army in 1898, it was not only in 1916 that Darfur was forcefully annexed by the British, after the killing of Sultan Ali Dinar. In 1916, Darfur was emerging from severe famine and this made the brunt of colonisation all the more severe. Similar to other colonies, the economy of Darfur was made to fuel the colonial machine. The already established trade route between the Nile region in Egypt and Sudan grew to include the supply chain of the growing textile

industry in Manchester, Britain, with Darfur and the rest of Sudan producing cotton. Cotton-growing estates were established to satisfy Britain's textile industry, at the expense of millions of people outside the triangle area known as the '3K's': Khartoum, Kassala, and Kosti. These areas cover the valley of the Nile to the North of Khartoum, the Blue Nile and White Nile areas south of Khartoum, and the central Kordofan and Southern parts of the Kassala province in Eastern Sudan. The '3K's' benefitted from the establishment of health services and education, but peripheral provinces like Darfur were completely neglected. Colonial rule in Darfur saw the reorganisation and management of the ethnic groups by defining their territories and retaining their traditional leaders. This was a relatively soft approach to rule, even though the traditional leaders had to obey their colonial oppressors. However, the establishment of defined territories was contradictory to the nomadic nature of the Baggara (Grunfeld & Vermeulen 2014: 52; O'Fahey & Tubiana 2009: 12-13; Osman *et al.* 2005: 6-7).

4.4. Sudan's Independence (1956)

Sudan gained its independence in 1956 and was followed by a succession of alternating democratic and military regimes. From this emerged two major parties: the largely Mahdist Umma Party (UP) and the National Unionist Party with the majority of Khatmiya followers who were historically linked to Egypt (Akasha 2014: 31; Osman *et al.* 2005: 7). Darfur's colonial period resulted in a disparity between which areas of Darfur were better supported than other areas, and left the post-colonial government with an infrastructure that had a viable flow of income. This had the potential to enable the new government to tackle the disparities. Yet, the government reinforced the same colonial policies advocated by political elites who had an interest in maintaining the social and economic realities they benefitted from during their colonial rule. Thus, the new government did little to dismantle the coloniality that persists in Darfur society to the present day. This coloniality plays a part in the marginalisation of modern-day Darfur (Akasha 2014: 32; O'Fahey & Tubiana 2009: 13-15; Osman *et al*. 2005: 7-8).

4.5. Post-colonial Conflict (1989)

The culture of violence that was instilled into Darfur society during colonial rule persisted post-independence. On 30 June 1989, Brigadier Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir of the Revolutionary Command Council and 15 army officers overthrew the Sadiq el Mahdi civilian government. Following this, Sudan was governed by the laws

and principles of the Quran per the interpretations of the NIF and its leader Hasan al-Turabi. Members of the NIF filled positions in the civil service, army, and police force. The Popular Defence Forces, a paramilitary force established under the Popular Defence Forces Act in 1989, consisted of existing militia in some localities (Osman *et al*. 2005: 9).

As the NIF took power in Khartoum, structural changes were made to secure the new Islamic model. These include Islamisation[5], Arabism[6] and the mobilisation of armed militia. Darfur became one of the recruiting hotspots of the Islamic Jihad[7] in Southern Sudan. Many traditional leaders became involved in the recruitment process and began taking alliances. The Janjaweed and other groups looted and robbed communities in Darfur in what has become known as armed banditry. The militarisation of Darfur society has resulted in the formation of different armed groups with opposition to the government, such as the Daud Bolad movement in the 1990s, and had intensified conflicts between ethnic groups (Grunfeld & Vermeulen 2014: 54; Osman *et al.* 2005: 9). The Arabism in Sudan saw the NIF organising conferences that advocated for Arab purity and the formation of a coalition of Islamists from the East to the West. This created hostility from non-Arab people of Darfur including the Fur, Berti and Zaghawa (Osman *et al.* 2005: 13).

4.6. The Current Crisis (2003-present)

The current crisis began in 2003 when the SLM/A perpetrated an attack in El-Fashir, the historical capital of Darfur against the Sudanese government. The SLM/A accuse the Arab-dominated Khartoum government of the marginalisation, discrimination, and oppression of the non-Arab populations in peripheral states like Darfur. Unlike the '3K's', Darfur has weak infrastructure, a lack of adequate healthcare and education systems, and a lack of basic social amenities. They also accused the Sudanese government of attacking non-Arab villages in Darfur to repress the population. The

[5] The process of bringing something or someone under Islamic rule. Islamic rule being the reconstitution of modern states and regions in economic, judicial and constitutional terms in what is conceived as a revival of authentic Islamic practice (Osman *et al.* 2005: 10).
[6] The notion of cultural and political unity among Arab countries. The Muslim Brotherhood (a transnational Sunni Islamist political, religious, and social organisation) encapsulates this (Osman *et al.* 2005: 10).
[7] It translates to 'effort' or 'struggle' in Arabic but has multiple meanings depending on the context. It has been erroneously translated as 'holy war' in the context of terrorism by the West. In a religious context, it refers to "the human struggle to promote what is right and prevent what is wrong" (Britannica 2022c).

attacks against the Sudanese government were later joined by the JEM, an Islamist sect made up of the Fur, Zaghawa and Masalit ethnic groups (Brooks 2008: 416: 12; Flint 2010: 14; Palsson 2020: 31-32). The Sudanese government's response was a counter-insurgency operation to quash the rebellion and reduce local support for the rebels. A second counter-insurgency operation by the Janjaweed, mostly comprised of non-Arab nomadic ethnic groups, destroyed 395 mostly-Black majority villages. The crisis has displaced approximately 2 million people and has resulted in more than 300 000 deaths (Palsson 2020: 32). At the same time, the Sudanese government was engaged in talks with the SPLM/A to end the 30-year civil war between North and South Sudan (Brooks 2008: 416).

Several factors have influenced the Darfur crisis. An analysis of the current crisis can be divided into several dimensions. Some dimensions have created or exacerbated the crisis and the crisis can also be understood as affecting different aspects of Darfur society.

4.6.1. *Darfur's Colonial History*

The British adopted a divide-and-conquer[8] model of colonial governance. This was a policy of promoting the financial interests of selected influential families from the central Nile valley by preferentially allocating productive assets, such as land, business contracts and bank loans. This was to minimise the risk of the growth of resistance to colonial rule. These influential families included merchants, religious leaders and tribal leaders. The British took advantage of the significance of religious life in Darfur. The preferential treatment rested authority and political influence in these influential families that persisted post-independence and translated into the current political elite. The adoption of the divide-and-conquer model created the disparities that exist between the '3K's' and peripheral provinces like Darfur and cemented the coloniality of political elitism in Sudan (Grunfeld & Vermeulen 2014: 53; Osman *et al.* 2005: 10).

[8] This is defined as "to make a group of people disagree and fight with one another so that they will not join together against one" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary 2022).

4.6.2. *The Mobilisation of Armed Militia*

The mobilisation of armed militia in Darfur dates back to the mobilisation of the Baggara against forced migration policies, but a more recent mobilisation began in the 1980s when President Numayri mobilised the Muraheleen militias who were of the Rizeigat ethnic group of the Baggara people from Southern Darfur and the Misseriya from Southern Kordofan to fight rebels from Southern Sudan. These militias were also used by Sadiq el Mahdi in 1986. Several atrocities were committed by Arab militias in war areas and central Darfur. In 1986, members of the same ethnic group as the Murahaleen militias massacred approximately 1000 displaced Dinka people, without judicial prosecution. This gave the militias a feeling of indemnity that reflects the failures in Darfur's judicial systems and police. After the NIF ruling party (renamed the National Congress) staged a *coup d'état* in 1989, it absorbed many members of the Murahaleen militia into the Popular Defence Forces. (Osman *et al.* 2005: 14).

In terms of the current crisis, governmental armed forces were deployed to stifle the rebel insurgency in Darfur that began in 2003, with the government appealing to tribal leaders to contribute men to the additional armed forces, the Janjaweed. The armed militias mobilised by the Sudanese government to address the counter-insurgency. They have participated alongside the regular armed forces in committing gross human rights violations. The normalisation of armed militia in the fabric of politics in Darfur has further imbued a culture of violence in the region. Regime change and violence go hand-in-hand, without hesitance or prosecution (Osman *et al.* 2005: 14).

4.6.3. *The North-South Civil War (1983-2005)*

The North-South civil war has contributed to the Darfur crisis in many ways. This includes: the recruitment of militia in Darfur to fight in Southern Sudan, increasing militarisation of Darfur spearheaded by the Sudanese government, and the continuing marginalisation of Darfur and drain on its development resources. The recruitment of Darfurians into militias to go fight in the South include the founder and former head of the JEM Dr Khalil Ibrahim, a physician turned military leader who was also part of the National Islamic Front from 1989 to 1999 and the Popular Congress from 1999 to 2000. Darfur's border with Southern Sudan's Bahr el Ghazel has seen the North-South civil war spilling into Darfur. Examples of this include the 1986 Ed Daein massacre

perpetrated by the Rizeigat without prosecution, and the 1991 attack by Daud Bolad, a Darfurian with SPLA support. The war in South Sudan has drained government resources into funding counter-insurgency leaving little for regions in the periphery. This includes development aid and humanitarian assistance that have been largely donated to victims of the civil war that live in South Sudan (Osman *et al.* 2005: 15).

4.6.4. *Drought and Famine*

Darfur has a long history of famine with governmental documentation of famines beginning with the *Faro Fata* (white bone) famine of 1873/74. The worst famine was that of 1888-1892, precipitated by the conflict between the Mahdist forces and the Baggara army (Akasha 2014: 55). And since 1972, there have been 16 droughts years in Darfur, with the most recent in 2000. These times of drought and famine bring increased political and social instability, impoverishment, food insecurity, water insecurity and tensions between resource-scarce communities. This has incited some international observers to label the Darfur crisis 'the first climate change crisis' given Darfur's history of environmental and political violence convergence. Although this title is unfitting as resource scarcity is a recurring catalyst to conflict (Akasha 2014: 35; Grunfeld & Vermeulen 2014: 53; Osman *et al.* 2005: 17-18).

4.6.5. *Failing Local Governance and Tribal Tensions*

The failing local governance in Darfur has its roots in Darfur's colonial history as was mentioned in the subsection titled 'Darfur's Colonial History'. British colonial rule relied on an indirect method of rule derived from a model developed by Frederick Lugard, colonial Nigeria's British High Commissioner. This model allows the population freedom to manage their affairs through their leaders but under the administration of the colonial staff. This model determines that a political hierarchy of local tribal leaders would derive their power from the central colonial government and be charged with the maintenance of law and order as well as the organisation of local labour and the collection of taxes. The tribal leaders were also responsible for allocating land. Tribal intermingling in grazing areas was limited, grazing boundaries for pastoralists were introduced, and water points were now opened and closed at selected times (Flint & de Waal 2008: 14; Osman *et al*. 2005: 20-21).

The Fur people, the largest indigenous ethnic group in Darfur, were reduced to just another ethnic group in the region and their administrative and economic authority was abolished. Yet other influential families from ethnic groups that resided in the '3K's' were given more influence and authority. Leaders in the '3K's' had more privileges than those in peripheral areas like Darfur. This model of indirect rule created a culture of political elitism that stemmed from the dichotomy of the tribal Darfurians and the educated Sudanese of Khartoum (Flint & de Waal 2008: 18; Osman *et al.* 2005: 21).

Following Sudan's independence in 1971, President Nyumari's military regime passed the Local Government Act, thus diving Sudan's governance into regional, district and area councils. This also abolished the administrative authority of the leaders of the different ethnic groups. This reorganisation triggered some ethnic disputes in Southern Darfur as it meant that political elites belonging to one ethnic group could be controlled by another. This generated 16 border disputes in Southern Darfur including those between the Rizeigat and Mahariya. Darfur's division into three states by the government in 1995 despite Darfurian opposition, further weakened the social integrity and infrastructure of the region (Akasha 2014: 34; Osman *et al.* 2005: 23).

4.6.6. *The Political Polarisation of Darfur: Fur-Arab Relations*

Darfur had strong ties with the Umma Party[9] through the Mahdist movement, which Darfurian Arabs aimed exploit and gain advantages over the Fur. Some prominent Darfurian Arab leaders won national ministries in the Mahdist government. In 1986, an Arab gathering was held where influential leaders from Arab ethnic groups claimed that they are the representation of the majority population in Darfur and were being marginalised as Arabs. They called on the government to address this but received no formal response, which they took as implicit support. The Fur, Zaghawa, and Masalit felt that the Arab leaders aimed to undermine non-Arab Darfurians and create ethnic rifts. The increase in the political influence that prominent Arab leaders gained during the colonial era propagated a sentiment of elitism among them. In the post-independence era, they sought to gain more political power as they no longer had to work under a foreign administration. The Arab gathering deepened the tribal tension

[9] A pro-independence political party that was formed in 1945 and was formerly led Sadiq-al-Mahdi (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2012).

that had been fostered by the British administration (O'Fahey & Tubiana 2009: 19; Osman *et al.* 2005: 27).

4.7. Conclusion

The establishment of the Fur Sultanate in 1650 under the rule of the Sultan of the Fur people (of African descent) saw migration into Darfur. Offers of land and positions from the Sultan encouraged scholars, holy men, travelling merchants, and the poor to migrate to Darfur. This is the first documented diversification of Darfur society (Grunfeld & Vermeulen 2014: 51; Osman et al. 2005: 2-3).

Ottoman-Egyptian rule (1874-1883) marked the beginning of turbulence in Darfur at the hands of foreign rule. Arab and European traders exploited African ethnic groups in Darfur and initiated a slave trade in Southern Sudan. This was the dawn of a North-South divide in Sudan. Previous external trading relations that thrived during the time of the sultanate were reduced in favour of trading in Khartoum. The marginalisation of peripheral provinces like Darfur by central power in Khartoum begins to take place (O'Fahey & Tubiana 2009: 10-11; Osman *et al.* 2005: 5).

The Mahdi's overthrowing of Ottoman-Egyptian rule in 1885 and the birth of the Mahdist state (1883-1898) was also turbulent time. The Mahdi was not supported by the majority of Darfurians, including the Fur, the Baggara, and some of the Ta'aisha. The new Khalifah of the Mahdist state also faced revolts from 1885 to 1888. The state's policy of the forced migration of the nomadic Baggara people did little to quell tensions (Osman *et al.* 2005: 5-6). The Fur Sultanate was briefly restored by Ali Dinar, a Fur loyalist that had served the Khalifah in the capital city of Khartoum in 1898, but British colonisation in 1916 made the revived sultanate short-lived (Osman *et al.* 2005: 6).

Sudan was forcefully annexed by the British in 1916 after the defeat and killing of Ali Dinar. Darfur's colonial economy was a cotton-growing economy modelled to serve the needs of Britain. The preferential treatment of the centrally located triangular area known as the '3K's' (Khartoum, Kassala, and Kosti) was at the expense of peripheral states such as Darfur. The reorganisation and management of Darfurian ethnic groups along defined territories created resentment for the colonial government. The divide-and-conquer model of rule was a soft approach in Darfur, through the use of Sudanese traditional leaders that had to obey their colonial oppressors, but the preferential

treatment of some Arab influential families created tensions between those in peripheral provinces and those in the '3K's' (Grunfeld & Vermeulen 2014: 52; O'Fahey & Tubiana 2009: 12-13; Osman *et al.* 2005: 6-7).

Sudan's independence in 1956 saw the removal of colonial power in Darfur but the retainment of the colonial system of preferential treatment, neglect of peripheral provinces, and a culture of political elitism that sees the majority of the political elite comprised of those of Arab descent (Akasha 2014: 32; O'Fahey & Tubiana 2009: 13-15; Osman *et al*. 2005: 7-8). Conflict persisted in post-colonial Darfur and Sudan saw a persistence of militarisation and forced regime change. The rise of militias and military coup d'états in Darfur was divided along ethnic lines and intensified tensions between ethnic groups. Non-Arab Darfurians felt threatened by the Arabism of Darfur. Religiously motivated militia begin to see an increase (Grunfeld & Vermeulen 2014: 54; Osman *et al.* 2005: 9).

The current crisis began when the SLM/A perpetrated an attack in El-Fashir, the historical capital of Darfur against the Sudanese government. Marginalisation, discrimination, and oppression of the non-Arab populations in peripheral states like Darfur were the accusations the SLM/A were hurling at the Arab-dominated Khartoum government. The SLM/A also accused the Khartoum government of attacking non-Arab villages in Darfur as a means of repression. The JEM, an Islamist sect made up of the Fur, Zaghawa and Masalit ethnic groups later joined the attacks against the Sudanese government (Ani 2016: 12; Flint 2010: 14; Palsson 2020: 31-32). The Sudanese government's responded with a counter-insurgency operation to quash the rebellion and reduce local support for the rebels. This was followed by a second counter-insurgency operation by the Janjaweed, mostly comprised of non-Arab nomadic ethnic groups (Palsson 2020: 32).

Several factors have contributed to the increasing tensions. Drought and famine, the North-South Civil War (1983-2005), failing local governance, and the polarisation of Darfur along ethnic lines exacerbated tensions and conflict. The turbulent history of Darfur provides better clarity of the roots of the ethnic tensions among Darfurians. A lack of acknowledgement of the significance of the historical background to the conflict leads to a misunderstanding of the roots of the crisis, which then results in proposed solutions that are not sustainable. The AU's mediation failed to reach a sustainable

solution to the crisis and the crisis persists to the present. The exploration of Darfur's history is paramount to employing a decolonial lens to the AU's mediation in Darfur. The AU's mediation team adopted deadline diplomacy after pressure from external donors but failed to explore the historical colonial underpinnings of the conflict (Akasha 2014: 55; Grunfeld & Vermeulen 2014: 53; Flint & de Waal 2008: 14; Osman *et al.* 2005: 15).

The links between a lack of understanding of Darfur's colonial history and the AU's mediation will be further explored in the following chapter titled 'The AU's mediation with particular attention to the deadline diplomacy employed by the AU.

5. THE AU'S MEDIATION IN DARFUR

5.1. Introduction

The African Union's (AU) mediation in Darfur also referred to as the Abuja process, is a demonstration of the outcomes of the use of deadline diplomacy. Impatience from external donors and low expectations resulted in the AU shifting from a classical integrative approach to focus on meeting deadlines that had been given by their external donors. During the last few months of the talks between the Sudanese government and the SLM/A and SPLM/A, the AU's mediators' role changed from communicators and formulators to influencers of the main agenda. This change scuttled plans for gradually arriving at a sustainable solution and resulted in the push for the signing of an agreement, which the AU's external donors perceive as a successful mediation. The outcomes of the AU's Darfur mediation serve as lessons regarding the credibility of deadlines, the margin of inclusivity and exclusivity, and the necessity of ownership in conflict resolution and negotiations (Brooks 2008: 413; Gelot 2012: 57; Nathan 2006b: 74).

5.2. Deadline Diplomacy and Darfur's Colonial Legacy

5.2.1. *Bringing the Parties to the Table*

Before the negotiations and throughout 2003, violence in Darfur escalated despite the signing of two ceasefire agreements that were not upheld. The third attempt at a ceasefire was held at N'Djamena, the capital city of Chad, in March 2004 led by AU and Chadian mediators. The signing of the N'Djamena Agreement was heavily influenced by the personal intervention of the former Chairman of the African Union Alpha Konare, who encouraged then Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir to sign the agreement. The N'Djamena agreement was the catalyst to the inter-Sudanese talks on Darfur. The AU then initialised talks between the rebel groups and the Sudanese government in Addis Ababa, in July 2004. The negotiations saw two highlights in the negotiations between the SPLM/A and NCP facilitated by the IGAD: the NCP/SPLM Nairobi Declaration and the signing of the Naivasha Protocols (Back 2016: 68; Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 102; Brooks 2008: 417. With the international community's focus on these breakthroughs, most mediators suspected that the JEM and SLM/A were avoiding negotiating with the Sudanese government until the conclusion of the

IGAD peace process. Hoping that the IGAD peace process would make the Sudanese government a more accommodating negotiating partner. The Sudanese government also sought impunity for its complicity in the violence perpetrated by the Janjaweed, by veering attention towards the IGAD peace process and its commitment to ending the civil war (Back 2016: 65; Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 102; Brooks 2008: 414).

December 2004 saw a spike in violence in Darfur and AU mediators hosted the next round of negotiations. The NCP and SPLM signed the CPA on 9 January 2005 (Brooks 2008: 418). The rebel movements and the Sudanese governments ramped up the demand to negotiate a solution to the conflict. As the IGAD process had concluded, the international community began to pay its attention directly on the situation in Darfur (Back 2016: 68; Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 101; Brooks 2008: 418).

5.2.2. *The Formula Phase and the Declaration of Principles*

Talks in Abuja began in June 2005 amidst mounting regional and international pressure. AU mediators began talks on formulating a Declaration of Principles, of which a 17-point document was formulated to provide guidance for future negotiations less than a month later (Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 102; Brooks 2008: 418). The Sudanese government felt pressured to engage in a negotiation with the rebel movements due to international criticism of its management of the situation in Darfur, which stagnated reaping its promised rewards from the international community for the signing of the CPA. The US had promised an end to sanctions and a trade embargo but had now pinned such rewards to the resolution of the crisis in Darfur. Prior to the negotiations, the leadership of the NCP needed to overcome two obstacles. First, the possible invalidation of the government-sanctioned narrative that the crisis in Darfur was due to ethnic tensions over resource scarcity for which the government held no responsibility, if negotiations with the rebels commence. The Sudanese government had argued before, that negotiating with the rebels was unnecessary as the “JEM and SLM/A were not sufficiently representative of the entire Darfur region” (International Crisis Group 2005: 7). Second, the government’s policy on Darfur during the infancy of the crisis had been the work of a small hand of security officers and the rest of the government had not been aware of their activities. The Sudanese government aimed to distance itself from accusations of its complicity in the human rights violations perpetrated by the Janjaweed by iterating the one-dimensional

rhetoric of the West. Reducing the complexities of the crisis to mere tribal disputes iterates the colonial narrative that represents the African continent as a dark continent filled with savages and immorality. That Africans are inherently violent and that it is up to the civilised West to solve the 'African problem'. The Sudanese government's attachment to this narrative demonstrates the coloniality within governmental rhetoric in Sudan (Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 102; Brooks 2008: 419; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013b: 337; Omobowale 2015: 110).

The appointment of an NCP hardliner Magzoub al-Khalifa in 2004 as lead negotiator and the inclusion of the First Vice President of Sudan Ali Osman Taha was perceived by analysts to demonstrate unity towards resolving the crisis. The four weeks spent working on the Declaration of Principles charged along despite a few internal crises in the JEM and SLM/A. Both movements and the Sudanese government participated fully in the process. The Declaration of Principles was signed by all parties on 6 July 2005, three days prior to the formal reform of the Sudanese constitution and the swearing-in of John Garang (SPLM/A leader) as First Vice President. The Declaration of Principles was recognised as a formula for further negotiations where general principles would guide the formulation of a sustainable solution (Brooks 2008: 419).

5.2.3. *Abuja VII, the Details Phase*

As the details phase commenced, the rebel movements were faced with two challenges affecting the strength of their negotiation. First, the death of Vice President Garang in a plane crash on 30 July 2005 threw the SPLM/A into chaos (Brooks 2008: 420; da Rocha2017: 161). This led to speculation among Sudanese political parties and the rebel movements concerning the consequences of the formation of a unity government and the implementation of the CPA. The SLM/A also suffered from internal fragmentation which resulted in its split into two factions. Facing these challenges, AU mediators debated whether the negotiations were doomed to deadlock or ripe for settlement. Garang's death saw the shift in the SPLM/A's position concerning the negotiations. Garang had envisioned the SPLM/A providing assistance to the Sudanese government as a negotiating partner, especially in light of the formation of a unity government. Yet, the new leader of the SPLM/A Salva Kiir was not as willing to be involved in the Darfur crisis and was steered towards the possibility of Southern independence and withdrew from the Darfur peace process. This placed the

Sudanese government in a precarious position as Garang had hoped to equalise what he perceived as a negotiating strength imbalance between the Sudanese government and the rebel movements by becoming involved in the peace process (Back 2016: 62; Brooks 2008: 420-421; da Rocha2017: 161; Nathan 2006b: 75).

As the SPLM/A's ties to the Darfur crisis unravelled, Darfuri leaders questioned the SPLM/A's commitment to the CPA and the relevance of the CPA as a guiding tool for meeting Darfuri interests. The split of the SLM/A saw Minni Arkoi Minawi (the then Secretary-General of the SLM/A) and Abdel Wahid Mohamed Nour vying for control over the entire movement rather than focus on the preparation of common positions concerning the details phase of the Abuja talks. The rift between the two saw international analysts attributing historical rift between the Fur (Abdel Wahid) and the Zaghawa (Minawi) as a contributing factor to the split of the SLM/A. The colonial rhetoric of ethnic rivalry as a contributing factor to the inherent violence in African societies is common rhetoric in analyses of the Darfur crisis from the West. This is the portrayal of Africans as violent people who cannot help but fight amongst themselves. It further iterates the colonial narrative that Africans are a 'basket case' that needs to be rescued by Westerners. As progress was slow, the talks adjourned on 20 October 2005. AU mediators and the international community blamed the lack of progress on Minawi and Abdel Wahid (Brooks 2008: 421).

As the 7th phase of the Abuja talks began in November 2005, AU mediators recognised Minawi's delegation of the SLM/A in the talks. Abdel Wahid felt he was coerced to consent as Minawi's Darfuri supporters surpassed his own. The Sudanese government made use of the disunity among the rebel movements by announcing its recognition of both factions, directly undermining the stance of the AU mediators (Back 2016: 63; Brooks 2008: 422). International frustration grew as early 2006 did not produce any significant breakthroughs; yet, some within the AU negotiating team spoke of ripeness for settlement to alleviate international concerns. The situation on the ground was worsening and the Bush administration of the US called for immediate authorisation from the UN for a more veracious peacekeeping force. In March 2006, Western diplomats successfully secured a bargain with the Sudanese government that if the Abuja peace process concluded with an agreement, the government would consider the transition of peacekeeping responsibilities in Darfur from the AU to the UN, most likely motivated by US promises of lifting international sanctions and the

alleviation of Western criticism (Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 102; Brooks 2008: 422; Nathan 2006b: 75). The actions of the Western diplomats and the Bush administration, demonstrate the lack of confidence in African mediation by the West. The big players of the UN are European states that would rather employ a coercive approach to mediation and the US method of coercion through threats and promises is a common trend in Western negotiation approaches (Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 102; Brooks 2008: 431; Nathan 2006b: 77). The aim is not to reach a settlement that appeals to all parties involved but to concede to the demands of the Eurocentric international community. This further perpetuates the asymmetric relationship between the West and the African continent (Brooks 2008: 425; Nathan 2006b: 75; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013b: 337; Omobowale 2015: 110). It is also a demonstration of the coloniality within the international system, most notably the coloniality matrix of power (Bassil 2011: 381; Brooks 2008: 424; Jarosz 1992: 106 & 108; Ngaruka 2007: 138). AU mediators then adopted a 'ceasefire first' plan in March 2006 concluding that conditions were not ripe for an immediate solution (Brooks 2008: 424; da Rocha2017: 167).

5.2.4. *The Enforced Turning Point*

The international community grew impatient with the AU's objective for a 'ceasefire first' plan. In early April 2006, President Obasanjo of Nigeria and President Denis Sassou-Nguesso of Congo-Brazzaville convinced AU mediators to set a deadline of 30 April 2006. The UNSC demanded the same deadline, three days later. This forced the AU to abandon the 'ceasefire first' plan and adopt a 'big bang' approach that would be imposed on the parties. This was deadline diplomacy (Brooks 2008: 425; Nathan 2006b: 75). Deadline diplomacy is defined as "the belief that time pressure (deriving from either artificial or pre-existing deadlines) has a positive impact on peace negotiations" (Nathan 2006a: 17; Pinfari 2011: 684). For two weeks, AU mediators worked on crafting a document that gave consideration to compromises made on the three main issues of security arrangements, power-sharing and wealth-sharing. At this point in the Abuja peace process, the role of the AU mediators shifted from communicators and facilitators to primary formulators. The AU mediation team continued individual communications with the parties, but no longer facilitated talks between the conflicting parties at one table – stating that the parties had shared their views on the key issues and that any opportunity for voluntary compromises from the parties had been exhausted. In order to meet the deadline, compromises would have

to be enforced upon the parties. The colonial matrix of power comes into play here as well (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013b: 337; Omobowale 2015: 110). The AU is at a financial disadvantage which deems it dependent on external donations from the West, which dictates the mediation approach as the donors impose a deadline based on funds. The West becomes puppet master of the Abuja peace process (Brooks 2008: 425; Nathan 2006b: 75).

On 25 April 2006, the AU mediators submitted an 87-page draft agreement that focused on the three main issues mentioned above, implementation mechanisms, and the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation (a mechanism for post-conflict reconciliation) (Back 2016: 63; Brooks 2008: 425-426; da Rocha2017: 164; Nathan 2006b: 75). The parties were only given five days to read, understand, discourse, and support the agreement. Arabic speakers only had three days to do this as the Arab version of the document was only completed on 28 April 2006. The imposition of a turning point in the negotiations by the international community and in turn the AU constituted a determination to create the conditions for ripeness. UN envoy Jan Pronk accounted the document as a "take it or leave it" document. AU Chief negotiator Salim strongly implied this in his 25 April 2006 speech: "…this is decision time. No more procrastination, no more antics…the eyes of the world are on you" (Back 2016: 64; Brooks 2008: 426; Nathan 2006b: 77). This statement is paramount to the colonial rhetoric of the West and its belief that having financial power warrants a dictator-like relationship with African societies (Brooks 2008: 416; Maza 2021: 16). The Western international community aims to reach a solution as soon as possible to be portrayed as morally just saviours of the dark continent in the eyes of the global community; while ignoring the concerns of the Darfurian people whose lives have been upended by violence (Brooks 2008: 426; Maza 2021: 16; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013b: 337; Omobowale 2015: 110).

The Sudanese government immediately accepted the document on the same day it was delivered, but the delegations of the rebel movements expressed shock at the imposed compromises in the document and rejected it on 30 April 2006 (Brooks 2008: 426). Despite their reluctance to sign the rebel movements expressed at the deadline, that a compromise on the key issues was possible. As a deadlock loomed, the AU mediators assumed the role of manipulators and exerted pressure on all parties to secure agreements for progress. The international community presumed that

enforcing a turning point meant that an agreement was within reach and Western diplomats descended on the Abuja talks to replace the AU mediation team as formulators. At this point of the Abuja peace process, the West decides to impose and take over as mediators. This not only brought embarrassment to the AU mediation team but was an obvious demonstration of the West's lack of faith in African mediation. This is the coloniality of knowledge, where the deadlock in the peace process at that point is used as justification for the West's rhetoric that the AU mediation was never going to be successful (Back 2016: 64; Brooks 2008: 427; Nathan 2006b: 75). Not because of the imposed deadline diplomacy, but because an African solution is inferior to the Western liberal peace framework. Thus, the West has to serve as a gracious saviour[10] to the peace process (Brooks 2008: 427; Nathan 2006b: 75; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013b: 337; Omobowale 2015: 110).

In the last five days of the deadline, the AU mediation team facilitated direct talks between the parties. There was some optimism from the mediation team due to the presence of Second Vice President Taha and senior leaders of the NCP and the SPLM/A, but Taha withdrew the talks on 1 May 2006, adamant that a deal with the rebel movements was impossible even though Salim announced that the US had requested a 48-hour extension to allow the parties to engage among themselves (Brooks 2008: 427).

Frustrated with the peace process at this point, international diplomats descended on Abuja to assume operations from the AU mediators. This included President Obasanjo, US Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick, UK Secretary of State for International Development Hilary Benn, EU Special Envoy for Sudan Pekka Haavisto, and Canadian Ambassador to the UN Allan Rock. The new team attempted to the gap bridge between the parties concerning power-sharing and security and proposed compromises on regional government in Darfur, and the absorption of fighters from the rebel movements into the Sudanese security forces (Back 2016: 64; Badescu &

[10] This refers to the 'white saviour complex' a concept that describes morally superior Europeans have the authority and duty to rescue the world, in particular marginalised African people. Taking the lead in the act of saving instead of following the lead of African people. This feeds a self-serving desire to be in control and to be the centre of 'credible' knowledge and practice. It reiterates the colonial rhetoric of the moral responsibility of civilised Europe to rescue Africa the dark continent, and its people from their own savagery and immorality. The 'white saviour complex' perpetuates the coloniality of power and knowledge, othering African voices and diminishing African autonomy (Anderson *et al.* 2021: 531; Willuweit 2020: 1-3)

Bergholm 2010: 102; da Rocha2017: 165). Obasanjo and the international diplomats then employed threats and packages of inducements to the delegations. Zoellick and Obasanjo (who represented two countries that had the most leverage over the rebel movements) primarily focused their efforts on Minawi, as the AU mediators had done before. They claimed that Minawi's participation was essential to any security agreement and that Darfurians saw him as a stronghold in Darfur who could bring peace. Abdel Wahid personally asserted that he would sign a deal as Zoellick had promised him the top Darfuri governmental position. The international diplomats also believed that the rivalry between the two factions of the SLM/A would compel Abdel Wahid to sign out of fear that Minawi would take the post from him. The Sudanese government eventually conceded to the integration of rebel fighters into the security forces, an issue that was especially important to Minawi (Back 2016: 64; Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 102; Brooks 2008: 428; da Rocha2017: 165; Nathan 2006b: 75).

The talks were extended for another 48 hours, upon which Obasanjo and Zoellick unleashed verbal threats on the three rebel leaders of the JEM and the split SLM/A. a late-night session on 4 May 2006 saw Zoellick providing promises from the US to the respective leaders which included personal letters from US President George W, Bush (Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 102; Brooks 2008: 429).

Minawi signed the Darfur Peace Agreement on 5 May 2006, after intense pressure from international diplomats. Yet, Abdel Wahid, the most popular rebel leader in the internally displaced camps, chose to withdraw from the DPA (Back 2016: 65; Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 102; Brooks 2008: 414; da Rocha2017: 160). Abdel Wahid's abstaining from the signing was difficult for observers to understand as it seemed he was the most committed out of the three rebel leaders and open to signing an agreement. He and his delegation had stayed at the talks when most of the AU mediation team had left on 6 May 2006. He proposed his chief three demands as amendments to the DPA, two of which Sudanese negotiator al-Khalifah had agreed to. Although it was the rejection of the third demand, concerning political representation that finalised his abstaining. Any offers from Zoellick and Obasanjo seemed to have been ultimately unsuccessful (Brooks 2008: 430; Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 102; Nathan 2006b: 77).

In terms of the JEM, its delegation believed that the team of international diplomats excluded it from the final round of negotiations due to rumours that JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim desired regime change in Khartoum and these rumours created what they described as a 'JEMophobia'. Some political analysts argue that the international diplomats ignored the JEM because the movement is politically strong but militarily weak, which is why the diplomats focused more on Minawi. The assumption was that the movement that has more military might will have more influence over the violence happening on the ground. Regardless, the JEM refused to sign the agreement. The Western mediation team refused to include all parties in the negotiations on equal terms. This favouritism is the same method that was used by the colonial administration in Darfur. Providing privileged attention to certain groups over others to divide and conquer. The international diplomats assumed that they could have complete control over the negotiations by manipulating and exploiting the hunger for power of the leadership of the rebel movements. This demonstrates that understanding the complexities of the conflict was never a priority. The most important element to be achieved was the signing of the document (Brooks 2008: 431; Nathan 2006b: 77).

The DPA remains a non-implemented agreement despite the international community and the Sudanese government supporting its legitimacy (Brooks 2008: 414; Nathan 2006b: 74). The agreement is also one that the AU's external donors, most notably the United States desired as an outcome of the Abuja process. The mediation objective in the last two months of the negotiations and most notably the last week of the negotiations was to secure the signature of Minawi, who was recognised as having the most effective military strength and was essential to any peace agreement. The external donors believed that if one rebel leader signed the agreement, the others would follow due to the bitter disputes between the rebel movements and the threat of international denunciation. This objective underpinned the deadline diplomacy strategy (Brooks 2008: 414; Maza 2021: 16).

The AU mediators followed a classic integrative[11] approach in the negotiations that began in March of 2004, and in 2006 worked with the rebel movements and the

[11] The classic integrative approach to mediation (also known as the interest-based approach) is a strategy that focuses on "mutually beneficial agreements based on the interests of the parties involved." This is a 'win-win' strategy (Brian 2013: 2; Shonk 2022; Spangler 2003).

Sudanese government to formulate a solution based on the political parameters stated in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement[12] (Naivasha Agreement) signed by the Sudanese government and the SPLM/A on 9 January 2005, and the Declaration of Principles for the Resolution of the Sudanese Conflict in Darfur signed by the Sudanese government, the SPLM/A, and the JEM on 5 July 2005 (Brooks 2008: 415). Some AU mediators sensed ripeness[13] from the parties during the last few months due to the stalemate on the ground, the deployment of UN peacekeepers, and intensifying pressure from external donors. The external donors regarded the DPA as a political vehicle to ensure the deployment of a more effective peacekeeping force. The substance of the agreement was less of a concern for the external mediators including Ambassador Zoellick (Brooks 2008: 416; Maza 2021: 16; da Rocha2017: 167).

Despite the signing of only the Sudanese government and one of three delegations of rebel movements, the US, the AU, and the majority of the international community deemed the DPA a success. The last page of the agreement (the signatures page) seemed to be the most important page of the agreement for the international community and the AU mediation team and not the proposed solutions within the agreements that should set the groundwork for sustainable peace and security (Brooks 2008: 432). The preferential treatment of Minawi and the side-lining of the leadership of the other rebel movements jeopardised the negotiations and demonstrated that the international community is not shy to exclude those it deems unnecessary to the key objective of signing the agreement. There is also the complete exclusion of Darfurian civil groups, traditional leaders, religious leaders, and female mediators (da Rocha2017: 170; Nathan 2006b: 76).

[12] The CPA marked the end of the Second Sudanese Civil War and consists of an extensive system of power-sharing and equal sharing of oil revenue between North and South Sudan. It also required that in January 2011, a referendum was to be held allowing the people of Southern Sudan to choose between a power-sharing agreement with the North or to opt for full independence from the North (United Nations Peacemaker 2005).

[13] Ripeness theory concerns a ripe moment, which is described as a juncture in the conflict when the parties most inclined to make a settlement and it is at that moment to introduce the notion of reaching a settlement. This is when the parties feel that their interests have been heard and understood (Cantekin 2016: 418; Zartman 2000: 225).

5.3. The Absence of Multi-track Diplomacy in Darfur

The exclusion of the members of Darfurian society that are directly affected by the conflict, such as civil groups, religious leaders and traditional leaders demonstrates the absence of multi-track diplomacy in the Abuja peace process (Brooks 2008: 432).

The AU's mediation in Darfur primarily consisted of track 1 and track 8 diplomacy which created distance between the Darfurian people on the ground, the mediators, the leadership of the parties, and international diplomats. Civil society actors in the traditional sense of NGOs (Track 2) and ordinary citizens (Track 4) are traditionally excluded from Track 1 level negotiations due to the perceived necessity of avoiding complex negotiations and speeding up the peace process (Paolucci 2012: 1). The inclusion of traditional leaders in the Abuja peace process is viewed as time-consuming and unfocused to the main political issues of the crisis from a Western and liberal peace perspective; however, the psycho-social and spiritual dimension of conflict resolution are important for the spiritual and mental rehabilitation of perpetrators and victims. Reconciliation is less likely to be natural without including track 7 diplomacy (da Rocha2017: 170; Paolucci 2012: 48).

The AU mediation did not take into account the customary system of mediation that exists in Darfur, called Judiyya. This system involves third-party mediators called Ajawid (elders) who must be accepted by all parties involved based on their knowledge of cultural traditions and their reputation in the community. Conflicts in pre-crisis Darfur concerning ethnic disputes and land rights were resolved this way and the decisions made were largely respected by the community. Since the beginning of the crisis, several Judiyya initiatives were launched by communities but most of them were hindered or co-opted by the Sudanese government; prompting local communities to initiate further Judiyya initiatives away from the eyes of the government. This has led to the reassertion of Judiyya in some areas in Darfur where the search for safe pastures has overtaken issues regarding power rivalries and herd looting. However, the Sudanese government continued to sabotage the process and pit ethnic groups against one another. The colonial method of divide-and-conquer is the Sudanese government's preferred method of maintaining control over the population (El-Tom 2012: 108-109; Paolucci 2012: 50).

Trying to hear the voices of the marginalised IDPs could have also been included in the table; however, there are two challenges with this notion. First, their lack of negotiating experience would make them more vulnerable to manipulation from more powerful actors such as the government. Second, IDPs represent a microcosm of Darfuri society and ignoring any representatives from any of the Darfuri ethnic groups may exacerbate tensions. Rather a civil society forum for IDPs and other civil society groups could work alongside track 1 negotiators. This would enhance the legitimacy of the negotiations and assist in bridging the distance between the state and the local population (Lanz 2008: 71-72).

5.4. Conclusion

The AU-led Abuja peace process saw the AU mediation team adopt a classic integrative approach to mediation without mainly prioritising the meeting of deadlines. This was intended to ensure that the interests of all parties at the table are well heard, understood, and reflected in the agreement that was to be signed. This is a painstaking process, which caused frustration from the AU's external donors, most notably the US. Intensifying pressure from the international community in light of worsening violence on the ground prompted the US and other external donors to impose a turning point, forcing the AU mediation team to abandon the classic integrative approach and adopt deadline diplomacy. This shifted the roles of the AU mediation team from facilitators and communicators, to formulators and manipulators (Brooks 2008: 415 & 432; Nathan 2006b: 74). As the deadline of 30 April 2006 was given to reach an agreement, the AU mediation team raced to draft a document, while international diplomats (most notable from the US, EU and UN) descended on the Abuja talks with the intention to take over. Coercion through threats of sanctions and offerings of top governmental positions as rewards was the method employed by the international diplomats to enforce an agreement from all parties. However, only two out of four leaders signed the DPA on 5 May 2006. Despite this, the AU mediation team, international diplomats, external donors and the international community deemed the peace process a success as the primary objective of deadline diplomacy was achieved, the signing of the document (Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 102; Brooks 2008: 431; Nathan 2006b: 77). The shift from directing from the side-lines to direct involvement in the Abuja peace process demonstrates the West's lack of faith in an African-led mediation. This is the persistence of the coloniality of knowledge and power in which the US, EU and UN

perceive the liberal peace framework to be superior to the AU's African solutions to African problems. The AU faced the embarrassment of having its mediation process taken over by its donors (Brooks 2008: 431; Nathan 2006b: 77).

Yet, the crisis persists despite the signing of the DPA and other actors that were affected by the conflict were not included in the negotiations. The diplomacy at the Abuja peace process was largely Track 1 mediation and there was no multi-track diplomacy employed throughout the process. Civil society groups and traditional leaders were excluded because they were perceived to be unnecessary to the process and their involvement would make the negotiations more time-consuming (da Rocha2017: 161; Lanz 2008: 71-72; Paolucci 2012: 48; Roeder Jr. & Simard 2013: 196;).

This created a distance between the affected population and the negotiations taking place in Abuja. It was only the interests of the government and rebel movements that were on the agenda. The AU mediation team also paid no attention to traditional Darfurian methods of conflict resolution. This demonstrates the disconnect between the people and the state that traces back to the colonial era, which is also one of the underlying factors contributing to the conflict. It also demonstrates the AU mediation team's lack of understanding of the complexities of the conflict and the coloniality that persists in Darfurian society (Roeder Jr. & Simard 2013: 196; Paolucci 2012: 48; Lanz 2008: 71-72; Brooks 2008: 431; Nathan 2006b: 77).

6. CONCLUSION, FINDINGS, AND RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

The African Union (AU) considered the Abuja peace process a success after the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement despite only two of four parties signing the document. Yet, the crisis remains unresolved to the present day (Ani 2016: 10; de Waal 2007: 1039). The exclusion of civil society and traditional leaders throughout the mediation process highlights the disconnect between the Abuja peace process and the people on the ground who were directly affected by the conflict. The imposition of deadline diplomacy in the late stages of the mediation is indicative of the liberal peace framework as a conceptual framework for the West's preferred mediation approach (da Rocha2017: 170; de Waal 2007: 1040; Flint 2010: 14). This researched applied a decolonial lens in analysing the failure of the AU's mediation efforts in Darfur from 2004 to 2006. The concept of decolonial peace challenged the liberal peace framework as well as the concept of African solutions to African problems – which acts as a guiding principle to the AU's mediation approach. This chapter summarises the previous chapters as well as the principal findings of this research, and also provides recommendations for further research to be conducted to contribute to the literature and the development of the decolonial lens.

6.2. Reasons Offered for the Failure of the Darfur Mediation

The existing literature on the AU's mediation in Darfur argues for the reasons for the failure of the Darfur mediation (Agena 2011; Ani 2016; Fisseha 2016; Gardachew 2021; Ifediora 2019; Nathan 2017; Palsson 2020). Three main themes are evident in the literature. Scholars like Afewerky (2021), Grunfeld & Vermeulen (2014), de Waal (2007), and Weiss (2011) focus on the failure of the UN's R2P principle. Other scholars including prominent scholar on mediation Nathan (2017), focused on mandate constraints. State-centrism and political factionalism was the third theme in the literature.

The key concepts grounding the lenses of the literature are the liberal peace framework and African solutions to African problems. The liberal peace framework, emphasises the relationship between interveners understood as being part of a distinct global-polity culture, which relies on Western liberal values that orientate interveners

toward the implementation of a liberal peace framework (Autesserre 2011: 4; Iglesias 2019: 205). The AU hailed R2P as a tool for the prevention of mass atrocities, following the adoption of the Ezulwini Consensus in 2005 (African Union 2005: 6). In terms of resolving conflicts in Africa, the AU aimed to increase African autonomy. African politicians recite the phrase "African solutions to African problems" as a principle for AU-led mediation. Africans mediating for Africans. Despite repeating this refrain, the AU has not succeeded in finding a long-term solution to the situation. (Brooks 2008: 414).

A different lens is necessary since there is a gap in the literature. The concept of decolonial peace, which has its origins in a decolonial lens, serves as the framework for this study. Decolonial scholars including Grosfoguel (2011), Iglesias (2019), Mignolo (2007), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013a), and Zondi (2017) have contributed to the development of this lens. Selected sources for this literature review were released between 2006 and the present. Even though the AU-led mediation was officially concluded in 2006, analyses of the mediation process have persisted ever since, therefore it is appropriate to include more current contributions in the literature.

In analysing the literature from 2006 to the present, the three main themes were apparent. Criticism of the R2P, a constrained mandate and lack of resources, as well as the presence of state centrism and political factionalism are arguments that focus on the promotion of the values of the liberal peace framework. None of these analyses employs a decolonial lens. An organisation that presents itself as African-orientated is dependent on Western donors that enforce a donor's mandate and act as 'Big Brother' to the AU; yet, fails to meet all of its commitments in resource allocation to AMIS (Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 107; Gardechew 2021: 252). The regional hegemons of the African continent who bear the burden of funding the majority of the AU's budget also use their economic contributions to sway the AU's agenda. This makes it difficult to bring the African solutions to African problems concept to fruition. Some African countries wished to protect their economic-political interests and were reluctant to condemn the Khartoum government's complicity in human rights violations. The use of the liberal peace framework in the analyses of the AU's mediation fails to recognise that the Darfur crisis is not an African problem at all, but is a result of years of tensions brought by the cycle of violence in the neo-colonial African state (Ani 2016: 15; Gardechew 2021: 254).

The use of Afrocentricity as a theoretical framework offers a better analysis from an African perspective as it promotes traditional African philosophical assumptions, cultural values predate European and Arab influence in Africa. This is the iteration that despite the alteration of African values due to colonialism, certain values maintained by kinship systems among Africans persisted. (Mazama 2002: 218-222; Mugambiwa 2021: 650-651; Schiele 1994: 13-17). Afrocentricity aims to supplant African knowledge with European knowledge and criticise racism, prejudice, and hegemony while shifting the subaltern role of Africans being objects been acted on, to agents that can act and must have responsibility over their actions and decisions. Scholars such as Mugambiwa (2021) and Schiele (1994) used Afrocentricity as a theoretical framework to criticise the dependence on external sponsoring, a lack of popular political participation in Africa in decision-making, a lack of infrastructure, a lack of competent African leaders, and Africa's continued surplus of war and conflicts; while failing to address the colonial underpinnings of these arguments. Inadvertently, the Afrocentric perspective to the AU's mediation in Darfur reiterates the Eurocentric rhetoric of criticising Africans for being Africans (Mazama 2002: 218-222; Mugambiwa 2021: 650-651; Schiele 1994: 13-17). This reveals the need for a decolonial lens particularly paying attention to decolonial peace.

Another gap was revealed in the literature. The majority of the literature on the AU's mediation in Darfur analyses AMIS and AMIS II without including the pre-negotiation, negotiation process, and the AU's actions post-negotiation and post-AMIS (Afewerky 39; Agena 2011: 19; Mansaray 2009: 42-44). This research aims to analyse the failure of the AU mediation in Darfur using a decolonial lens, with particular attention to the concept of decolonial peace. This will be an analysis of the mediation process, including pre-negotiations. The AMIS, peacekeeping period, and post-negotiations period are beyond the scope of this research, as this study is a mini-dissertation and would not allow a comprehensive analysis on those elements of the mediation process. An analysis of AMIS not be included in the analysis of the failure of the AU's mediation in Darfur as this research aims to contribute to the gap in the literature mentioned above, and an analysis of AMIS is not within that gap.

6.3. Conceptual Reflection

The liberal peace framework has been the UN's dominant framework for peace operations. This stemmed from Galtung's concept of positive peace. A concept that contributed to the development of the field of peace studies (Galtung 1969: 170; Galtung 2012: 1; Kappler 2017: 1). Scholars of peace studies are not only concerned with defining 'peace' itself, but with the conditions that constitute peace (Cortright 2008: 7; Diehl 2016: 1; Lawler 2013: 80-82). As was mentioned in section 3.2. Peace Studies, Galtung (1969: 170) introduced the dual definition of peace as being 'negative peace' or 'positive peace' (Cortright 2008: 7; Diehl 2016: 1; Galtung 2012: 1; Kappler 2017: 1; Lawler 2013: 80-82).

Galtung (1969: 170) greatly influenced peace studies by creating this dual distinction. The concept of negative peace encourages the tendency to assume that peace has been achieved once the fighting is done and creates the opportunity to leave human rights violations unabated. In the post-Soviet Union, post 9/11 security environment this tendency is not compatible as it frames risks in absolute terms (Shields 2017: 6-7). Positive peace has many interpretations that go beyond the absence of war and incorporates many elements of societal life such as cultural violence, structural violence, and physical violence, which allows for conflict resolution to migrate to peacebuilding. In 2005, the UN picked up on these ideas with an institutionalised peacebuilding structure alongside its traditional peacekeeping operations (Shields 2017: 10-11). This interpretation of positive peace was then conveyed by the UN and multilateral organisations based on the assumption that the best foundation for building and sustaining peace is a "liberal democratic polity" and a market-orientated economy (Iglesias 2019: 205).

The liberal peace framework aims to see the creation of a market economy, the organisation of elections, and the promotion of the rule of law and human rights (Autesserre 2011: 4; Iglesias 2019: 205). Violence in the developing world, according to proponents of the liberal peace framework, is due to a lack of three main pillars: liberal institutions that can guarantee democracy, irreplaceable universal values known as human rights, and the state's development is dependent on its economy's full integration into the capitalist global economy. This peace operations model silences the existing mechanisms for non-violent conflict resolution in traditional

societies. This clash of cultural differences and imposition of one culture onto another explains why, in certain aspects, many peace agreements in Africa find difficulty in maintaining sustainable peace. The liberal peace framework is advertised as being the only solution to peace in Africa, reiterating the colonial rhetoric that Africa is a backwards dark continent that needs to be rescued by the West from its savagery. Thus, A decolonial understanding of the liberal peace framework is that of a hegemonic iteration that reproduces the coloniality of power in the global political international system (Bouralou & Menaceur 2021: 1365-1368; Cruz 2021: 12).

As was mentioned in section 3.4. Decolonial Lens, coloniality has an impact on how knowledge is produced and disseminated as well as how the population's living conditions are organised (Iglesias 2019: 203). The hierarchical structure of society, which places Europeans at the top and non-Europeans as less than human, is the foundation of coloniality of power. The idea that European knowledge was better and information from the non-European world was inferior, backward, primitive, and barbaric. This is reinforced by this sense of "otherness." This idea became widely accepted to the point where people in the periphery were forced to internalise and use Eurocentric thinking to adapt into colonial society's social structure by discarding their own cultures, languages, and practices in order to please their masters (Grosfoguel 2011: 15; Quijano 2000: 216). In order to make room for alternative knowledge, practices, and ways of being and living, decoloniality is seen as a process that strives to lessen and transcend the coloniality of power and knowledge (Iglesias 2019: 203-204).

The liberal peace framework's requirements for foreign peace interventions tend to import a one-size-fits-all paradigm. Additionally, the liberal peace framework ignores the fact that colonialism's design and the coloniality of power and knowledge are frequently the fundamental causes of conflict. The continual process of nation-building, identity conflicts, the division of labour, the means of production, and the modes of production are all factors that contribute to the conflict (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013a: 3-4; Quijano 2000: 216). Instead of allowing multiple approaches to conducting peace operations to coexist, international peace operations driven by the liberal peace framework impose a Western paradigm that limits the room for them. The UN typically

regards local populations as homogenous and having a shared understanding of peace while conducting peace operations (Iglesias 2019: 212).

The decolonial project advocates for the bottom-up approach, where peace operations are guided by alternative understandings of peace and challenges the lack of cultural competence in the liberal peace top-bottom approach (Autesserre 2011: 5; Dastile & Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013: 109; Mignolo 2007: 13).

African solutions to African problems, which refers to solutions to crises in Africa being developed and implemented by Africans themselves, serves as the framework for the AU's mediation strategy. The Western approach to peacebuilding is predicated on the idea that conflict prevention, resolution, reconstruction, peacekeeping, and building should occur in that order and that one aspect cannot be carried out without the completion of the element that came before it. The AU, however, thinks that this order is not necessary. African-led solutions to African issues necessitate context-specific peacekeeping efforts (Badescu & Bergholm 2012: 100-101; Zondi 2017: 114). However, as different political ideas and priorities are brought to the table, the difficulty to fund this strategy and the dependency on external money weaken this concept. African solutions to African problems are undermined by the fixation with preserving the inherited neo-colonial state, which is consistent with liberal peace framework values and shows the continuance of colonialism in Africa and African-led peace operations (Zondi 2017: 114-126). According to Zondi (2017), decolonial peace can be understood as recognising the colonial roots of conflict in the post-colonial nation-state while highlighting the perspectives, histories, experiences, and knowledge from the periphery. Therefore, the use of decolonial peace as a conceptual framework offered an alternative lens to the AU’s mediation in Darfur, opposing the liberal peace framework and the concept of African solutions to African problems.

Characteristic to the AU’s mediation, was a lack of understanding of the historical complexities underpinning the crisis. These historical complexities include: the exploitation of African ethnic groups in Darfur by Arab and European traffickers during Ottoman Egyptian rule in Darfur, preferential treatment of the influential Arab political elite at the expense of Darfurians of African descent, the continuation of the system of political elitism in post-colonial Darfur, the rise of militarisation divided along ethnic

lines. The fourth chapter of this mini-dissertation provided a historical background to the Darfur region and to the crisis.

6.4. A Retrospective Summary of the Historical Background

The establishment of the Fur Sultanate in 1650 saw migration into Darfur. Offers of land and positions from the Sultan encouraged scholars, holy men, travelling merchants to migrate. This is the first documented diversification of Darfur society (Grunfeld & Vermeulen 2014: 51).

The period of Ottoman-Egyptian domination (1833–1874) signalled the start of unrest in Darfur brought on by foreign rule. African ethnic groups in Darfur were exploited of by Arab and European traffickers, who also started a slave trade in Southern Sudan. This marked the start of Sudan's North-South division. Trading in Khartoum replaced earlier exterior trading relationships that were prosperous during the sultanate. It starts to happen that central power in Khartoum marginalises outlying regions like Darfur (O'Fahey & Tubiana 2009: 10–11; Osman et al. 2005: 5). A violent period also accompanied the Mahdi's overthrow of Ottoman-Egyptian rule in 1885 and the establishment of the Mahdist state (1883–1898). The majority of Darfurians, including the Fur, the Baggara, and some Ta'aisha, did not support the Mahdi. From 1885 until 1888, the Mahdist state's new Khalifah had to deal with uprisings as well. Tensions were exacerbated by the state's strategy of requiring the nomadic Baggara people to migrate (Osman et al. 2005: 5-6). Ali Dinar, a Fur loyalist who had served the Khalifah in the capital city of Khartoum in 1898, managed to resurrect the Fur Sultanate for a brief period before British colonisation ended it in 1916. (Osman et al. 2005: 6).

After Ali Dinar was defeated and killed in 1916, the British forcibly annexed Sudan. The colonial economy of Darfur was based on cultivating cotton to meet British needs. At the expense of periphery states like Darfur, the centrally placed triangle region known as the "3K's" (Khartoum, Kassala, and Kosti) received preferential treatment. Resentment toward the colonial authorities was raised by the reorganisation and management of Darfurian ethnic groupings along designated areas, provinces in the "3Ks" and the periphery (O'Fahey & Tubiana 2009: 12-13; Grunfeld & Vermeulen 2014: 52; Osman et al. 2005: 6-7). By using Sudanese traditional leaders who had to submit to their colonial rulers, the divide-and-conquer model of governance was a mild approach in Darfur, but the preferential treatment of some powerful Arab families led

to tensions between residents of outlying provinces and those in the '3Ks' (O'Fahey & Tubiana 2009: 12-13; Grunfeld & Vermeulen 2014: 52; Osman et al. 2005: 6-7).

The colonial system favoured preferential treatment, disregard for outlying provinces, and a culture of political elitism, in which the majority of the political elite are people of Arab descent. This system was retained after Sudan gained independence in 1956, despite the removal of colonial power from Darfur (Akasha 2014: 32; O'Fahey & Tubiana 2009: 13–15; Osman et al. 2005: 7-8). Post-colonial Darfur and the wider Sudan saw the persistence of militarisation and forced regime change. The rise of militias and military coup d'états in Darfur was divided along ethnic lines and intensified tensions between ethnic groups. Non-Arab Darfurians felt threatened by the Arabism of Darfur. Religiously motivated militia begin to see an increase (Grunfeld & Vermeulen 2014: 54; Osman *et al.* 2005: 9).

The current conflict started when the SLM/A attacked the Sudanese government in El-Fashir, the historical capital of Darfur. The SLM/A raised claims of marginalisation, discrimination, and oppression against the Arab-dominated Khartoum administration against non-Arab populations in outlying states like Darfur. The Khartoum government was also accused by the SLM/A of using attacks on non-Arab settlements in Darfur as a tool of repression. The JEM, an Islamist sect made up of the Fur, Zaghawa and Masalit ethnic groups later joined the attacks against the Sudanese government (Ani 2016: 12; Flint 2010: 14; Palsson 2020: 31-32). A counterinsurgency effort was launched by the Sudanese government in response to put an end to the uprising and lessen local support for the rebels. This was followed by a second counter-insurgency operation that included the Janjaweed, which was largely comprised of Arab nomadic ethnic groups, but did not exclude men from other non-Arab ethnic groups in their recruitment (Palsson 2020: 32).

The rising tensions have been influenced by a series of factors. The North-South Civil War (1983–2005), drought and starvation, poor local governance, and the ethnic division of Darfur have all contributed to the escalation of tensions and warfare. The turbulent history of Darfur provides better clarity of the roots of the ethnic tensions among Darfurians. Lack of appreciation for the importance of the conflict's historical context results in a misinterpretation of its causes, which ultimately yields remedies that are not sustainable. The AU's mediation failed to reach a sustainable solution to

the crisis and the crisis persists to the present. The exploration of Darfur's history is paramount to employing a decolonial lens to the AU's mediation in Darfur. The AU's mediation team adopted deadline diplomacy after pressure from external donors but failed to explore the historical colonial underpinnings of the conflict (Akasha 2014: 55; Grunfeld & Vermeulen 2014: 53; Flint & de Waal 2008: 14; Osman *et al.* 2005: 15).

The links between a lack of understanding of Darfur's colonial history and the AU's mediation will be further explored in the following chapter titled 'The AU's mediation with particular attention to the deadline diplomacy employed by the AU.

6.5. Summary of the Findings

The crisis persists today despite the AU's mediation efforts to find a sustainable solution. The understanding of Darfur's history is necessary to applying a decolonial lens to the AU's mediation in Darfur. In response to pressure from outside donors, the AU's mediation team embraced deadline diplomacy, but neglected to explore the historical colonial roots of the conflict (Akasha 2014: 55; Grunfeld & Vermeulen 2014: 53; Flint & de Waal 2008: 14; Osman et al. 2005: 15).

The AU mediation team hurriedly drafted a document as the international diplomats descended on the Abuja discussions with the intention of taking over as 30 April 2006 (the deadline for reaching an agreement) approached. The international diplomats used coercion to persuade all parties to agree to signing the document by threatening with sanctions and promising high government positions as rewards. However, On May 5, 2006, only two of the four leaders signed the DPA. This was the Sudanese government and the SLM/A led by Minawi. Despite this, the AU mediation team, the foreign diplomats, external donors, and the international community considered the peace process to have been successful because the main goal of deadline diplomacy—the signature of the document—was attained (Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 102; Brooks 2008: 431; Nathan 2006b: 77). The West's lack of confidence in an African-led mediation is evident by the transition from indirect to direct involvement in the Abuja peace process. The US, EU, and UN continue to value the liberal peace framework over the AU's African solutions to African problems due to the existence of the coloniality of knowledge and power. Thus, the AU had to deal with the humiliation of having its donors take control of its mediation process (Brooks 2008: 431; Nathan 2006b: 77).

Nevertheless, despite the DPA's signing, the crisis persists, and other parties who were impacted by the conflict were excluded from the negotiations. There was no multi-track diplomacy employed during the Abuja peace process. Most of the diplomacy featured Track 1 mediation. Considering them to be unnecessary to the process and that their participation would prolong the negotiations, civil society organisations and traditional leaders were excluded from the process (da Rocha2017: 170; Lanz 2008: 71-72; Paolucci 2012: 48; Roeder Jr. & Simard 2013: 196).

The negotiations in Abuja were now distanced from the impacted population as a result. On the agenda were just the interests of the government and rebel movements. Additionally, the AU mediation team paid no heed to conventional Darfurian dispute settlement methods. This exemplifies the rift between the populace and the government dates to the colonial era and is one of the root causes of the conflict. Additionally, it reveals the AU mediation team's lack of understanding of the complexity of the crisis and the persistent coloniality in Darfur society (Roeder Jr. & Simard 2013: 196; Paolucci 2012: 48; Lanz 2008: 71-72; Brooks 2008: 431; Nathan 2006b: 77).

6.6. Recommendations

These recommendations are intended to depict a mediation process that aims to achieve decolonial peace; yet, it is important to be aware of the financial restrictions faced by the AU. Such recommendations cannot be realised if financial restrictions dictate the agenda of the AU. Nevertheless, these recommendations have been provided to encourage a mediation process in Darfur with achieving a sustainable decolonial peace in mind.

- Further negotiations in Darfur should be more inclusive of more traditional Darfurian methods of mediation. The mediation team should encourage and facilitate negotiations between conflicting ethnic groups, allowing traditional leaders to spearhead the process. This will allow for traditional authorities to exercise their agency and build a sense of mutual trust and understanding between different ethnic groups.
- Peace negotiations and the mediation process need to be more inclusive. Civil society, women’s groups, religious leaders, NGOs, and politicians

outside of the Darfurian government (the opposition) should be included in the mediation process. This would be the use of multi-track diplomacy. The participation of both armed and unarmed groups would not only increase the legitimacy of the mediation process but would also ensure that official mediation team are well-informed about the concerns of the affected local population.

- The mediation team should model the method of mediation to reflect the cultural fabric of Darfurian society. This should be done by consulting traditional leaders, for there to be a method of mediation that is familiar to Darfurians. This would build trust between the parties at the table and the official mediation team, while increasing the legitimacy of the mediation process in the eyes of the affected local population.

6.7. Suggestions for Further Research

The African Union-United Nations hybrid operation UNAMID ended its operation in Darfur on 31 December 2020 after it was established on 31 July 2007 following the conclusion of AMIS II (UN Peacekeeping 2022). There has been a resurgence of violence in Darfur with clashes between rebel forces and the remnants of UNAMID troops in February 2022 (Al Jazeera 2022). The Darfur crisis is an ongoing crisis that has not been resolved despite the deployment of AMIS, UNAMID and the AU's mediation (Grunfeld & Vermeulen 2014: 53; Flint & de Waal 2008: 14; Osman *et al.* 2005: 15). The scope of this research was limited to the AU's mediation in Darfur from 2004 to 2006 and this included pre-negotiations and the Abuja peace process, within the decolonial lens. There is the potential to utilise the decolonial lens in other avenues of research:

- An analysis of the African Union-United Nations hybrid operation UNAMID using a decolonial lens. This would offer a lens that differs from the mainstream neo-liberalist lens in an analysis of the persistence of the Darfur conflict despite the deployment of UNAMID.
- The decolonial lens and decolonial peace as a conceptual framework for an analysis of other case studies of conflict and crisis in the African continent, where the AU and/or African regional inter-governmental organisations have

engaged in mediation processes. This is to contribute to the development of the decolonial lens in scholarship on African mediation in African conflicts.

- An analysis of the AU's mediation and involvement in Darfur, including: pre-negotiations, the Abuja process and AMIS using the decolonial lens and decolonial peace as a conceptual framework. This is to provide an analysis to the relationship between mediation at the table, and peacekeeping on the ground.

6.8. Conclusion

The Darfur crisis is an ongoing humanitarian crisis without resolution despite the AU-led Abuja peace process (Grunfeld & Vermeulen 2014: 53; Flint & de Waal 2008: 14; Osman *et al.* 2005: 15). This research aimed to utilise the decolonial lens to analyse the failure of the AU's mediation in Darfur to contribute to provide a different lens to the mainstream neo-liberal lens and to the AU's concept of African solutions to African problems, and to contribute to the development of the decolonial lens as a school of thought. The AU utilised track 1 mediation to engage with the Sudanese government and the SLM/A and the JEM but did not take advantage of other tracks of mediation or include the civil society in the negotiations (Paolucci 2012: 1). The colonial underpinnings of the crisis were not a priority in the AU's understanding of the complexities of the conflict (Akasha 2014: 55; Grunfeld & Vermeulen 2014: 53; Flint & de Waal 2008: 14; Osman *et al.* 2005: 15). The AU's understanding of the conflict was limited to violence on the ground and the Sudanese government's narrative of ethnic disputes due to resource scarcity (Badescu & Bergholm 2010: 102; Brooks 2008: 419; Paolucci 2012: 50). This was exacerbated by the imposition of deadline diplomacy by the AU's external donors. This rushed the negotiation process towards the end and shifted the priority to signing an agreement that did not see all parties adding their signatures (Brooks 2008: 425; Nathan 2006a: 17; Nathan 2006b: 75; Pinfari 2011: 684). There is a distance between the negotiations at the table and the realities of the population on the ground, because the violence continues despite the conclusion of the Abuja peace process and the signing of an agreement (Paolucci 2012: 1). The relationship between mediation at the table and the realities on the ground is an issue that not only needs to be prioritised but also needs to be clearly defined in further African mediation on the African continent.

Thus, based on the findings articulated above, it may be concluded that AU-led mediation in Africa is based on African solutions in speaking, but demonstrates an external donor-based agenda in practice. The lack of financial capacity of the AU, the reliance on external funding, and the use of the same problem-solving mediation method employed by the West weakens the implementation of any solutions that are proposed, by Africans for Africans. Furthermore, the concept of African solutions to African problems is reduced to a mantra that does not bring about sustainable solutions, rather it serves the purpose to providing legitimacy to any solutions proposed by an AU mediation team regardless of whether those solutions are based on the interests of the affected populations or not.

It may also be concluded that the international mediation environment reflects the same asymmetrical relationship between the Global North and the Global South that exists in other aspects of the international political environment, such as the racialised hierarchy of structural power and the dissemination of knowledge. An AU-led mediation began as African-led but ended under the leadership of diplomats from the US, the UK, and the European Union. Western domination in Africa continues in the post-colonial era, indirectly through an external donor-led mediation agenda and directly through taking over the mediation process.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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