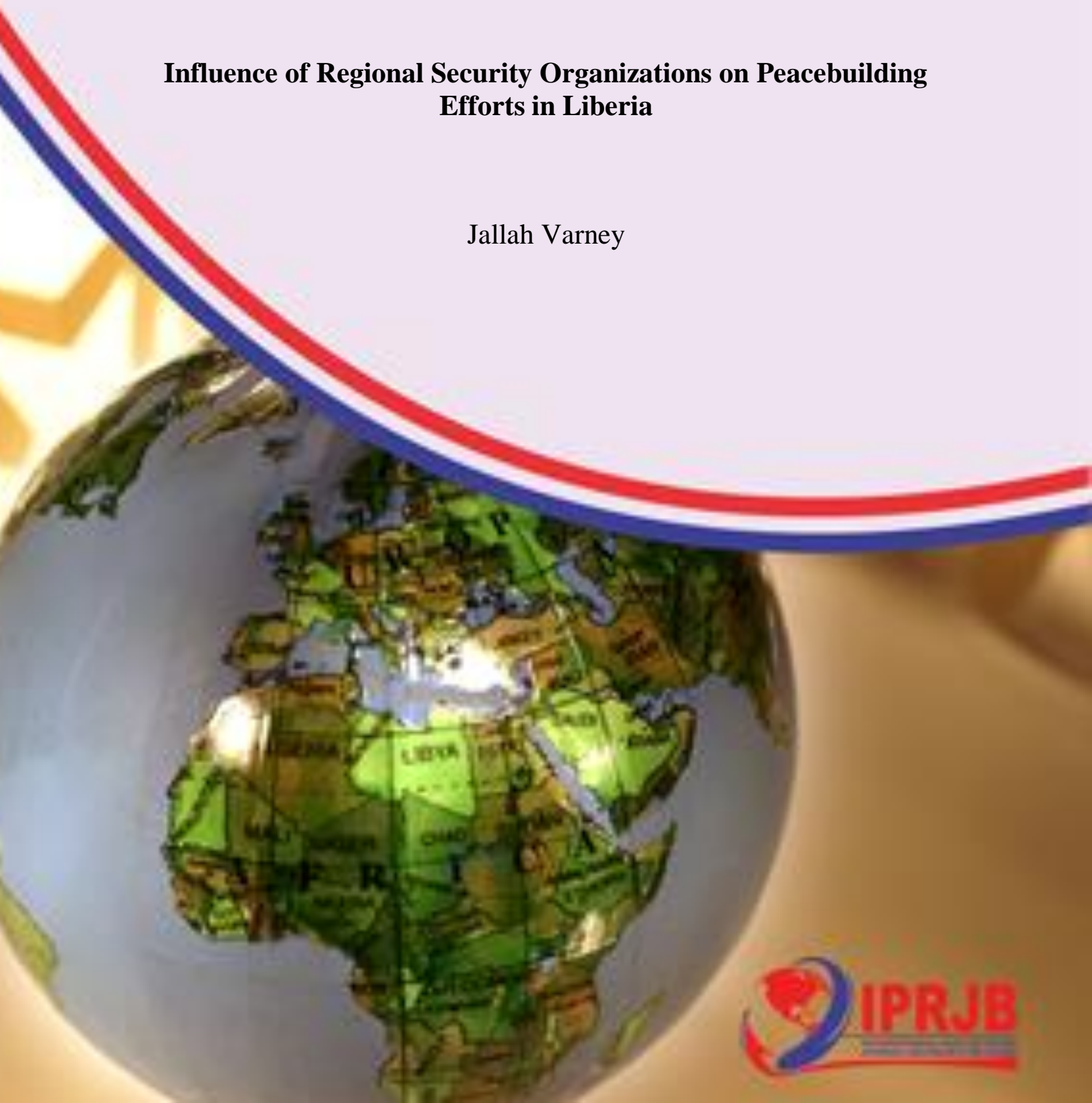


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**Influence of Regional Security Organizations on Peacebuilding
Efforts in Liberia**

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Influence of Regional Security Organizations on Peacebuilding Efforts in Liberia



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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to analyze the influence of regional security organizations on peacebuilding efforts in Liberia.

Methodology: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: Regional security organizations, particularly ECOWAS, played a critical role in stabilizing Liberia and laying groundwork for sustained peace. Their military interventions helped quell violence, and their political mediation efforts paved the way for peace agreements and transitional governance frameworks. By coordinating disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs, these organizations fostered post-conflict recovery, while ongoing diplomatic and monitoring activities ensured accountability and supported institution-building.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: Neorealism, Liberal Institutionalism & Constructivism theory may be used to anchor future studies on influence of regional security organizations on peacebuilding efforts in Liberia. RSOs should prioritize enhancing their resource base, institutional capacities, and logistical frameworks to improve their effectiveness in peacebuilding. RSOs should advocate for policy frameworks that facilitate the inclusion of marginalized groups in peacebuilding processes, ensuring that their voices are heard and their needs addressed.

Keywords: *Regional Security Organizations, Peacebuilding Efforts*

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INTRODUCTION

Peacebuilding success refers to the comprehensive efforts to reduce conflict, rebuild institutions, and promote social cohesion in societies emerging from war or deep unrest. Developed economies, such as the USA and Japan, have demonstrated significant achievements in peacebuilding through various diplomatic, military, and economic efforts. For instance, after World War II, Japan's post-war reconstruction was supported by peacebuilding initiatives led by the United States, focusing on democracy promotion, economic recovery, and military disarmament. By the 1960s, Japan became one of the world's largest economies, with peacebuilding outcomes visible through stable democratic institutions and growing international trade. According to the Global Peace Index (2020), Japan ranks as one of the most peaceful countries, reflecting the success of its post-war peacebuilding strategies, with a steady reduction in internal conflicts and a high degree of social stability (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2020).

Similarly, the United States has engaged in peacebuilding efforts across the world, including in Iraq after the 2003 invasion. Despite challenges, the USA's efforts to establish democratic governance and rebuild critical infrastructure resulted in Iraq's gradual political stabilization over the years. A report by the U.S. Institute of Peace (2019) showed that post-invasion Iraq has made strides in improving governance and security, with the establishment of the Iraqi National Guard and improvements in military training, though challenges persist. The U.S. spends billions annually in peacebuilding initiatives, as reflected in foreign assistance statistics, with over \$17 billion invested in security and governance reforms in the Middle East (U.S. Department of State, 2019). These examples illustrate that developed countries, while facing different challenges, have shown how peacebuilding efforts can foster long-term political stability.

After World War II, Germany's peacebuilding efforts, led by the Allies, focused on demilitarization, economic recovery, and the promotion of democratic institutions. According to the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW Berlin, 2020), Germany's economic recovery is a clear example of successful peacebuilding. The country saw rapid industrialization and economic growth, known as the "Wirtschaftswunder" (economic miracle), which helped Germany integrate into the global economy and establish peaceful relationships with its European neighbors. Moreover, the establishment of the European Union, in which Germany played a key role, helped further stabilize the continent and foster peaceful international relations. Germany continues to be one of the world's most economically stable and peaceful countries, ranking high in the Global Peace Index.

France's peacebuilding strategies after the two World Wars focused on national reconciliation and integration with the European community. France was a founding member of the European Union, and its commitment to multilateralism has contributed to the promotion of peace across Europe. According to a study by the European Commission (2019), France's role in peacebuilding within the EU framework helped consolidate democracy in former Eastern Bloc countries after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The French approach to peacebuilding also involves substantial investments in foreign aid and development projects, particularly in Africa. France's peacebuilding efforts within the EU and its continued commitment to international peace initiatives have contributed to reducing intra-European conflicts and promoting long-term stability.

Peacebuilding in developing economies often involves overcoming deeper economic and social challenges that developed countries may not face. In the case of Colombia, the peace agreement signed in 2016 between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) exemplifies successful peacebuilding in a developing nation. According to the World Bank (2020), the peace deal led to a decrease in armed conflict-related deaths by 85% within two years, and the agreement significantly reduced the size of FARC's forces while promoting the reintegration of former fighters into society. The government allocated funds for rural development and victim reparations, which contributed to a reduction in violence and the improvement of economic conditions in formerly conflict-ridden areas. However, the peace process continues to face challenges, including ongoing violence from non-FARC armed groups, which highlights the complexities of peacebuilding in developing economies.

In Afghanistan, international peacebuilding efforts, particularly after the 2001 U.S. invasion, aimed at building democratic institutions and ensuring security. The World Bank (2021) reports that while Afghanistan saw substantial investments in infrastructure and education, challenges such as insurgency, corruption, and political instability hindered the success of peacebuilding efforts. Despite these issues, some regions within the country witnessed increased security and governance improvements, particularly in urban areas. According to a UNDP report (2020), life expectancy in Afghanistan increased by nearly five years since 2001, and literacy rates rose from 28% to 37% for women. These outcomes reflect how peacebuilding in developing economies, while challenging, can yield positive results in specific sectors, though overall success remains fragile.

Colombia and Afghanistan, other developing countries such as the Philippines and Myanmar have seen varying degrees of peacebuilding success and challenges. In the Philippines, peacebuilding efforts have been focused on resolving long-standing conflicts between the government and various insurgent groups, particularly in Mindanao. The 2014 peace agreement between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) was a significant step towards resolving this conflict. According to a report by the World Bank (2021), the peace deal helped reduce armed conflict in the region and led to the creation of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), which provided greater political autonomy and economic support. However, challenges remain in fully implementing the agreement, with ongoing security concerns from splinter groups. Despite this, the agreement represents a major peacebuilding achievement in a country that has long struggled with insurgency and regional conflicts.

Similarly, Myanmar's peacebuilding journey has been fraught with difficulties, particularly in the context of the Rohingya crisis. While Myanmar initiated peace talks with various ethnic armed groups over the years, the military coup in 2021 significantly derailed these efforts. According to a UN report (2021), while Myanmar had made some progress in the peacebuilding process, the military coup undermined these achievements, and the country is now grappling with renewed internal conflicts. Despite these setbacks, efforts in ethnic peace talks and reconciliation with minority groups, including the Karen, Shan, and Kachin, are ongoing, though their success remains uncertain. Myanmar's peacebuilding efforts show the fragility of peace in a context marked by military control and ethnic divisions.

Sub-Saharan African nations face unique obstacles in their peacebuilding efforts due to high levels of poverty, political instability, and ethnic conflicts. The case of Rwanda is often cited as one of the most successful peacebuilding stories in the region. After the 1994 genocide, Rwanda embarked on a national reconciliation process that focused on justice, economic recovery, and social cohesion. According to a report by the African Development Bank (2019), Rwanda's GDP growth rate averaged 7.5% from 2000 to 2018, and the country significantly reduced its reliance on aid. The government's emphasis on national unity and grassroots participation in peacebuilding initiatives, such as the Gacaca courts, helped foster long-term peace and stability, making Rwanda one of the fastest-growing economies in Africa.

Similarly, South Africa's post-apartheid peacebuilding model, spearheaded by Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu, remains a major example of conflict transformation. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), established in 1995, played a central role in healing the nation's wounds by addressing human rights violations. A report by the World Bank (2020) noted that South Africa made notable progress in reducing poverty and improving governance after the end of apartheid, with unemployment rates decreasing by 5% over the last two decades. However, challenges such as high crime rates and inequality persist, indicating the complexity of peacebuilding in post-conflict societies. Still, South Africa's successful transition to democracy has been a model for peacebuilding in sub-Saharan Africa.

In Sierra Leone, after the brutal civil war ended in 2002, peacebuilding initiatives focused on national reconciliation and rebuilding institutions. The country benefited from the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and international support, particularly from the UN and the UK. According to a 2020 World Bank report, Sierra Leone experienced a remarkable improvement in human development indicators, including a rise in life expectancy and a reduction in poverty rates. The peace process included disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs for former combatants, which helped foster long-term stability. While challenges remain, including corruption and weak governance, Sierra Leone's post-war recovery and the continued peaceful coexistence of various ethnic groups reflect the effectiveness of international peacebuilding efforts.

In Liberia, peacebuilding was central after the civil war that lasted from 1989 to 2003. The establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) helped address human rights violations, while the presence of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) played a crucial role in maintaining security and facilitating democratic elections. According to the UNDP (2021), Liberia's peacebuilding success can be attributed to the consolidation of democratic governance and economic development in the post-war era. The country saw significant progress in improving health, education, and infrastructure, although challenges such as corruption, high unemployment, and inequality persist. Nevertheless, Liberia's success in holding peaceful elections in 2017 and maintaining relative stability illustrates the potential for peacebuilding success in post-conflict societies in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Ghana and Malawi have made substantial strides in peacebuilding. Ghana, often hailed as a model of democratic stability in West Africa, has undergone successful peacebuilding efforts since its transition to multiparty democracy in the early 1990s. Ghana's commitment to democratic elections, peaceful transitions of power, and national reconciliation after periods of military rule

has been widely recognized. According to the UNDP (2019), Ghana's robust political institutions and a growing economy have fostered a peaceful environment, which contrasts with many other countries in the region that have struggled with conflict and political instability. Ghana's example highlights the importance of strong democratic institutions, good governance, and economic development in achieving lasting peace.

Malawi, despite its smaller size and limited resources, has made notable progress in peacebuilding, especially since the 1990s, when it shifted from a one-party rule to a multiparty democracy. The peaceful transition of power in Malawi, especially following contested elections, reflects its commitment to democracy and peacebuilding. According to a 2020 World Bank report, Malawi has invested in human development, particularly in education and healthcare, to build the social cohesion necessary for long-term peace. While the country still faces challenges such as poverty and corruption, its peaceful electoral processes and commitment to peacebuilding have earned it a reputation as one of the more stable nations in Sub-Saharan Africa. Malawi's example underscores the importance of inclusive governance, development, and political participation in fostering peace in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Regional security organizations (RSOs) are intergovernmental bodies designed to address collective security issues, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding within a specific geographical area. The African Union (AU) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are two prominent examples of RSOs that have played pivotal roles in regional peacebuilding. The African Union, with its Peace and Security Council, actively engages in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, and post-conflict reconstruction in African countries. For instance, the AU's intervention in Sudan, particularly in Darfur, highlights its commitment to peacekeeping and stabilizing fragile states through military and diplomatic efforts (Parker, 2020). Similarly, ASEAN's approach to regional peace focuses on promoting diplomatic dialogue and preventing conflicts through consensus-based decision-making, as seen in its efforts to address the South China Sea disputes (Acharya, 2019). These organizations have been critical in enhancing the prospects for peace by providing regional frameworks for cooperation and conflict resolution.

In addition to the AU and ASEAN, other RSOs such as the Organization of American States (OAS) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) also contribute to peacebuilding within their respective regions. The OAS, for example, has played a crucial role in promoting democratic governance and human rights in Latin America through peacebuilding initiatives and electoral monitoring missions. NATO, primarily a military alliance, has shifted its focus toward crisis management and conflict prevention in regions like the Balkans and Afghanistan, facilitating stability and rebuilding efforts post-conflict. These regional security organizations share common objectives of fostering peace, promoting security, and supporting economic recovery in post-conflict regions. However, the effectiveness of these organizations in peacebuilding depends on the political will, resources, and the capacity to address both the immediate and long-term challenges of conflict-affected countries (Callahan, 2021). By fostering cooperation among regional actors, these organizations can mitigate regional tensions and promote a more stable global order.

Problem Statement

The role of Regional Security Organizations (RSOs) in peacebuilding efforts has gained significant attention in the context of global governance and conflict resolution. While many RSOs, such as the African Union (AU) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), have made considerable strides in addressing regional conflicts and fostering stability, their effectiveness in promoting sustainable peace remains under scrutiny. Despite efforts to prevent conflicts and mediate peace agreements, challenges such as limited resources, political complexities, and insufficient coordination between regional actors often hinder the success of peacebuilding initiatives (Parker, 2020). In regions like Africa, where conflicts are multifaceted and protracted, the AU's interventions, though commendable, face challenges related to member state sovereignty and external interference (Callahan, 2021). Similarly, while ASEAN has promoted dialogue in Southeast Asia, its consensus-driven approach sometimes falls short in addressing deep-rooted conflicts, such as the South China Sea dispute, where national interests dominate (Acharya, 2019). This study seeks to explore the extent to which RSOs influence peacebuilding outcomes and identify the barriers to their effectiveness in sustaining peace in post-conflict regions.

Theoretical Framework

Neorealism (Structural Realism)

Neorealism, developed by Kenneth Waltz in his 1979 book *Theory of International Politics*, emphasizes the role of state behavior in the international system, focusing on power dynamics and security concerns. According to neorealism, states are driven by the need for security and act in ways that maximize their power within the international system. This theory is relevant to the study of Regional Security Organizations (RSOs) because it provides insights into how member states' interests and power considerations shape the effectiveness of peacebuilding efforts. RSOs may struggle in promoting peace if member states prioritize national interests over regional cooperation, a challenge seen in organizations like the African Union (AU) (Parker, 2020).

Liberal Institutionalism

Liberal Institutionalism, as proposed by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, argues that international institutions can facilitate cooperation among states and help mitigate anarchy in the international system. This theory stresses the importance of international organizations, such as RSOs, in promoting peace, stability, and cooperation through established norms, rules, and institutions. In the context of RSOs, the theory is relevant as it suggests that regional institutions like ASEAN and the AU can enhance peacebuilding efforts by fostering collaboration and establishing frameworks for conflict resolution (Acharya, 2019).

Constructivism

Constructivism, championed by Alexander Wendt, emphasizes the importance of social structures, identities, and norms in shaping state behavior. The theory posits that international relations are not solely driven by material power but also by shared beliefs, norms, and ideas. RSOs like ASEAN and the AU are driven not just by material interests but by common regional identity and the desire to maintain peace through collective norms. This theory is crucial for understanding how

regional security organizations can shape peacebuilding through fostering shared regional identities and promoting collective norms (Callahan, 2021).

Empirical Review

Parker (2020) examined the African Union's (AU) role in peacebuilding, focusing specifically on its peacekeeping efforts in Sudan. The study used a case study methodology to assess the effectiveness of the AU's intervention in Sudan, particularly the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and its successor, the United Nations–African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). Parker found that while these peacekeeping efforts succeeded in reducing violence, the AU struggled with several limitations. Resource constraints, including insufficient funding and personnel, hampered the ability of the AU to effectively carry out its peacebuilding mandate. Additionally, the AU faced challenges related to member states' sovereignty, where political dynamics within the region impeded the organization's capacity for decisive action. Despite these challenges, the study noted that AU interventions often served as an important diplomatic tool for conflict resolution. The findings recommended that the AU increase its collaboration with international organizations and donor countries to improve its peacekeeping capabilities. Furthermore, the study advocated for a comprehensive approach to peacebuilding that would include not just military intervention but also socio-economic development and governance reforms. Parker concluded that enhancing the AU's resource base and institutional capacity could help address these barriers and enable more effective peacebuilding interventions.

Acharya (2019) explored the role of ASEAN in peacebuilding in Southeast Asia, focusing on the regional organization's diplomatic efforts and conflict prevention strategies. The study employed qualitative interviews with ASEAN diplomats and policymakers to gain insights into ASEAN's peacebuilding initiatives. Acharya found that ASEAN's policy of non-interference and consensus-building had been effective in preventing the escalation of regional tensions. However, ASEAN's approach often proved insufficient when addressing deep-rooted and complex issues such as the South China Sea dispute. The study found that ASEAN's reliance on consensus led to slow decision-making processes, which hindered its ability to resolve conflicts swiftly. Despite these challenges, ASEAN's commitment to dialogue and cooperation remained crucial in fostering regional peace. The study recommended that ASEAN develop a more assertive approach to conflict resolution while balancing its core principles of non-interference and consensus-building. Acharya also emphasized the need for ASEAN to strengthen its mechanisms for collective security and crisis management to be more effective in peacebuilding efforts. Lastly, the study suggested enhancing ASEAN's partnerships with external powers such as China and the United States to address broader geopolitical tensions.

Callahan (2021) analyzed NATO's role in post-conflict peacebuilding in Afghanistan, utilizing a mixed-methods approach combining surveys, interviews, and field data. The study focused on NATO's military interventions and the implications of its approach for long-term peacebuilding in the region. Callahan found that NATO's military-first approach often overshadowed efforts at nation-building, which led to mixed outcomes in terms of peacebuilding sustainability. Despite significant investments in infrastructure and governance reforms, the study revealed that NATO's approach was primarily focused on maintaining security rather than addressing the root causes of conflict. Furthermore, the reliance on military force exacerbated tensions between NATO forces

and local populations, undermining the legitimacy of the peacebuilding efforts. Callahan argued that peacebuilding requires a more balanced approach that includes military, diplomatic, and developmental components, and that NATO's exclusive focus on security hindered the region's long-term stability. The research recommended that NATO integrate local stakeholders into its peacebuilding efforts, ensuring that Afghan leaders and communities play a larger role in shaping the future of the country. The study further suggested that peacebuilding strategies should prioritize education, economic development, and institutional reforms to provide lasting peace. It concluded that NATO must reassess its strategy in post-conflict environments by shifting from a military-dominated approach to one that prioritizes sustainable peace. Finally, Callahan suggested that international peacebuilding efforts should align with the cultural and political contexts of the regions they aim to stabilize.

Smith and Jones (2021) focused on the OAS's efforts in electoral monitoring, conflict prevention, and mediation in various countries, including Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Colombia. Smith and Jones found that the OAS played a crucial role in stabilizing the region by promoting democratic values, conducting electoral monitoring missions, and facilitating dialogue between conflicting parties. However, the study also found that the OAS struggled to intervene effectively in authoritarian regimes, where political polarization and state repression limited the organization's influence. In particular, the OAS faced resistance from member states with diverging political interests, which hindered its ability to act decisively in conflicts like the crisis in Venezuela. Despite these limitations, the study emphasized that the OAS's diplomatic mediation efforts were vital in mitigating political violence and ensuring peaceful transitions of power. The research recommended that the OAS strengthen its conflict resolution frameworks and improve coordination with regional and international partners to increase its impact in non-democratic states. Furthermore, Smith and Jones argued that the OAS should work to enhance its credibility by aligning its actions with its stated commitment to human rights and democracy. The study also suggested that the OAS develop stronger mechanisms for preemptive conflict management to address issues before they escalate into full-blown crises. Finally, the authors concluded that regional cooperation and solidarity were key to the OAS's continued success in fostering peace in Latin America.

Williams (2020) focused on CARICOM's role in conflict prevention and peacebuilding in the Caribbean, employing a document analysis methodology to assess the organization's diplomatic initiatives. Williams found that CARICOM had played a pivotal role in preventing the escalation of regional conflicts, particularly in countries like Haiti and Guyana, by providing a platform for dialogue and conflict resolution. The study noted that CARICOM's diplomatic efforts were often successful in averting large-scale violence, but its peacebuilding capacities were limited by a lack of financial and logistical resources. Williams argued that CARICOM's ability to mediate conflicts was constrained by its members' varying levels of political commitment and economic capacity. Despite these challenges, the study found that CARICOM's influence in conflict resolution was particularly strong in cases where regional cooperation and unity were prioritized. The study recommended that CARICOM enhance its conflict prevention initiatives by establishing a permanent conflict mediation team that could be deployed quickly in times of crisis. Williams also suggested that CARICOM work more closely with international partners and development

organizations to secure the resources necessary for effective peacebuilding operations. Furthermore, the research advocated for the creation of a regional peacebuilding strategy that includes both preventive measures and post-conflict reconstruction efforts. The study concluded by emphasizing the need for CARICOM to invest in building its institutional capacity to effectively address emerging conflicts in the Caribbean.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low-cost advantage as compared to field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

FINDINGS

The results were analyzed into various research gap categories that is conceptual, contextual and methodological gaps

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

In conclusion, regional security organizations (RSOs) play a pivotal role in peacebuilding efforts by providing a platform for diplomatic engagement, conflict prevention, and post-conflict reconstruction. Their influence in fostering peace is evident through their capacity to mediate disputes, deploy peacekeeping missions, and promote socio-economic development in conflict-affected regions. However, challenges such as resource constraints, political dynamics among member states, and slow decision-making processes hinder the effectiveness of these organizations, as seen in the cases of the African Union, ASEAN, NATO, and CARICOM. To enhance their impact, it is essential for RSOs to adopt more comprehensive and balanced approaches to peacebuilding, incorporating military, diplomatic, and developmental strategies. Additionally, strengthening institutional capacities, improving collaboration with international actors, and addressing contextual factors such as political and economic dynamics within regions can significantly improve the success of peacebuilding initiatives. The future of peacebuilding efforts through RSOs will depend on their ability to adapt to evolving challenges, ensuring that they can offer sustainable solutions to conflicts and contribute to long-term regional stability. Ultimately, fostering greater cooperation, enhancing resources, and integrating local perspectives will be crucial in maximizing the effectiveness of regional security organizations in peacebuilding.

Recommendations

Theory

A key recommendation is the development of a unified theoretical framework that integrates diverse approaches to peacebuilding within regional security organizations (RSOs). This framework should blend military, diplomatic, and socio-economic strategies, examining their interconnections and synergies. Researchers should explore how these organizations can address complex and multifaceted conflicts by incorporating broader peacebuilding theories, such as

human security and conflict transformation, into their mandates. By refining the theory of peacebuilding to include the diverse tools employed by RSOs, scholars can help bridge the gap between military interventions, governance reforms, and development efforts in the peacebuilding process.

Practice

On a practical level, RSOs should prioritize enhancing their resource base, institutional capacities, and logistical frameworks to improve their effectiveness in peacebuilding. This could include establishing joint operations centers to streamline coordination between military, diplomatic, and development sectors, enabling rapid deployment of peacekeeping and peacebuilding interventions. Additionally, RSOs must invest in strengthening their conflict prevention and mediation mechanisms to deal with emerging tensions before they escalate into full-blown conflicts. The implementation of rapid-response teams, consisting of both local experts and international specialists, could ensure that peacebuilding efforts are timely and contextually relevant. Furthermore, RSOs should facilitate knowledge-sharing platforms among member states to enhance their collective understanding of conflict dynamics and improve their response strategies.

Policy

From a policy perspective, it is crucial that regional security organizations adopt comprehensive peacebuilding policies that integrate the perspectives of all stakeholders, including local communities, women, and civil society organizations. Policies should emphasize long-term conflict prevention, focusing on socio-economic development, good governance, and human rights as critical pillars of peace. To support these efforts, regional organizations must collaborate more effectively with international actors, including the United Nations, donor countries, and non-governmental organizations, to secure the necessary financial and technical resources. Additionally, RSOs should advocate for policy frameworks that facilitate the inclusion of marginalized groups in peacebuilding processes, ensuring that their voices are heard and their needs addressed. Finally, policies must be flexible and adaptive to the changing political and security contexts of regions, enabling RSOs to remain responsive and proactive in addressing new challenges to peace.

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