Political Marketplace in Sites of Intractable Conflicts: Implications to humanitarian aid and development delivery of NGOs

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis entitled the Political Marketplace in Sites of Intractable Conflicts: Implications to humanitarian aid and development delivery of NGOs is my original work except where citations indicate otherwise. All sources used are referenced.

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Zásady pro vypracování

By employing Alex de Waal’s “political marketplace” framework in cases of patronage networks in a select country with intractable conflict, this paper examines the potential implications of this framework on the delivery of humanitarian and development aid of international non-government organizations. First, this paper explores de Waal’s assertion in applying the economic logic of supply and demand in understanding patronage politics or clientelism and how this framework illuminates a novel understanding of governance in countries with intractable conflicts. Second, the focus is shifted to understanding the relationship between patronage and conflicts. These expositions are followed by an attempt to understand the limitations and potential contributions of the political marketplace framework. Third, the interaction of international non-government organizations and supply-side political operators are examined to identify how international actors influence the political marketplace.

***KEYWORDS**:* political marketplace, NGO, conflicts, patronage

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES

There are only a few studies that use political marketplace framework in understanding governance systems and the prevailing politics in countries with intractable conflicts. This paper aims to contribute to that literature by attempting to explain how international NGOs negotiate and interact when such governance systems or political systems are re-framed in the political marketplace logic. Development and humanitarian organizations bring in external resources that could be potentially used as the currency for buying political allegiances when captured by those in the supply-side of the political marketplace (i.e. the political elite). Externally sourced aid or development programs could also be the cause of disturbing the going price of loyalty, which affects the political marketplace dynamics. To date, there has been no study that integrates the work of humanitarian and development organizations in analyzing its potential effects on the political marketplace. This paper will endeavour to extend the framework by concentrating on international actors, specifically non-government organizations.

To accomplish such objectives and present shortcomings, this paper will address the following questions:

- What is the political marketplace framework? What are the implications of this framework on humanitarian aid and development delivery of international actors?
- How does the application of the political marketplace’s logic better explain the patronage system in a country with intractable conflict?
- How do the international NGOs interact with the supply-side political actors in a political marketplace?

METHODOLOGY

This paper endeavours to conduct a structured review of the literature and employ a qualitative method to gather and interpret data. Specifically, this study will use semi-structured interviews with select non-government organizations.

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"The political exploitation of aid is not a misuse of its vocation, but its principal condition of existence."
-Marie-Pierre Allié (2011), Médecins Sans Frontières

ABSTRACT

Using Alex de Waal's political marketplace framework, this study examines how NGOs contribute to the political marketplace reproduction in South Sudan. This study employs process tracing as its methodology and uses data from Aid Worker Security Database, UN OCHA's Humanitarian Access Incidence Overview, and other reports. The study also outlines how NGOs and political actors interact in South Sudan's political market and the dilemmas faced by both actors. Likewise, the study demonstrates how the political marketplace framework views NGO activities. Analyzing the transmission of causal forces from NGO activities to political marketplace reproduction reveals that NGOs potentially contribute to political market reproduction when political finance is low and when NGOs shift the incentive structure of political market actors. This paper argues that the consistent but low-intensity attacks against aid workers and their assets have been the empirical manifestation of political actors' strategy concerning NGO activities in South Sudan. The paper reveals that NGO activities transmit their causal force that contributes to reproducing the political marketplace in South Sudan when such activities enable the persistence of the exchange of loyalty and violence that is the ultimate expression of the political marketplace logic.

KEYWORDS: political marketplace, NGO, South Sudan, international actors

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FIGURES AND TABLES

ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
CEPO	Community Empowerment for Progress Organization
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
GDP	Gross domestic product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International non-government organization
NGO	Non-government organization
NSAG	Non-state armed group
ODA	Official development assistance
OLS	Operation Lifeline Sudan
PMF	Political marketplace framework
RRC	Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (South Sudan)
SAVE	Secure Access in Volatile Environments
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement / Army
SPLM/A-iO	Sudan People's Liberation Movement / Army – in – Opposition
SSRRA	South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association
UN	United Nations
UN CHR	United Nations Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UN OCHA	United Nations for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
WFP	World Food Program

INTRODUCTION

In conflict zones, multiple actors composing state and non-state actors, and influential external actors practice governance over civilian life (Kasfir et al., 2017). In Kasfir et al.'s (2017) view, the fluid network among diverse distrusting actors practicing conflictive, cooperative. and co-optive relations necessitates no longer considering governance in conflict settings as a privilege of a sovereign government.

Given this condition, de Waal (2009a, 2015, 2016) surmises that a monetized, competitive, and transactional system over formal institutions organizes politics in violent political marketplaces. Along with patronage systems and neo-patrimonialism, it is within these understandings that De Waal develops the political marketplace framework (PMF) in examining the logics of actors' practices, networks, and relationships within the dynamic formal and informal institutions they operate. Kasfir et al. and de Waal's arguments provide a backdrop on how to view NGO activities in conflict zones.

Without necessarily subjecting NGOs to normative frames and not taking them as a homogenous group, they introduce 'disruptions' on how complex networks within a conflict setting operate. The magnitude of these disturbances is contingent on the power and legitimacy these actors possess, the extent of intervention, and the present context in which conflict evolves. These disruptions, which influence the networks in the conflict zones, are often in the form of mediation, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, development delivery, and aid, among others. However, as violence is often a volatile condition, the outcomes of these interventions are uncertain.

The PMF is an analytical tool that describes the conduct and practice of politics by competing actors in a political market. By using the logic of supply and demand of loyalty, the framework identifies how power configurations are bargained, negotiated, or purchased in a way goods and services are exchanged (de Waal, 2015). In this market, buyers of loyalty are also sellers. De Waal (2015) asserts that political managers often aggregate rented loyalties, which they could sell to higher-level political entrepreneurs. Ultimately, this framework describes elite behavior in the context of conflict.

Development and humanitarian organizations possess resources that political market actors could use as currency for buying political allegiances when captured. Likewise, political actors instrumentalized NGO negotiations as a signaling value for other actors. This relationship is the focal point of this paper: NGOs and political actors in South Sudan. Previous studies framed the relationship according to the contradiction between sovereignty and intervention (Hagemann, 2020; Jansen, 2017).

The schism withers away using the PMF as conflict actors are integrated beyond their territorial borders in more ways than one, which is consistent with Hagemann's (2020) argument that intervention and sovereignty coexist, combine, and interact producing new and hybrid forms of authority. This study will interrogate NGO activities to re-conceptualize its position within political markets.

This paper aims to contribute to PMF theorization since there are only a few studies (De Waal, 2009b, 2014a, 2015, 2020; Kaldor & de Waal, 2020; de Waal et al., 2020b; Gundel, 2020; Ingriis, 2020; Boswell et al., 2019; Westendorf, 2018; Twijnstra, 2015; Debos, 2014;) that apply such model in countries with intractable conflicts. This research intends to expound on using the framework by examining the role of NGOs in delivering development and humanitarian aid within the purview of this power contestation mechanism.

Secondly, the paper aspires to add to the analytical tools for NGO intervention in conflict areas. Previous studies (e.g., Okumu, 2003; de Waal, 2009b) have illustrated that interventions can inadvertently extend conflicts. One explanation points to the incompatibility of institutional logic: interventions operate on expectations that institutional logic in conflict zones resembles those in 'stable' countries. This expectation has the unintended effect of co-opting 'external' actors in the machinations of actors in violent political marketplaces (de Waal, 2009b). However, these studies focused on heavy-footprint interventions involving military actions and direct state-building projects. This paper concentrates on what is conceptualized as 'light-footprint' activities, which relates to humanitarian and development assistance. The PMF has the potential use for improving the practices of NGOs. The differentiation between light- and heavy-footprint intervention is directed towards this goal, although the distinction is heuristic.

Lastly, this paper seeks to add to conversations about South Sudan: embroiled in violence involving almost three-quarters of its population. According to the UN (2021), there is widespread

community-level violence, human rights violations, systematic torching of homes, arming of children, and trading of women as spoils of war. Out of the country's estimated 12.1 million people, 8.3 million people need humanitarian assistance, while 7.7 million require emergency food assistance, according to the March 2021 figures (USAID, 2021). South Sudan is also one of the most dangerous countries for aid workers next to Afghanistan (Humanitarian Outcomes, 2021). The level of violence and conflict is also commensurate with the level of international intervention it receives. The UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has been one of the most expensive UN missions, with its mandate expanding over the years, including protecting civilians even from the government forces (Hunt, 2020; Rolandsen, 2015). Along with the growing need for humanitarian assistance, this study aims to contribute to the diagnostic tools of NGOs using the PMF.

This paper uses the case of South Sudan as there are studies (Boswell et al., 2019; de Waal, 2015; de Waal & Boswell, 2019; de Waal et al., 2019; Kuol, 2020; Twijnstra, 2015; Pendle, 2014) that systematically characterized its political marketplace. Since this paper aims to expound on the PMF by focusing on NGO activities, it necessitates a well-studied case.

To accomplish the study's broad objectives, this paper will address the following questions:

- How do NGO activities contribute to the reproduction of the political marketplace in South Sudan?
- How does the political marketplace framework view NGO activities?
- How do NGOs interact with political actors in South Sudan?
- What are the dilemmas of NGOs and political actors when interacting in the political marketplace?

The first question supposes that light-footprint intervention influences political market reproduction. Light-footprint interventions have the intent of suffering alleviation in contrast with heavy-footprint interventions involving state-building projects and military activities. This line of question assumes that NGO activity is a distinct phenomenon vis-à-vis the political market. There is no reason to think that NGOs are not a part of the political market. For example, Angelina Teny Machar, current head of the Ministry of Defense for Veteran Affairs, a senior member of SPLM/A-iO, and Vice President Riek Machar's wife, has been the president of an NGO,

Initiatives of Change in South Sudan, since 2012[1]. Angelina's multiple identities are an example of how political actors could overlap with NGOs.

Moreover, without the NGO-political market distinction, the analytic value potentially extracted from the PMF dissipates. The reason is that the 'agency' of whoever determines the likelihood of NGO participation is negated by insisting that they also operate within the political marketplace logic. Due to this, this paper considers NGO activities and the political market as distinct phenomena.

This paper uses process tracing to answer the main research question. Process tracing is helpful for within-case analysis of causal processes (Mahoney, 2010; Ricks & Liu, 2018). The use of within-case analysis about causal processes using in-depth studies makes sense for this study as this method seeks to unpack the black box linking NGO activities to the political marketplace reproduction that is not possible with other methods (Beach & Pedersen, 2013). This method involves collecting observations, turned into evidence, to trace the transmission of causal forces of the hypothesized mechanism (Beach, 2017; Skarbek, 2020). Resource constraints shaped the choice of this method that enabled this study to conduct desk research in answering the paper's research questions. This study used published works, commission reports and analyses, and databases.

This paper proceeds by discussing the political marketplace framework and South Sudan's political market. Expounding the theoretical priors by discussing NGOs in conflict zones follows the previous section. The following section describes the methodology and hypotheses. Succeeding sections continue with the analysis of the hypothesized mechanism and discussions. The study's limitations follow this, and by convention, it ends with a conclusion.

POLITICAL MARKETPLACE FRAMEWORK

This paper uses the political marketplace framework (PMF) to investigate the implications of NGO activities in South Sudan's political market. Specific mechanisms of the framework such

[1] South Sudan News. (2020). Opinion: Open letter to the president of Initiative for Change on Angelina Teny. https://ssnewsnow.com/opinion-open-letter-to-the-president-of-initiative-for-change-on-angelina-teny/

as 'political budget,' 'price of loyalty,' and 'political market structure and regulation' enable this study to understand the different dimensions of NGOs and political actors' interaction. One caveat from PMF is that it is not a grand theory that comprehensively explains politics, but rather it is a tool for examining elite behavior and the different logics that organize their relationship (Boswell et al., 2019).

The behavior of political actors defines the political marketplace. In de Waal's (2015) view, the summative concept that encapsulates this behavior is the political-business strategy of actors. See figure 1. According to de Waal (2015), the political strategy of actors is a function of 'political budgets,' 'price of loyalty,' and 'political business model and skills of political operators' that orders their calculus within the networks of market actors. This calculus presumes that political actors are utility-maximizing in conducting their affairs.

Figure 1: The political-business strategy and political marketplace relationship

Source: Author's visualization from De Waal's (2015) political marketplace framework

De Waal's (2016a) PMF identifies political markets as a system of governance based on *"personal transactions in which political services and allegiances are exchanged for material reward in a competitive manner."* De Waal (2015) contends that a political manager bargains with a member of the political elite (and sometimes external actors) on the price the ruler needs to pay in cash, or access to resources, in return for their allegiance. A political elite could pressure the political manager to enter the bargain using the ability to mobilize voters, turn out crowds and inflict violence (de Waal, 2016a).

The political budget is the fund available to the political actor for discretionary spending and, more importantly, for ensuring the allegiance of political elite members (de Waal, 2014b) and personal enrichment (de Waal, 2015). This function is why political operator's solvency becomes primary. The related concept is the price of loyalty which refers to the prevailing market rate for buying out the loyalty or cooperation for some time or a particular activity (de Waal, 2014b). The political budget has a particular function in this framework, together with the political skill of operators, in that it is the basis of the survival of political actors within the marketplace. According to de Waal (2015), the size of the political budget is a function of rents a ruler can obtain.

What de Waal calls the 'marketization of politics' presupposes the importance of political funds. Cash is an essential instrument in the everyday conduct of political markets (de Waal et al., 2020). Although endemic corruption is an example of the source of political funds, theft of state assets, tax evasion, counter-terrorism rent channeled through central governments, sale of natural resources, aid contracts, among others, are examples of cash sources (de Waal et al., 2020). Besides cash transfers, the license to extort taxes and levies and license to pillage also substitutes cash in these exchanges (de Waal, 2016a).

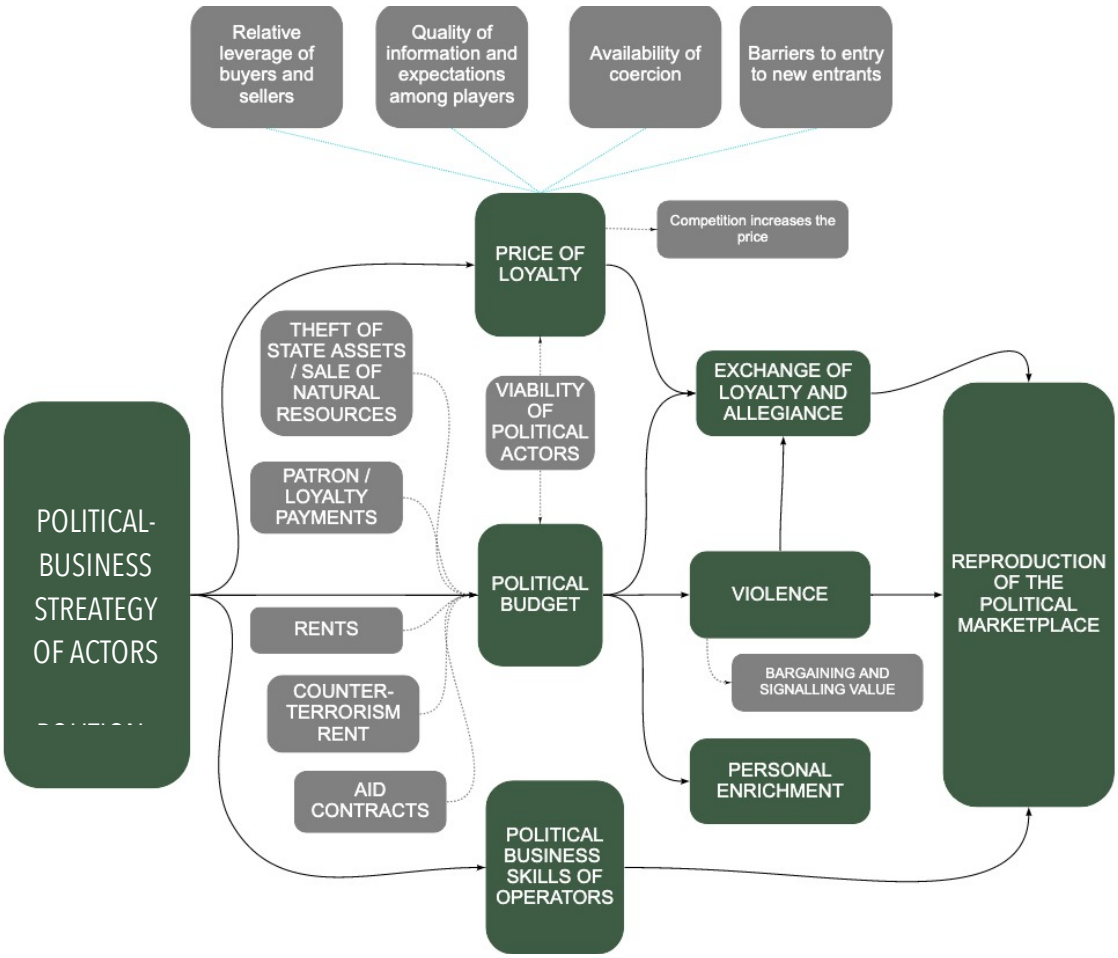
Political funds flow from government coffers, private citizens, higher-order patrons, war entrepreneurs, powerful international actors, and aid donors to political actors. For example in Somalia, warlords and entrepreneurs played a role in manipulating aid and used the accumulated capital to start businesses, which they used to fund politicians and start private security groups (de Waal et al., 2020).

Figure 2 provides a schematic visualization of the PMF. Violent political markets and their derivatives depend on several factors, especially on the actors' political business strategy, to maintain or claim a credible position in the political market hierarchy (de Waal, 2015). The political market reproduction is mainly maintained by the competitive, personalized, and transactional politics that defines the behavior of political elites.

Endogenizing the role of political actor's agency and skills in managing transactions and the political budget is an innovation of the PMF. This framework is concerned with how does a ruler efficiently manages this budget and accesses the budget to survive. For example, in Somalia, controlling oil rents through the new Petroleum Law has been a critical competition area among political market actors (Gundel, 2020). In Gundel's view, elite members' goal is to control these resources, which are sources of political funds. This condition is also the case of Sudan and South Sudan (Boswell et al., 2019).

From empirical studies (de Waal, 2009, 2015; 2020 Boswell et al., 2019), the political marketplace can take the form of a centralized kleptocracy, authoritarian kleptocracy, (rivalrous or collusive) oligopoly, or free competition. A political-market crash can also take place. In this event, actors retreat to secure the minimum positions available or position themselves to profit from the breakdown (de Waal, 2016a).

Figure 2: Pathways within the political marketplace framework



Source: Author's visualization from De Waal's (2015) political marketplace framework

A vital assumption of de Waal's framework is that allegiance or loyalty is a tradable good. In de Waal's conception, loyalty, protection, policies, money, legal instruments, favors, votes, public goods, rents, resources, and violence are the goods and services utilized in exchange for allegiances and cooperation in the political marketplace. However, the exchange of these goods is highly contingent. This contingency means that loyalty payments in exchange for allegiance could be renegotiated at any time (de Waal, 2016a). These exchanges occur at the local, national, and international levels (de Waal, 2015). As a heuristic device, political marketplace actors include those in the security arena, political firms, international bodies or countries, armed groups, financiers, and 'domestic' elites.

Some conditions enable actors to behave in a manner described by the PMF. First, there is no dominant institutionalized state in violent political marketplaces (de Waal, 2015). The dominance of transactional politics over formal institutions characterizes this condition. These transactions include the sale of political loyalties and services to the highest bidder according to

the market's supply and demand (de Waal, 2015). Although politics is highly transactional, there is a wide distribution of sources of political funds and control of violence across elite members. Significant barriers to entry for non-elites make political markets exclusionary. Political actors mainly instrumentalize non-elites for political business (de Waal et al., 2020). According to de Waal et al. (2020), several usually contravening logics, including monetized transactional politics, pervasive violence, the instrumentalization of identity, and 'civicness' organizes public authority. Formal institutions exist. However, they hardly constrain the conduct of politics and are used by political managers to mediate relationships with external actors (de Waal et al., 2020).

Second, violence is the norm in political marketplaces (de Waal et al., 2020). Various sorts of violence occur at different societal levels, and market actors often use this as a bargaining tool.

Third, there is widespread vulnerability (de Waal et al., 2020). Political markets are vulnerable to external shocks, and there is turbulence, which takes the form of political environment unpredictability in the short term.

Fourth, it has a subordinate position in the world political-economic order. Political marketplaces are internationally integrated forms of patrimonial politics (de Waal, 2016).

De Waal (2016) proposes four dimensions of the political marketplace system that warrant attention to those interested in understanding how the system functions:

1. *"The extent to which formal and institutional rules and procedures regulate political life as opposed to inter-personal transactions and relationships."*
2. *"The extent to which political finance is externally derived rents as opposed to domestic sources."*
3. *"The extent to which the means of organizing violence is distributed among members of the political elite, rather than being concentrated in the hands of the ruler."*
4. *"The terms on which the country's political marketplace is regionally and internationally integrated."*

This study specifically touches on the first and second dimension by focusing on NGO activities.

SOUTH SUDAN'S POLITICAL MARKETPLACE

This study will take South Sudan's case to investigate how NGO activities contribute to the reproduction of the political marketplace. South Sudan's government relies on oil production

for 98% of its revenue (de Waal, 2015). This reliance on oil is central to understanding South Sudan's political market by looking at the competition for capturing oil revenues and how political actors purchase loyalties through extracted rents. The low oil price and the unrecovered production since it re-opened in 2013 contributed to the collapse of the oil-based centralized rent system in South Sudan (de Waal, 2016b). The rest of the section outlines South Sudan's political marketplace.

Before independence, de Waal (2015) described southern Sudan as a rentier militarized political marketplace where the agenda for separation developed. Its successful secession from Sudan is attributed to its use of oil rents to make it expensive for Khartoum (Sudan) to interfere with the secession and secure the elites' consensus in the market (De Waal, 2015; Pendle, 2014). South Sudan also secured international assistance: Ethiopia and Uganda in their quest for secession, and the US, Britain, and Norway sponsoring the peace process that made the country's international relations favorable (Chilunjika et al., 2020; Young, 2021).

Figure 3: Map of South Sudan

Source: UN OCHA (2020)

Before South Sudan's secession, the region has received scant attention from Khartoum. Discriminatory policies that led to the southern Sudan's lack of socio-economic development, the pumping of oil-rents to the north, the colonial and institutional legacies left by the Anglo-Egyptian

regime, and the international support it received all contributed to the cause for secession (Chilunjika et al., 2020).

Since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005, South Sudan functioned as an oil-based rentier political marketplace headed by President Salva Kiir, who provided oil rent access in return for political allegiance (de Waal & Boswell, 2019). When the country closed its oil production in 2012 due to disagreements with Khartoum, the oil-based centralized political market crashed along with it (de Waal, 2016b). De Waal (2016b) notes that when rivalries challenged Kiir's leadership, a cleavage delayed by the cause for secession, he no longer had the funds, the apparatus, and the political skill to maintain his hierarchy position. This condition led to a civil war in 2013 where South Sudan mortgaged its oil production against short-term loans for political and security payments (De Waal, 2016b). The government also used the same means to finance the war, augmented by asset transfer asset and sales, extortion of taxes and levies, sale of natural resources, and licensing armed units to pillage and steal material goods and assets (De Waal, 2016b).

From an oil-based centralized rentier system during its struggle for independence from 2005-2011, South Sudan morphed into a system of allocating licenses to plunder as payments for loyalty (de Waal, 2016b; Boswell et al., 2019). In the face of an economic crisis, South Sudan's political market survived through dwindling payouts from oil reserves (de Waal, 2016; Boswell et al., 2019). Boswell et al. (2019) described the country as an *"oil-based rentier system without rent."* Following Boswell et al.'s (2019) analysis, the political market has been segmented into an open market with several players. South Sudan eventually became a militarized political marketplace sourcing political finance from oil, pillaging, and clientship payments. See table 1. Elites made some efforts to re-centralize the political market but to no avail. A UN CHR (2021) report suggests that the documented violence against civilians from February to November 2020 far exceeds the violence from 2013-2019, which serves as an indicator of how violent and segmented the political market has become.

Table 1: South Sudan's Political Marketplace 1972-2019

PERIOD	ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS	SOURCES OF POLITICAL FINANCE	BENEFICIARIES	STRUCTURE OF POLITICAL MARKETS	REGIONAL CONTEXT
1972 - 1983	Aid and debt-led boom	State borrowing	Actors and crony capitalists	-	Junior within Sudan
1983-2004	War economy	Pillage, military clientship	Military officers and their business partners	-	Cockpit for regional rivalry
2005-2011	Oil and aid boom	Oil, contracting	SPLM/A leaders	Two rival kleptocracies engaged in arms and patronage race	Challenge to (northern) Sudan
2012-2013	Economic crisis	(Dwindling) payouts from reserves	None	Rivalrous oligopoly after fiscal shock	Junior status
2013-2015	War economy	(Small) pillage and clientship	None	From rivalrous oligopoly to free competition: a segmented bankrupt political market	Cockpit for regional rivalry
2015-2018	War economy and oil	Oil, pillage and clientship	Military Leaders	From rivalrous oligopoly to free competition: a segmented bankrupt political market	Cockpit for regional rivalry
2018 – 2019	War economy and oil	Oil, pillage and clientship	Military Leaders	Attempts to establish a centralized authoritarian kleptocracy	Junior status, regional collusion

Source: Lifted from Boswell et al. (2019)

THEORETICAL PRIOR: NGO IN CONFLICT ZONES

Previous studies concentrate on a wide range of outcomes relating to NGO participation in conflict areas. For example, Okumu's (2010) findings reveal how external actors in conflict areas have been 'manipulated' to fuel wars, gain access to the civilian population, and lend legitimacy to political actors. He provides an example in the Democratic Republic of Congo where state collapse has led rebel leaders to rely on external assistance for welfare provision for its people, while the rebels used the resources levied from mining companies to fight government forces and other groups (Okumu, 2010).

According to Okumu (2010), other ways external actors prolong conflicts include: 1) external actors being subject to extortion when transporting goods; 2) aid fungibility relaxing government budgets to fund wars by freeing the responsibility to provide welfare for its people; 3) warring parties promote military objectives using humanitarian infrastructure and assets; 4) fueling war through looted humanitarian provisions such as food, medicine, and equipment in exchange for arms or money; and 5) when military and training bases' location is near food centers or near civilians, and airstrips, governments or rebel groups use the population as a shield against attacks.

In post-conflict areas, many democratic projects of external actors have facilitated the 'formation' of political elites as they influence interim governing rules (Grimm & Weiffen, 2018). Grimm and Weiffen (2018) argue that rather than paving the way for democratic norms, these interventions have faced struggles with local resistance and the persistence of political culture. For instance, Ahmad (2012) found that external peace operations in Somalia contributed to state weakness and the war economy that sustained the civil war. Selway and Templeman (2012) found that governance intervention favoring proportional representation and parliamentary arrangements exacerbates political violence when ethnic fractionalization is high.

According to Findley et al. (2011), the aid–conflict literature suggests that the link between aid and the onset and dynamics of conflict argue that 1) aid increases the price associated with state capture; 2) aid capture is a business for rebellions, which allows to finance wars or to serve as war-support.

Moreover, some scholars explored the relationship between intervention and patronage. Scholars who argue that foreign aid promotes patronage contend that the electoral motivations of recipient governments influence aid spending that favors supporters (Jablonski, 2014). While concurring with this argument, Zhang's (2004) study on World Bank aid allocation in Chinese provinces explains that bureaucrats' interests and preferences influence aid allocation. The study of Öhler and Nunnenkamp (2014) reveals that favoritism plays a role in location choices of physical infrastructure projects of multilateral aid. Dipendra's (2020) paper on aid allocation at the sub-national levels finds that multilateral aid is more prone to patronage than aid from NGOs. Ahmed's (2012) cross-country study contends that governments channel foreign aid to finance patronage to extend their tenure in office. When scholars disaggregate by donor types, results reveal mixed evidence. For instance, evidence shows that select African leaders divert Chinese aid

towards locations with a high concentration of supporters while they do not find such a pattern from World Bank aid (Anaxagorou et al., 2020; Dreher et al., 2019). Dreher et al. (2019) contend that 'electoral competition' explains this pattern of spatial favoritism.

There is a lack of exploration of NGO activities' direct implications in conflict zones framed using the PMF. The closest is de Waal's (2009) analysis of peacekeeping in political marketplaces in Africa. However, even this does not provide any explicit link to political marketplace reproduction. Nevertheless, the overall conclusion from these studies is that NGO interventions lead to outcomes that are beyond their intended objectives.

This paper finds vitality in its focus as Acht et al.'s (2015) cross-country study found that government donors generally bypass 'weak government' recipients via NGOs and multilateral organizations to aid poorly governed countries without needing to go through them. This idea has implications to the hypothesized causal mechanism as it would appear if the mechanism existed, even NGOs potentially contribute to the logic (i.e., competitive, transactional, and monetized) that allows this pattern of 'poor governance' (i.e., political markets) to persist.

Therefore, in Bayesian terms, based on this prior knowledge, the study is relatively confident that the NGO activity-political marketplace reproduction mechanism (and its parts) are not present in South Sudan. Updating the confidence in the presence of the NGO activity-political marketplace mechanism requires finding strong evidence that is highly unlikely to be found unless NGO activity-political marketplace mechanism is present.

METHODOLOGY

This paper answers the first research question using process tracing. Table 2 summarizes the strategy for answering the study's research questions.

Table 2: Research questions and strategy

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	STRATEGY FOR ANSWERING
How do NGO activities contribute to the reproduction of the political marketplace in South Sudan?	Process tracing
How does the political marketplace framework view NGO activities?	Extant literature
How do NGOs interact with political actors in South Sudan?	Extant literature
What are the dilemmas of NGOs and political actors when interacting in the political marketplace?	Extant literature

This paper begins process tracing by transforming the PMF (see Figure 1) into a causal mechanism consisting of a four-part causal process (see Figure 2). As the study aims to trace NGOs' contribution in the political marketplace reproduction, it formulates the causal process mechanism so that NGO activity is the initial condition. Each conceptualized part will serve as the hypothesis of this paper. These hypotheses then guide the study's next step: formulating case-specific predictions about the expected observable manifestations if the causal mechanism is present. It proceeds with collecting observable empirical manifestations of the theorized causal mechanism using the case of South Sudan. The study turns these observations into evidence, called 'causal process observations' (Collier, 2011; Skarbek, 2020) or 'mechanistic evidence' (Beach 2017). See APPENDIX for the detailed explanation of these steps. The evidence is analyzed using the correspondence between the hypothetical operation of NGO activities and political marketplace reproduction and the actual observable manifestations of such mechanisms in South Sudan.

By design, process tracing is a single-case method that enables a study to make inferences about the operation of a specific mechanism within the studied case (Beach, 2017). Beach and Pedersen (2013) argue that this method helps unpack the black box of causality using in-depth case studies to make robust within-case inferences about causal mechanisms. This paper considers the method appropriate as it shifts the analytic focus from causes and outcomes to the mechanisms in between them, which is consistent with the study's objectives.

Beach (2017) points out the disagreements about the nature of mechanisms. There are three distinct interpretations[2] on the nature of mechanisms that necessitates different research designs: mechanisms as intervening variables, minimalist understanding of mechanisms, and systems understanding of mechanisms (Beach, 2017).

To improve the paper's methodological rigor, it begins with the minimalist understanding of mechanisms to form what Beach (2017) suggests as the "*plausibility probe mechanism*" for the NGO activities and the political marketplace relationship in South Sudan. This paper then takes on the systems understanding of mechanisms as the study's question is congruent with its ambition

[2] The first view considers mechanisms as a form of intervening variable (Gerring, 2007; King, Keohanne, & Vebra, 1994). The second and third view argues that there is no need to use difference-making across cases to make inferences (George & Bennet, 2005; Collier, Brady, & Sewright, 2010; Mahoney, 2010). These scholars contend that traces left by the causal mechanism within an actual case can be used to make inferences about the existence of a mechanism in a case (Beach, 2017). Those who trace within-case causal processes using mechanistic evidence provides two unique interpretation on mechanisms: the minimalist understandings and the systems understandings of mechanisms.

"*to unpack explicitly the process that occurs in-between a cause and an outcome by tracing each of the constituent parts empirically"* (Beach, 2017). The minimalist tracing enables the research to identify a mechanism that links NGO activities and its contribution to the political marketplace reproduction in South Sudan before utilizing the systems understanding of mechanisms to unpack its inner workings. In short, the minimalist understanding entails asking, using Beach's (2017) words, *"what observables the operation of NGO activity and political marketplace mechanism has to leave in a case, and if found, whether there are any alternative explanations of finding them."* In contrast, the systems understanding asks which observables would be left in a case by the data-generating process for the activities of entities for each component of the mechanism (Beach, 2017). The next step is to empirically analyze each part of the mechanism using evidence and seek the traces left by the activities of entities in each part of the process.

WITHIN-CASE EVIDENCE

This paper used Aid Worker Security Database 2011-2021, UN OCHA's Humanitarian Access Incidence Overview, 30 archived NGO, UN, and AU reports, government documents, and proceedings in South Sudan. Likewise, this paper utilizes secondary data, grey literature, and published works. The data required by process tracing is *"any material potentially left by the operation of a causal process that increases or decreases the researcher's confidence in the existence of an underlying causal mechanism"* (Beach, 2017). Since empirical evidence is often case-specific in the process-tracing research (Beach, 2017; Skarbek, 2020), this study will base the inclusion of evidence on existing literature regarding the relationship between NGO activities and South Sudan's political marketplace.

The paper analyzed the evaluated evidence using Bayesian logic. Bayes' theorem directs that confidence in a theory following the evaluation of new evidence is a function of 'prior confidence' and the 'evidential weight of the new empirical material' collected (Beach, 2017). Beach (2017) argues that prior confidence is essential in a causal hypothesis as only new solid empirical evidence can further increase the confidence in the theory if there is a large amount of theoretical and empirical knowledge suggesting that a theory is valid. Applying the Bayesian logic to process tracing directs the focus on evaluating two questions: 1) whether there is a need to look for a given empirical material (certainty of evidence), and if found; 2) whether there are plausible alternative explanations for finding the empirical material (uniqueness of evidence) (Beach, 2017).

The inherent restriction of inferences in process tracing is claiming the presence of the mechanism, and it functioned as expected (Beach & Pedersen, 2013). The method is incapable of identifying whether changes in NGO activities produce changes in political marketplace reproduction. Process tracing aims to evaluate a particular mechanism linking the condition and the outcome (Lorentzen et al., 2017). Therefore, the method is instrumental in unpacking the mechanism linking NGO activities and political marketplace reproduction in South Sudan in line with the study's aims.

HYPOTHESES

The formulated hypotheses refer to the existence of each part of the mechanism. The paper conceptualized the hypothesized mechanism where each part is vital for the whole causal process to work.

External interventions influence political market dynamics (de Waal, 2020). This relationship is the case as NGOs bring in resources for distribution and influence the associated expectations and incentive structure with interventions. Likewise, intervention could inadvertently lend legitimacy or recognition to political market actors. Intervention in a controlled area by a specific group can indicate the relative strength or position within political market networks.

In understanding how NGO activities form a part of political market reproduction, this paper hypothesizes that NGO activities or looming intervention influence the political-business strategies of market actors. These projects come in many forms. For example, intervention in peace mediation includes pay-outs (payroll peace) to involved parties (de Waal & Boswell, 2019). The political market equilibrates when parties are satisfied at the peace negotiation table. Peacetime (usually short-term) is achieved.

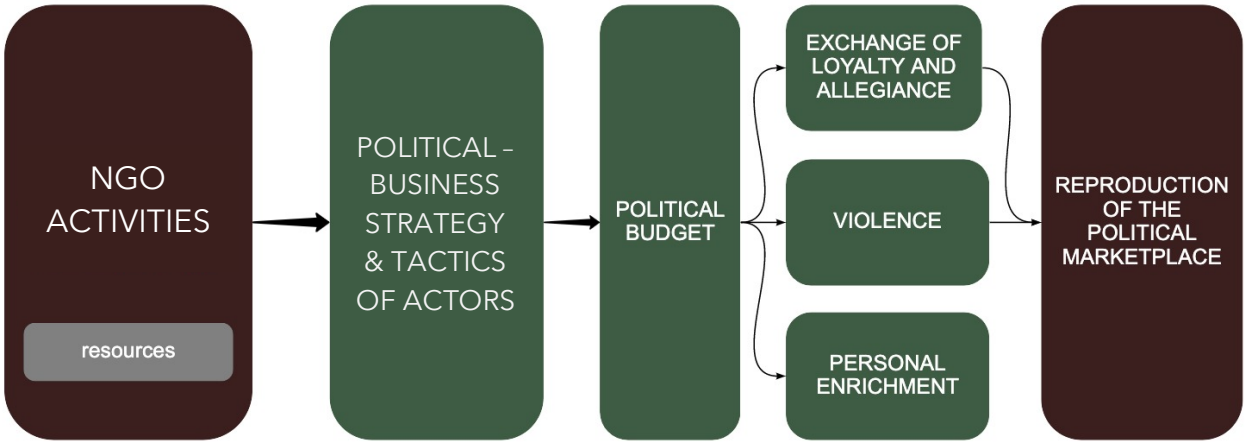
This paper conceptualized NGO activities as light-footprint interventions. This intervention is contrary to heavy-footprint interventions that include peacekeeping, military missions, and those involving direct state-building assistance (Grimm & Weiffen, 2018). The division provides a heuristic device as the intentions of these interventions are diverging. The heavy-footprint intervention, e.g., UN peacekeeping operations in Africa, explicitly intends to end violence, transform these conflicts into stable societies, and build institutions. These interventions directly aim at transforming the political marketplace into other systems of governance. De Waal

(2009) argues that since the blueprint of these interventions works on a different premise, they end up being enmeshed in the political marketplace "*without an exit strategy.*" In contrast, suffering alleviation and human well-being improvement frame the aim of light-footprint interventions.

Another characteristic that separates the light-footprint relates to the avowed 'neutrality,' 'independence,' and 'impartiality' derived from humanitarian principles. However, these principles have been challenged by scholars and political actors as they argue that the securitized humanitarian aid and NGOs being more accountable to donors their beneficiaries dispel the independence and impartial principle of humanitarian work (Brown & Grävingholt, 2016; Geneva Call, 2016).

De Waal (2009) has characterized the implication of heavy-footprint interventions to the political marketplace reproduction: it creates political market distortions. In contrast, this study concentrates on light-footprint intervention. This paper attempts to test the notion that light-footprint interventions also contribute to political marketplace reproduction. Whereas studies of political markets clarify that heavy footprint interventions are sufficient to reproduce the political marketplace, light-footprint interventions, as this paper argues, only contribute to its reproduction. Figure 4, constructed from Figure 2, sketches the formulated causal mechanism.

Figure 4: Causal mechanism of NGO activities and the reproduction of the political marketplace



Source: Author's formulation based on De Waal's (2015) political marketplace framework

NGO Activities

On the supply side of intervention, aid organizations act according to their calculus, purportedly attached to a specific population's humanitarian and development needs. NGOs' ability to 'legitimately' participate in conflict zones depends on sovereign states or armed actors'

openness to allow such activities. If NGOs could not participate through these channels, NGOs could still provide the much-needed welfare but covertly or 'illegitimately.' This restriction explains why NGOs need to negotiate with political marketplace actors (i.e., the state and armed groups). NGOs also need the guaranteed safety for their staff and the cooperation of those who govern the population they desire to assist.

Negotiating with political market actors leads to at least two implications: legitimizing the actors in the negotiation table that has repercussions in political markets as a signal of the actors' value; and NGOs effectively enter a bargain with political actors, which necessitates the need to navigate multiple motivations of actors.

Political-business strategy of political actors

NGO activities may not considerably shift political actors' political-business strategy if key actors effectively manage competition for patronage or if there are lucrative sources of political funds. However, as material goods are more crucial for medium- to low-level political market actors, NGO intervention may oil the machinery of lower segments of political actor networks. When there are ongoing crises like famine, NGO intervention could be a potent source of resources. Likewise, depending on the structure of the political market, such as when it is widely segmented, made up of small armed factions, any NGO resources could be profitable for those who survive through pillaging and looting.

Political budgets

At the center of actors' political-business strategy is the management and maintenance of the political budget. Political budgets are hard to track down. NGO activities could potentially increase political budgets, but not on a large scale and in the presence of other sources of funds. The premise is that NGOs bring in resources. In a cash-strapped area, NGOs could provide resources that become attractive for capture. Likewise, welfare provision of NGOs could increase the political budget by reducing the resources allocated for welfare and increasing the allocation for other politically beneficial projects.

Exchange of loyalty and allegiance, violence & personal enrichment

Political actors purchase allegiances and loyalty using political budgets (de Waal, 2015). License to loot and pillage has also been used as a tactic by political actors as payment for allegiances (de Waal et al., 2020). As intervention activities are prone to these methods by armed actors, especially when political finance is low, NGOs risk being caught up in this system.

Reproduction of the political marketplace

De Waal et al. (2020) argues that international partner institutions follow the logic of compatibility rules such as tactical, procedural factors, and institutional make-up that resembles formal organizations. However, when these rule-bound institutions in a country-beneficiary are secondary to the political market, any participation by external actors is subject to the operations of the political market's transactional logic. De Waal et al. (2020) follow the argument that political actors' skillful manipulation of donors or institutions may result in outcomes resembling an enmeshed institution within political markets.

Exchanges of loyalty and allegiance directly link with political marketplace reproduction. The reason is that these actions are the ultimate expression of the political markets' transactional nature. The reproduction in this sense is not a static outcome. Rather, this paper conceptualizes the political market reproduction that reflects an outcome that emanates from NGO activities.

With the previous discussions, this paper puts forward the following hypothesized mechanisms and its operationalization (detailed discussions are made explicit in the APPENDIX):

Table 3: Conceptualization and operationalization of NGO activities and political marketplace mechanism

Hypothesized Mechanisms	Predicted Evidence	Type of Evidence used to Gauge Prediction
1. Activities of humanitarian and development organizations contribute to the reproduction of the political marketplace in South Sudan.	Plausibility probe mechanism	
2. NGO activities influences the political - business strategy of actors in the political marketplace when rents are shrinking.	Expect to see political actors (1) to co-opt or attempt to direct NGO activities, and (2) to minimize the negative disruptions caused by NGO activities on their operations	1. Assessed using trace and account evidence on restrictions of NGO activities 2. Assessed using trace evidence of government policies and laws
3. Actors in the political marketplace attempt to maximize the benefit of NGO activity-derived rents for political budgets.	Expect to see political actors designing political-business strategies to ensure the flow of political finance from NGO activities	1. Assessed using trace evidence (reports) on political actors profiteering from NGO activities 2. Assessed using account evidence (NGO accounts) how rents are derived from NGO activities.
4. Managing the flow of political finance involve the exchange of loyalty and allegiance, funding violence, and personal enrichment.	Expect to see political actors to make, receive, demand, and supply loyalty payments Expect political actors use their amassed political budgets (in whatever form) to fund violence to destroy their competitor or to ensure to outbid their competitor using political funds	1. Assessed using trace and account evidence of loyalty payments between political actors using political funds 2. Assessed using trace and account evidence of funding conflict actors using political finance
	Expect political actors using political budgets for personal enrichment	3. Assessed using trace and account evidence of profiteers in South Sudan
5. The exchange of loyalty and violence contributes to the reproduction of the political marketplace	Expect to see changes in the characteristics of the political market when violence and exchange of loyalty and allegiance occurs	1. Assessed using trace and account evidence of South Sudan's political market

Source: Author

ANALYSIS

The analysis begins with the plausibility probe mechanism, which attempts to describe possible pathways that impel NGO activities to contribute to political marketplace reproduction. Probing the possible links gives the subsequent analysis the groundwork to unpack the theorized mechanism by clarifying the theoretical and empirical premises embedded in this paper's causal claims.

MINIMALIST MECHANISM: NGO ACTIVITIES AND THE POLITICAL MARKETPLACE

The inevitable interaction of aid organizations and political actors links NGO activities and the reproduction of political markets. NGO activities potentially contribute to political marketplace reproduction because of their resources, perceived legitimacy, and interaction with beneficiaries.

The second link this paper identifies is the historical relationship of NGOs and political actors in South Sudan's political marketplace. Even before the country's independence, NGOs assisted in South Sudan, performing 90% of all social services. Led by the UN, NGOs have negotiated with non-state armed groups (NSAG), who later became state actors upon independence.

In South Sudan, with the competitive, personalized, transactional, and violent logic ordering actors' behavior in political markets, a vibrant NGO landscape changes the incentive structure of these actors as they pursue their goals. These political actors' goals include personal enrichment and the maintenance or advancement of their position in the political market hierarchy through exchanges of allegiance and the race to control the price of loyalty and the political market itself (de Waal, 2015). NGOs operating in dynamic political markets incentivize political actors to capture this potential source of rents. This incentive is the main reason why pockets of formal institutions in political markets exist as political managers instrumentalize this to transact with NGOs (De Waal, 2015).

However, this change in incentive structure is not automatic. If a political manager has a more secure and lucrative source of political finance, NGO resources might not influence those in the upper echelons of political market networks. At the minimum, it could be observed that

political actors are taking conscious steps to thwart NGOs' political efforts that directly challenges the enablement of their behavior.

To insulate their work from political actor maneuvers, NGOs employ strategies to closely monitor their programs and avoid patronage influences in beneficiary targeting. However, in practice, these accountability mechanisms are designed for funders to assess aid effectiveness.

In the long run, NGOs can potentially constrain political markets. NGOs may transform the norms legitimizing transactional politics by supporting community empowerment and political participation (i.e., good governance initiatives). Nevertheless, these are long-term objectives as it underlies transforming embedded political norms. The danger for NGOs taking these initiatives relates to being targeted by government forces, especially in environments like South Sudan. In conflict areas with extreme political uncertainty and complex crises, NGOs dedicate their attention to humanitarian and development efforts. If NGOs engage with objectives tackling social change, human rights, empowerment, or fostering participation that could challenge the dominant logics of political markets, they undertake these at the community level. To confront what is called the 'high politics' on this scale is difficult.

Besides NGO activities for their beneficiaries, their operational interaction with political actors themselves presents a point of departure where they confront the logic of political markets. When NGOs operate in a country, negotiations regarding who, what, how, and when assistance will be distributed are often negotiated. NGOs determine this based on available resources, strategic goals, or donors' requisites, while political actors sometimes put up barriers for such activities to act as gatekeepers and for effective surveillance.

When such NGO strategies fail and political actors who systematically attempt to capture rents from NGO activities succeeds, this paper argues that NGO activities potentially contribute to political market reproduction in several ways:

First, if NGOs (inadvertently) institute or formalize local elites through their programs (e.g., needing a leader for beneficiary targeting). Without considering contexts, NGO activities lend stature to aspiring elites when they assign 'community leaders,' unintentionally excluding competing personalities. One characteristic of being a community leader in South Sudan is that

their authority is impermanent and evolves depending on dynamics. Hence, NGO activities potentially contribute to the personal projects of aspiring political actors.

Second, elites capture NGO resources for personal enrichment, the perpetuation of violence, and the purchase of loyalties. In conflict environments, looting is a widespread incident, especially in the face of concurrent crises. In South Sudan, the license to loot has become a common way to repay accumulated arrears with loyalty payments for armed actors (Boswell et al., 2019).

Third, NGO activities create new markets profitable for political actors (e.g., security contracts). Businesses and political elites are overlapping communities. In South Sudan, NGOs contract out security services due to highly unsafe environments. Security agencies of business elites who have close ties with political elites usually provide these services.

Lastly, the fungibility of aid relaxes the government's budget constraints for funding war instead of welfare. A broad literature discussed aid fungibility as the potential undesirable effects of unearned income (Ahmed, 2012).

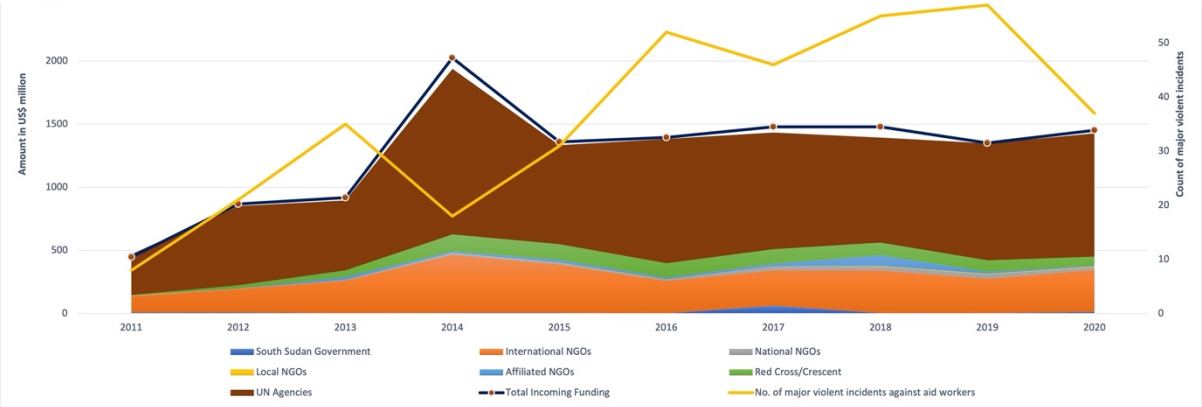
To contribute to the logic ordering actors' behavior in political markets entails reinforcing the legitimacy that organizes this behavior and bolstering the conditions enabling this logic. This legitimacy refers to the general acceptance of political market practices: competitive exchange of loyalty and allegiance, the ability to wield threats of violence, and rent-seeking behavior. One of the material expressions of this system is the political fund which constrains actors and defines their viability. The political market reproduction, then, can be traced through the combination of these factors.

Sketching the persistent humanitarian emergency that contextualizes NGO participation in South Sudan, the country has faced many interconnected crises: civil wars, famine, climate-related disasters, and community-level violence. UN agencies, with NGOs, have been a vital force in delivering humanitarian aid. This massive humanitarian funding couples this vitality. In 2020 alone, South Sudan received at least US$ 1.45 billion in humanitarian funding (UN OCHA, 2020b). As a benchmark to this funding figure, South Sudan's GDP in 2020 stood at US$ 4.18 billion[3].

[3] Even though COVID-19 has affected this figure, the GDP (in current prices) in 2019 and 2018 is $US 4.93 billion and US$ 4.66 billion, respectively.

Not all humanitarian funding goes to NGOs, although they receive a considerable share of it. See figure 5.

Figure 5: Yearly reported international humanitarian funding by organizational destination (in US$, millions) and major violent incidents against aid workers in South Sudan



Source: Financial Tracking Service UN OCHA; www.aidworkersecurity.org

A World Bank report by Finn and von der Goltz (2020) indicates that NGOs are one of the biggest employers in South Sudan, outsizing local businesses. Around 400 NGOs employ around 15,000 workers, which constitutes 22% of businesses (Finn & von de Goltz, 2020). NGOs alone provided one in every four jobs in Juba, without counting UN employees and contracted workers on the UN and NGO payroll. Also, most NGOs have been active longer than most businesses (Finn & von der Goltz, 2020). In Finn and von de Goltz's (2020) view, aid workers are an essential source of demand for goods and services in Juba, even though direct agency procurement is not a significant factor. UN and aid agencies' employees are likely to contribute to the economy through domestic demand as they account for as much as 74% of the customers outside Juba (Finn & von der Goltz, 2020).

While receiving large amounts of humanitarian funding, South Sudan also receives official development assistance (ODA) and official aid. The World Bank report by Mawejje (2020) reveals a significant shift in food consumption from market to aid. People in the country have been dependent on aid for welfare due to conflicts and natural disasters.

The organizational and institutional setup, objectives and missions, and the funds of NGOs configure their activities. More often than not, NGO activities characterize short-term programs and projects for long-term and widespread problems. As South Sudan characterizes a condition where curtailing civilian liberties and spaces is common, openly confronting the political marketplace logic, especially for smaller NGOs, are close to impossible and are usually beyond

their objectives. This condition is why the study clearly defined that NGO activities only contribute to the reproduction of political markets.

In this plausibility probe linking NGO activities and political markets, this paper demonstrates that the scale and extent of NGOs working in South Sudan have the potential to create political market disturbances. NGO resources brought into the country do not automatically contribute to political market reproduction. Depending on the context in which political markets evolve, there are instances when such resources are a lucrative source of funds. NGOs contribute to political market dynamics when NGOs fail to insulate their resources from elite capture and work in sensitive ways that feed the current political climate.

SYSTEMATIC MECHANISM: NGO ACTIVITIES AND THE POLITICAL MARKETPLACE

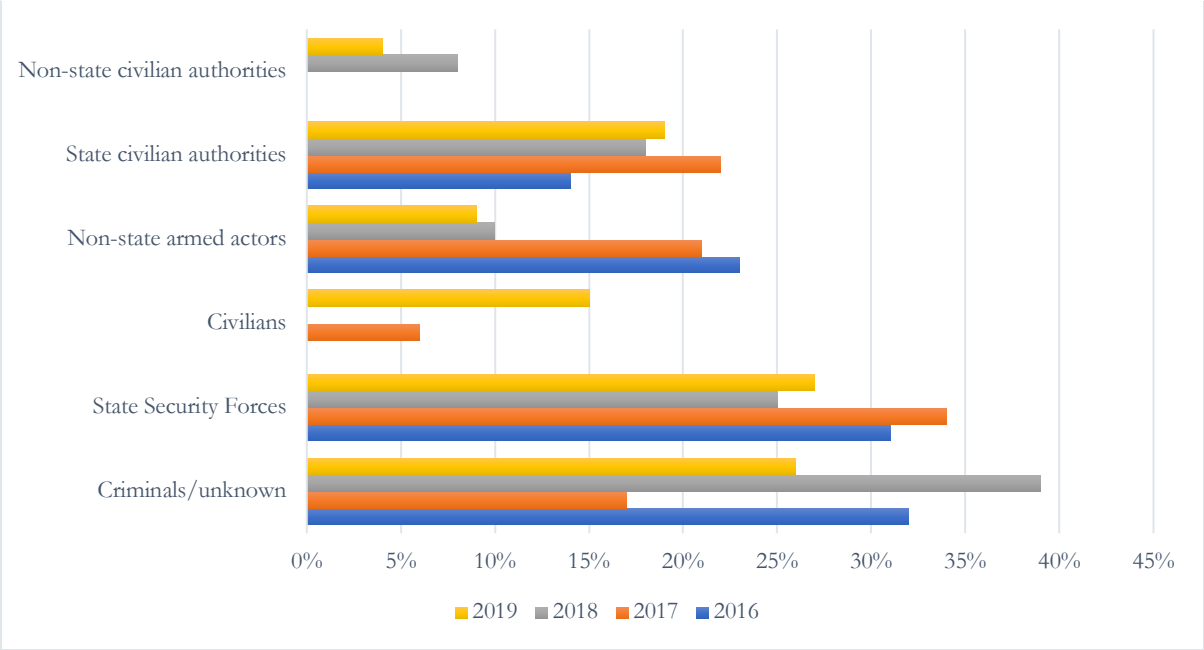
1. Political-business strategies and tactics

NGO activities influence the political-business strategy and tactics of actors in political markets when rents are shrinking. If this relation holds, then the predicted evidence is that political actors attempt to co-opt or direct NGO activities and to minimize negative disruptions of interventions to their operations. There is no black and white document detailing the strategic and tactical maneuvering of political actors that enables its analysis. How, then, can it be determined that NGO activities induce benefit-maximizing and disruption-minimizing inclinations from political actors? The key is to trace political actors' treatment of the humanitarian space.

This paper uses the data on reported violent incidents against aid workers and their assets, to describe the main perpetrators of these attacks, which aid organizations are affected, and the patterns and motivations behind hampering humanitarian access. From this, the paper deduces the patterned tactics political actors use against NGO activities.

Among the perpetrators[4] affecting humanitarian access in Figure 6, state forces have played a significant role in these documented cases, next to criminals/unknown perpetrators. However, when disaggregated between violent and non-violent attacks, data from 2018 and 2019 indicates criminals/unknown perpetrators have more documented cases of 'violent incidents,' while state security forces and state civil authorities have more documented cases of 'non-violent interference.'

Figure 6: Type of perpetrator of reported humanitarian access incidents in South Sudan



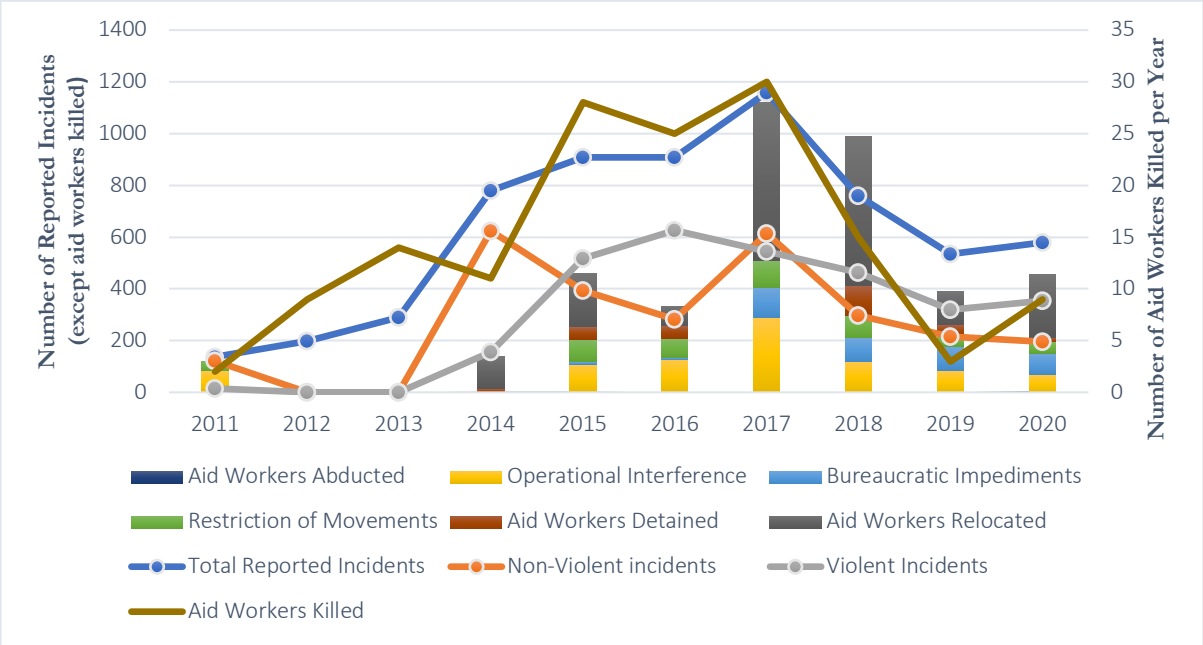
Source: UN OCHA Annual Humanitarian Access Review 2019-2016

In Stoddard et al.'s (2017) separate analysis of major attacks on aid workers, the incidents attributed to state actors include two types of violence. These two are (1) the deliberate and targeted attacks by the state, perpetrated mainly by the military forces during the period they analyzed, and (2) incidents of crossfire and airstrikes by the state and other actors, which includes accidents and collateral damage. The authors' cross-country analysis reveals correlations between aid worker violence and other indicators of state fragility and failure (Stoddard et al., 2017). However, in South Sudan's case where the military commits attacks against aid workers, they argue that it goes beyond the lack of capacity to extend law and protection of humanitarian operations: it reflects *"a brutal, ethnically driven military campaign, disintegration of command and control, a condition of impunity for offenders, and the hostility against aid workers"* (Stoddard et al., 2017).

[4] Civilians refer to identifiable individuals such as beneficiaries, community leaders, youth, or former staff. (UNOCHA, 2020).

In UN OCHA's (2019) typology, cases of violent incidents against aid workers and their assets range from killing, abduction, rape, detention or arrest, robbery, looting, burglaries, commandeering or hijacking, and destruction of assets. On the contrary, non-violent incidents include access denials, operational interference, movement restrictions, and bureaucratic impediments (UN OCHA, 2019). See Figure 7[5].

Figure 7: Yearly reported incidents of hampered humanitarian access and aid workers killed

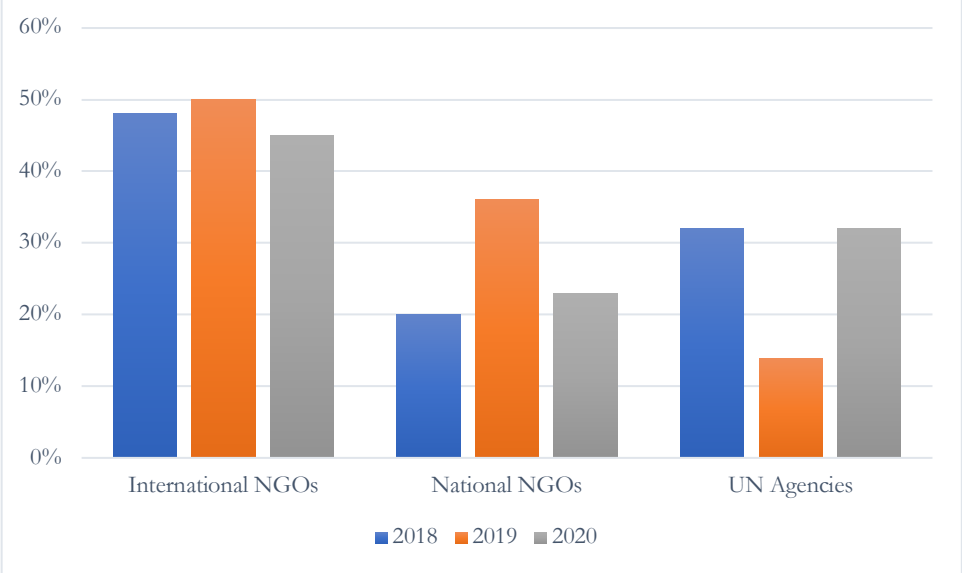


Source: UN OCHA Humanitarian Access Review, Aid Worker Security Database

UN OCHA classifies affected organizations into national NGOs, international NGOs, and UN agencies. See Figure 8. From the documented period of 2018-2020, INGOs experienced the most incidents compared with the other two. However, a careful reading of the data is needed as the type of organization may appear to be more affected than the others because of a more widespread humanitarian staff footprint.

[5] For the years 2012 and 2013, only total incidents and killed aid workers are available. For the year 2014, UN OCHA did not specify frequency data on operational interference, bureaucratic impediments, and restriction of movements. Only a few monthly reports are available.

Figure 8: Proportion of organizations affected by attacks against humanitarians



Source: UN OCHA

The UN heuristically attributes the intention of attacks to economic and political motivations. This paper finds that the regularity of these attacks against aid workers indicates the conscious decision of political actors to influence humanitarian activities. The humanitarian space is the fulcrum that political actors use to influence NGO activities by restriction, intimidation, harassment, interference, surveillance, if not outright violence. These methods form a part of the political-business strategy of political actors. If the attacks are not part of the strategy, South Sudan authorities will prosecute individual perpetrators. Nevertheless, prosecutions are the exception, and impunity is the rule. The fact that political actors even institutionalize restrictions through laws tells more of their intent to deal with NGO activities.

However, the hypothesized part is conditional. Although the paper finds the predicted evidence of patterned actions of political actors hampering humanitarian activities, it does not provide evidence of when or why NGO activities trigger an action from political actors. The shrinking rent sources of political actors are the conditional trigger that this study formulates in the hypothesis. The analysis, then, proceeds by providing evidence for this condition.

In South Sudan, NGOs are collectively large, while crises have kept donors channeling resources to NGOs. The government's decision to close down its oil production in 2012 exhausted government revenues and sources of rents. Oil production restarted in 2013, but it has never recovered the same production before its closure. The dip in oil prices in the subsequent period has also strained this source of revenue for political actors. With a struggling economy, the civil

war began in 2013, which subsided only in late 2018. Persistent food insecurity due to conflict and natural disasters have intensified humanitarian needs. In 2017, the WFP even declared near-famine conditions in several areas of the country.

Against the backdrop of dwindling oil revenues, the growing need for rents to finance the war and loyalty payments, and the segmenting political market[6], political managers resorted to various tactics[7] to secure such funds and maintain the 'big tent strategy' used by dominant actors. A UN CHR (2020) expert panel finding reveals that the country's political actors have *"invested disproportionally in a pervasive and repressive national security architecture, routinely curtailing political space and freedoms in order to maintain* [a] *hold on power…channeling the country's vast oil wealth and natural resources for personal gain and for sustaining the parallel political and security systems."*

These tactics include government asset transfer and sales, extortion of taxes and levies, sale of natural resources, and licensing armed units to pillage and steal material goods. Although these tactics are not directed against NGOs but to the civilian population in general, these methods have significantly increased insecurity, thereby affecting the provision of humanitarian assistance, which characterizes the shrinking humanitarian space. According to the Aid Worker Security Report (Stoddard et al., 2017), attacks by the SPLA and other armed actors have included murder, gang rape, and beatings or torture, which resulted in a dramatic decrease in the operational aid presence in the country. Meanwhile, aid organizations and NGOs tried to raise funds to provide much-needed humanitarian assistance.

Political actors have instrumentalized ethnic identities during the 2013 civil war, which added the complexity of providing humanitarian aid. In Tanner et al.'s (2017) report, several community-based NGOs in opposition areas during the civil war in 2015 have closed down because they cannot access government registration offices. NGOs become the target of armed actors, especially when they attempt to provide humanitarian provision in opposition areas.

Political managers' economic motivation to influence NGO activities is coupled with its political motivation of preventing aid from reaching areas where opposing ethnic identities are located. Political managers use various tactics to monitor NGOs with advocacies that harm their

[6] This refers to the internal rift within the SPLM/A and the eventual rise of smaller armed groups in South Sudan, such as the White Army.

[7] One documented tactic of political actors is the sale of future oil production and the monetization of the government budget deficits (Mawejje, 2020).

operations (UN OCHA, 2018). For example, according to the South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC), the 2016 NGO Law intends to influence NGOs' assistance in certain areas and limit advocacy and engagement in political issues (Hamsik, 2017). Unsurprisingly, authorities used the law to silence civil activists. A report[8] reveals that the government instructed the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO), a national NGO, *"to shut down within two weeks or be considered illegal"* when it demanded that government soldiers be held accountable for raping and looting.

The sheer size and outpour of resources to NGOs in the face of shrinking oil-rents has incentivized political actors to co-opt or direct NGO activities and to minimize negative disruptions on their operations by serving as gatekeepers. In Jansen's (2017) view, this reaction of political managers not only represents their rent-seeking tendency but the historical embeddedness of NGOs in the state-building process. This analysis finds Jansen's argument that political actors' motivation to restrict NGO activities as flexing their sovereignty inadequate. The argument fails to account for the evidence that these policies are applied to hamper humanitarian assistance in opposition areas, curtail civil liberties, and the impunity that comes with violent attacks against aid workers and their assets as loyalty payments.

Political managers can extract rents through private businesses. However, most of these are small businesses, with three or fewer workers making up almost 72% of all businesses, while NGOs employ 37 workers on average or 18 workers at the median (Finn & von der Goltz, 2020). The network of political actors and businesses are also overlapping (The Sentry, 2019a, 2019b, 2018, 2016; Global Witness, 2018). NGOs are the best target for such rent-seeking activity as they are more extensive than private firms and have been longer in South Sudan than most firms. As one of their tactics, political actors find ways to drive up the financial and bureaucratic cost of humanitarian access that comprises the restrictive regulation of aid agencies in South Sudan (SAVE, 2016; Yayboke, 2018).

With these, political actors in the government put up policies that closely monitor NGO activities[9] as information is an essential tool for political managers. Political managers had

[8] See ICNL (2021). South Sudan Country Overview; Lynch, J. (2016). *South Sudan activists say intimidated for meeting diplomats.* AP News. https://apnews.com/article/2731beaf514a48d29dc9fe582f497748

[9] NGOs are closely monitored by securing permits for any activity. For example, a transportation permit for an item within South Sudan by an NGO would cost around US$ 200. An INGO registration would cost around US$ 2000, while NGO country heads need to register at the Criminal Investigation Unit for US$1000. Work permit fees for consultants and managers cost as much as

continuously meddled with NGO's hiring decisions[10], seized assets, and used intimidation and overly complex procedure to influence where, when, and how assistance was delivered (Hamsik, 2017; Jansen, 2017; UN OCHA, 2020a). The 2016 NGO law institutionalized and strengthened the government's hand in coordinating aid delivery, controlling NGO access, using the bureaucracy for oversight[11] and surveillance[12], and influencing NGO programming.

The RRC[13] required NGOs to submit extensive reports related to finances, history, projects, and staffing plans to be legally registered. According to Hamsik (2017), the NGO Law has required NGOs that imported goods under tax exemption cannot be liquidated or transferred to other projects, but these goods and assets must be transferred to RRC once the project closes. The RRC requires all NGOs to list all assets in field sites during the registry to ensure a complete account of NGO assets (Wau State – Wau RCC, 2019). Reports reveal that authorities coerce NGOs into paying fees for RRC to free confiscated items, or forfeit assets or pay fines to avoid more damaging measures (Hamsik, 2017).

Before this law, the SPLM/A established the South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association (SSRRA) during the war with Sudan. In Hamsik's (2017) view, the SSRRA served as the liaison office between the army and the NGOs. During independence, SSRRA became RRC and functioned under the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, which served as a vehicle to continue South Sudan's political and security objectives (Hamsik, 2017). How it functions is rooted in the political-military structures of the state (Hamsik, 2017).

The paper increases its degree of confidence attributed to this part of the hypothesized causal mechanism. The dwindling sources of rents are the most plausible reason for NGO activities to influence the incentive structure of political actors. However, it may seem that most

US$ 4,000 and US$ 3,000 for 'professionals.' As an example, see Government of South Sudan (2017). *The Financial Act 2017/2018;* South Sudan Civil Aviation Authority (2019). *Circular for All International Humanitarian Agencies and Airline operators' agents assessing the Air site;* South Sudan Ministry of Transport. (2014). Circular on *Inspector for vehicles verifications for licensing.* (Circular no. 1/14).

[10] See South Sudan Ministry of Labour, Public Service, and Human Resource Development (2019), *Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Recruitment Guidelines.*

[11] See South Sudan Criminal Investigation Division. (2019). *Letter for UN Agencies and NGOs Requirements for Verification Exercise.* South Sudan National Police Service, Ministry of Interior.

[12] An example of this surveillance is the RRC asking NGOs in South Sudan to list all their employees. See RRC (2019) *Memorandum on Updated Staff List of International and National staff.*

[13] For example, see Wau State – Wau Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) (2019). *Memorandum on Validation of all Humanitarian Organization Operating in Wau State.*

violence against aid workers is just collateral damage due to the criminal behavior of some actors. This paper finds a compelling reason that the inability of the political actors to sustain loyalty payments leading to the 'big tent strategy' failure due to shrinking rent sources has routed many to attack NGOs providing humanitarian resources. This condition has fed the increased attacks against aid workers. The political manager's strategy allowing its starved members to 'loot and pillage,' material goods and people alike, with impunity, enables this behavior to persist.

This paper contends that the seemingly coincidental nature of attacks against aid workers constitutes the political-business strategy and tactics of political actors. The evidence points to the direction that there is a systematic attempt at capturing humanitarian resources appearing legitimate through the façade of government regulations. Hence, this study finds that NGO activities influence the political-business strategy and tactics of political actors by being the alternative, if not the second best, target to pursue their goals in the political marketplace.

2. Political funds

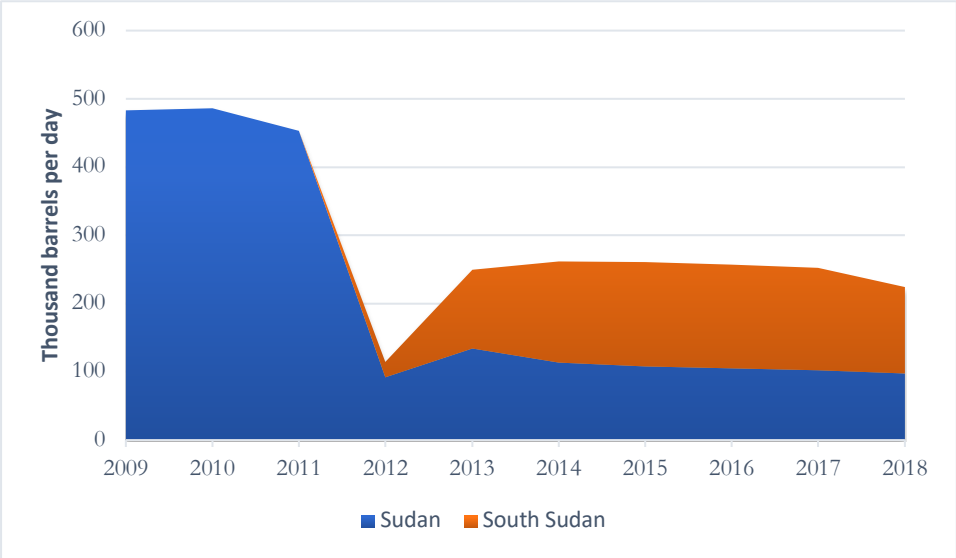
Actors in the political marketplace attempt to maximize the benefit of NGO activity-derived rents for political budgets. This paper formulates the expected evidence if this hypothesis exists in a manner where political actors design political-business strategies and tactics to ensure the flow of political finance from NGO activities. Central to the political-business strategy of actors is to ensure their survival in the political market. This centrality is why political finance is embedded in political-business strategies as it directly links to actors' survival.

The fall of oil prices has put severe pressure on the government's budget, and by implication, the primary source of political funds has been tight. See Figure 9. Political managers have shifted to issuing advanced oil contracts and central bank financing to remedy this budgetary constraint (IMF African Department, 2020; Mawejje, 2020). Various tactics of political actors, as discussed earlier, have been used to maintain the flow of political budgets. However, these were not enough to cover the war and loyalty payments.

According to the typical argument for war economies, the political-business strategy is to suppress welfare budgets to increase funds for political finance. There is the expectation that political actors would highly rely on NGOs and aid agencies. However, this does not fully explain the situation in South Sudan as restrictions to humanitarian access are observed. According to Hilde Johnson, former head of UNMISS, "*it was international NGOs that ended up bearing the brunt of*

social-service delivery to South Sudanese, providing [the] *population with basic healthcare and education, and building in rural areas"* (AU Commission, 2014). This reasoning points to the direction that welfare provision for its citizens never restricted political actors in governments.

Figure 9: Crude oil production in Sudan and South Sudan



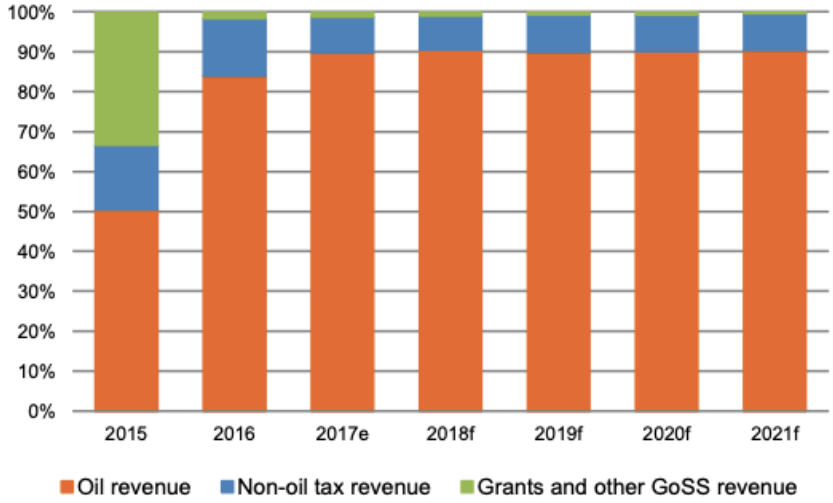
Source: US Energy Information Administration

South Sudan's welfare spending has been consistently low compared with security spending and payment of salaries and wages (Attipoe et al., 2014). Why, then, do they restrict humanitarian access? The last part (part 1) of the causal mechanism explains that political actors targeted NGO activities to gain more resources or serve as a substitute in the absence of political finance through rent-seeking behavior, if not violent attacks against aid workers. The insecurity generated by regulation and impunity of attacks against aid workers, primarily caused by political actors themselves, has permitted political actors to entirely take advantage of the situation.

The size of political funds is hard to measure, but tracing its sources is possible. See figure 10. For example, a Sentry report (2016) shows that an oil company made $80 million security-related payments to South Sudanese political actors, government agencies, and companies owned by politicians and their relatives from March 2014 – June 2015 alone[14]. A Global Witness (2018) report also has similar findings in its investigation of the state-owned company, Nilepet. Although these reports show only the documented figure of oil-rents going to political actors throughout the years, it indicates the clear trend that oil has been a source of political funds.

[14] See news report: Mednick, S. (2018). *South Sudan oil money corruptly funds civil wars, say reports.* AP News. https://apnews.com/article/b522f621d4b44653b80614fe6de7088a

Figure 10: Share of total government revenue



Notes: e = estimate, f = forecast. Source: South Sudanese authorities; and IMF estimates and projections.

Secrecy masks South Sudan's oil industry, and accurate data on production or export volumes are hard to obtain. However, the World Bank report by Mawejje (2020) shows that the share of the oil sector in South Sudan's GDP declined from 60% in 2011 to around 32% in 2019. In Mawejje's (2020) view, this change in magnitude may have reduced incentives to extract oil rents to some degree.

The 'reduced incentives' of political actors to extract political finance from oil production had implications on who would be the first victims of non-repayment of shares from political funds: political actors in the lower segment of the network. It manifested itself in the form of non-payment of wages of government workers (a form of patronage) and those in the security sector. This condition could be why there are low-intensity but widespread attacks of state authorities against aid workers and their assets. The inability of political actors in the higher level network to repay the loyalty of those in the lower order led them to allow looting, ambush, and restrictions of NGO activities without being held responsible for these actions.

Political payments in the form of license to loot and pillage and the arbitrary setting-up of checkpoints have been lucrative as NGOs transport humanitarian resources in South Sudan. There is the view from political actors that what was entering South Sudan belonged to the government, which emboldened these local actors to lay legitimate claims over humanitarian assets (Jansen, 2017). In Jansen's (2017) analysis, the insecurity caused mainly by political actors gave them the leverage to control the humanitarian access of NGOs.

It is no coincidence that private security firms are the largest employers in South Sudan. For example, they are partially foreign-owned, catering in part to international presence. Private security firms employ about four times as many workers as businesses active in manufacturing (around 1,645 jobs employed in 384 firms) (Finn & von der Goltz, 2020). Unsurprisingly, NGOs account for enormous spending on private security (78%) (Finn & von der Goltz, 2020). Political actors also have links to these businesses. For example, an investigative report by the Sentry (2016) has discovered the relatives of Vice President Machar to have a direct stake in the private security company, KK Security, based in Kenya. In the report, the private security firm provides services to international organizations, aid agencies, NGOs, and local businesses (Sentry, 2016).

The incentives and disincentives structures for political actors also shift over time when interventions are sustained and become an integral part of survival for significant parts of the population. Political actors design their political-business strategies for NGO activities with rent-extracting goals. The design involves strategically locating projects and programs to benefit their supporters as a form of payment for their loyalty. An example is Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS). Food assistance and provision of welfare have played into local politics: control over food distribution networks being a key asset for local commander (Carver, 2017).

There are several accounts of how humanitarian aid in South Sudan was instrumentalized and manipulated by authorities and rebel parties (Millard Burr & Collins, 1995; Hutchinson, 1996; De Waal, 1997; Laverage & Weissman, 2004; Marriage, 2006; Johnson, 2007; Keen, 2008). Hamsik (2017) observes that when inflation and currency devaluation made it difficult for the government to sustain its patronage networks and pay salaries in 2016, NGOs experienced a spike in requests from local authorities for material support such as vehicles, fuel, cash, tires, and phone credit.

Conservative estimates suggest that South Sudan collected around $200,000 for NGO registration in August 2017 alone (Hamsik, 2017). Although small compared to the war economy, Hamsik (2017) notes that there can be no separation between NGO regulation and the political economy of the war. She contends that the collapse of many income streams for political actors has accelerated the control for the remaining lucrative asset in the country – humanitarian assistance (Hamsik, 2017).

There is an increase in the paper's degree of confidence in this hypothesized part of the causal mechanism. (See APPENDIX). It provides evidence that the design of political-business

strategies with the primary aim to ensure political actors' survival maximizes the benefits from NGO activities through rent-seeking behavior, if not outright violence.

The PMF contends that the use of political funds involves the exchange of loyalties and allegiance, fund and sustain violence, and personal enrichment of political actors. Political finance closely links with the corruption and plunder of resources in South Sudan. However, corruption is just one of the tools political actors utilize to maintain the flow of political funds. Corruption also limits the study's view regarding political actor activity. This reason is why the idea of a political fund is a more encompassing concept as it is not just used for personal enrichment but, more importantly, for the exchange of loyalty and violence.

3.1 Exchange of Loyalty and Allegiance

Managing the flow of political finance involves the exchange of loyalty and allegiance. The use of political funds involves the competitive exchange of loyalty and allegiance as one of its functions. The paper expects that political actors make, receive, demand, and supply loyalty payments if this relation holds.

As de Waal (2015) suggests, loyalty payments are not only in the form of cash or other valuable resources. Impunity is also a proxy for hard cash or resources accessed through loyalty. License to loot and pillage is another. Armed actors in certain areas sow terror and steal from South Sudanese civilians with impunity. Public employment is also a form of patronage. A country with 11.8 million people employs 400,000 soldiers and police and 50,000 civil servants, constituting as many workers in established businesses (Mawejje, 2020). Lacher (2012) states that instead of lining up the funds for a viable development plan, the SPLM has used the national budget to build these vast clientelist structures.

The AU Commission Report (2014) documents that despite the availability of legal and institutional framework, *"access to resources and services are determined by patronage and allegiance to the ruling party."* What shapes the form of allegiance in South Sudan is the groups' (or individuals') ability to holds arms to rally behind those who purchased their loyalty. These two factors sketch the condition why many are lured into arming themselves or joining the army.

The limited and mismanaged political finance has placed severe pressure on political actors to secure the loyalty they purchased (i.e., the big tent strategy). The non-payment of salaries to

public employees has been widespread and increased the humanitarian access incidence seen in Figure 7.

Leonardi (2007) studied the complex motives of the youth in South Sudan into being associated with the army (SPLA). She finds that the SPLA tried to inculcate loyalty among its recruits through coercion and patronage (Leonardi, 2007). Leonardi (2007) also finds that many girls marry soldiers to secure protection from rape by other soldiers, which she contends is how people have remedied their sense of disempowerment. The AU Commission Report (2014) finds that by using state resources and contributions of the business sector, political leaders have recruited the youth to the point of creating a private army, subsumed into the South Sudanese army.

In South Sudan, the exchanges of loyalty and allegiance have also been drawn along ethnic lines by contending political elites. However, a report (i.e., AU Commission Report 2014) reveals that ethnic membership in many instances is not the immediate nor the root causes of conflict or the sole basis for the exchange of loyalty. The disagreement among political actors regarding the succession of leadership of SPLM has been brewing ever since South Sudan became independent (AU Commission, 2014). Before this, differences within the SPLM leadership portended violence as early as 2009 but urges for the unity of purpose averted this as elections, and the impending referendum approached (AU Commission, 2014). These long-standing disagreements have been delayed but became pronounced after the CPA, which heightened the competition in the political market among elites. With dwindling political funds and South Sudan's militarized public life, the disagreement has morphed into violence, leading to the civil war in 2013.

There is no reduction or increase in the paper's degree of confidence attributed to this hypothesized part of the mechanism. (See APPENDIX). The evidence presented is similar to what has been used by scholars of the political marketplace framework. However, this paper still finds evidence that the transmission of the causal force from NGO activities to the competitive exchange of loyalty and allegiance exists.

3.2 Violence

The flow of political funds enables the perpetuation of violence. This relation holds depending on the size of the political budgets. This relation means that when there is demand for loyalty, but the political budget is limited, those who supply their loyalty could deploy violence to

nudge political managers to purchase their loyalty. On the contrary, when there is demand for loyalty but political budgets are expanding, those who supply their loyalty could threaten violence to nudge political leaders to make payments. However, the political skill and strategy of actors also shape this calculus.

For this part of the hypothesized mechanism, the paper expects to find evidence that political actors use their amassed political budgets (in whatever form) to fund violence to destroy their competitor or to ensure to outbid their competitor using the political funds. There are a plethora of motivations for violence in South Sudan: cattle revenge killing and criminal behavior, among others. There is no shortage of documentation on the intensity and sites of violence in South Sudan. However, this paper demonstrates a particular logic of violence that does not intend to be the catch-all explanation for the violence in South Sudan.

In the political marketplace logic, violence is instrumental in negotiating positions in the hierarchy of relations. Violence and the exchange of loyalty are closely linked. Impunity mediates the exchange of loyalty that enables violence to take its form. It is not surprising why armed militias, as a payment for their loyalty, go unpunished for killing civilians, raping women, and arming children.

The AU Commission report (2014) reveals that resource plunder from South Sudan's resources constitutes "*a grievance and a threat which has nurtured participation in, and mobilization for, violence.*" The Sentry (2016) and the Global Witness (2018) reports document how political actors use oil rents to fund the purchase of war equipment. Using the evidence on humanitarian access incidence reports, this part of the mechanism finds that NGO activities and resources are sometimes violently usurped and captured. These attacks function as loyalty payments of political actors to their subordinates when other forms of payments are limited, if not unavailable.

There is no reduction in the paper's confidence in the existence of this part of the mechanism as it finds evidence of the transmission of the causal force from NGO activities up until this part. (See APPENDIX).

3.3 Personal Enrichment

Political funds, along with violence and patronage, enable the enrichment of political actors. Pinaud (2014) has studied the making of what she calls the 'military aristocracy' of the

SPLA commanders amassing wealth both in war and peace. She demonstrates how the political actors consolidated their position as a dominant class through a dense network of providing gifts, specifically cattle, for their clients to marry (Pinaud, 2014).

This personal enrichment from political funds involves resources and the social capital in which they increase their networks through marriage. Deng (2010) has studied the impacts of war on the social capital of communities in South Sudan. He contends that war does not summarily destroy social relations but creates new forms of relations (Deng 2010).

The Sentry (2020a, 2020b, 2019a, 2019b, 2018, 2017, and 2016) and the Global Witness (2018) document the enrichment of political actors through patronage, corruption, and violence. Ferullo (2018) traced the connections of the banking sector with political actors who channeled their ill-gotten wealth outside South Sudan through the global financial system. Dranginis (2019) explored the network of actors in East and Central Africa to investigate the economic dimension of atrocities of political actors. These reports have followed the trail of money and the alleged unexplained wealth of political actors in South Sudan. A conclusion emerges that these political actors have enriched themselves from war, patronage, famine, and plunder of the country's resources by colluding with a vast network of international actors. Yet, this analysis is concerned with a specific mechanism that links NGO activities to the personal enrichment of key political actors. The documented reports do not state such link in South Sudan.

This hypothesized part of the mechanism, if it exists, expects that political actors use their amassed political budgets to enrich themselves. At the same time, there is evidence that security-related businesses connected to political actors, as discussed in part 2 of the mechanism, potentially profit from NGO activities. Investigating the reports used by this paper states no trace evidence that key political actors have enriched themselves solely from NGO activities. The looting of NGO warehouses and corrupt practices of bureaucrats may have benefitted some groups. However, this paper finds no adequate observation that it has substantially enriched individuals that can increase or decrease this paper's confidence in this part of the mechanism.

The evidence of the above reports and studies does not confirm the existence of the causal force transmission that emanates from NGO activities, eventually leading to the personal enrichment of political actors. For this reason, the study's confidence in the existence of this part of the causal mechanism remains the same.

4. Reproduction of the Political Marketplace

The exchange of loyalty and violence contributes to the reproduction of the political marketplace. If this part of the mechanism exists, the paper expects to find evidence that political market characteristics change when the exchange of loyalty and violence occurs.

In South Sudan, the causal force that drives these changes in the political market due to NGO activities begins with NGO's integration in the state-building project of actors such as the UNMISS and international donors and organizations. With more humanitarian funds coming into the country, the contracting source of political finance and cracks among dominant political actors made NGO activities more susceptible to influence the political marketplace.

Divorcing the role of UN agencies with NGOs working in South Sudan is difficult as this historical cooperation of humanitarian–development exchange played a role in shaping South Sudanese politics. A closer look at UNMISS's mission to assist the government of South Sudan in governing has received many criticisms. In an assessment report of the UNMISS' effectiveness by Day et al. (2019) for the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, there is a view that *"while the UN is trying to support state-building, political actors are just trying to survive."* The report describes the UN's early support to the state as *"putting 'fingers on the scale' in favor of the Dinka-dominated government, helping to shore up President Kiir's support network"* (Day et al., 2019).

It is undeniable that UN agencies have set the rhythm for NGOs as their symbiotic activities become more intertwined, especially for hard-to-reach areas. Several NGOs, especially local ones, rely on these aid agencies for funding and operational support, such as airlift to distribute humanitarian goods. On the contrary, UN agencies and INGOs rely on local NGOs for closer interaction with beneficiaries.

Looking at historical patterns of aid agencies and NGO activities in South Sudan, they became a substitute for welfare provision instead of just supporting the gaps left by the State. Meanwhile, political actors were busy fighting each other increasing military expenditures and wage payments that significantly comprised the government budget. Significant parts of the population had to rely on humanitarian assistance, which signifies the country's aid dependence.

De Waal (2015) has theorized that a critical marker of the political marketplace is the continuation of conducting politics that is monetized, personalized and transactional exchanges of loyalty, according to the supply and demand over formal institutions. In South Sudan's post-independence experience, evidence (i.e., UN reports; AU Commission 2014; Day et al., 2019) reveals how this logic of politics has persisted.

Violence is also an essential driver in the reproduction of political markets. It serves many functions, but in South Sudan, political actors used violence to negotiate their positions within the political market and terrorize citizens by posturing as an ethnic conflict. This condition became evident in the Civil War in 2013 and the widespread community-level violence that continued even when hostilities between primary actors have subsided.

In this paper's hypothesized causal mechanism, violence and the exchanges of loyalty and allegiance carry the causal force that leads to the reproduction of the political marketplace. This relation was observed before South Sudan's independence when President Kiir employed the 'big tent strategy' to ensure the unity of political actors to secure the country's secession from Sudan. In the aftermath of independence, due to confounding conditions, the strategy became unworkable. Increased violence has been observed over these years, specifically when political funds became incommensurate with the demands and price of loyalty. According to Boswell et al. (2019), the structure of the political market in South Sudan began with two rivalrous kleptocracies before independence. This structure morphed into a rivalrous oligopoly after independence and free competition during the Civil War in 2013. See Table 1.

This analysis has traced how NGO activities ends-up 'unintentionally' contributing to the reproduction of the political marketplace. It has identified how NGO activities influence the political-business strategy of political actors as their interaction deepens in the process. Central to the political-business strategy is to ensure the flow of political funds. What defines political actors' strategy in their behavior with NGOs is to ensure benefit extraction from the latter's activities. Although the source of political funds is not limited to rent-extracted from NGOs, its importance becomes more pronounced when another source of finance becomes limited. Political actors then use the political funds to exchange loyalty and allegiance, enable the conduct of violence as the actors' calculus dictates, and enrich themselves.

NGO-derived rents might be small compared to other sources of finance, but it has led to South Sudan's dependency on welfare provision. In reviewing reports of South Sudan, the paper notes that there was never a trade-off between war and welfare provision as those in power have never provided significant funds for social services. This reasoning is why there is caution in inferring that NGO activities providing welfare have freed up the state's budgetary restriction to pursue its war or pay its clients. Processes involving the exchange of loyalty and allegiance and the threat of violence have led to the reproduction of the political marketplace.

The hypothesized mechanism seemingly charts a linear causal relationship of NGO activities and the reproduction of the political marketplace treading along each of the parts discussed. See Figure 4. However, this paper argues that it only captures a segment of the complex dynamics of political markets. This paper in no way infers from the causal process presented that NGOs produce political markets. The causal process presented does not say anything about the political marketplace's genesis or evolution.

This paper did not extensively provide evidence on how political funds, derived from actors' political-business strategies designed to extract resources from NGO activities, are used to exchange loyalty and allegiance, violence, and personal enrichment as reports demonstrated such relationship. This paper deemed its primary task is to show how NGO activities influence actors' political-business strategy and tactics, centered on securing the flow of political funds. On the other end of the causal mechanism, this paper argued that political marketplace reproduction is immediately affected by the exchange of loyalty and allegiance and violence.

DISCUSSIONS

HUMANITARIAN AID & DEVELOPMENT DELIVERY ACCORDING TO THE PMF

The political marketplace framework (PMF) contribution for intervention practices starts with the analytical tool it presents for organizations or peace advocates. Existing discussions of PMF on intervention practices are more general and not dedicated explicitly to NGOs. Despite this, the PMF puts forward tools which could detect factors that drive change in political markets. According to de Waal et al. (2020), these tools attempt to understand the system for what it is and not what it should be.

The PMF is a helpful device in assessing the factors that drive change in the political system beyond institutions, which entails weighing the likely political consequences of interventions and the flexibility for changes (de Waal et al., 2020). Following de Waal's et al. (2020) prescription using the PMF, there are three broad types of approaches[15] available for intervention after an analysis using the framework: a) tactically engineering short-term outcomes; b) stabilizing from above through changes to the political economy; c) preparing the ground for democratic transformation from below.

Interventions referred here have blurred the lines between the heavy-footprint and light-footprint interventions discussed in the earlier parts of the paper (see page 16). The latter type of intervention, usually associated with NGO activities, has become a part of a broader package of interventions in practice. This intervention package is the reason why this paper also discusses the PMF's view and prescriptions on broad intervention practices. Specifically, the first and third broad approaches for interventions are useful when operationalizing NGO activities.

As the analysis reveals, when NGOs fail to consider the political marketplace logic and the conditions perpetuating the marketplace, NGO activities could be readily co-opted or manipulated. When co-opted, at its best, corrupt activities of political actors subsume NGO activities. At its worst, NGO activities have contributed to the reproduction of the political marketplace.

The view of the PMF is that when such prior analysis fails to consider the logic and behavior of political actors of the market, NGO interventions might enable the perpetuation of the political marketplace logic. Likewise, such interventions could lead to undesirable outcomes if NGOs have become inflexible in making operational and tactical decisions.

Short-termism could be an advantage in political markets (de Waal et al., 2020). NGOs being alleged to employ such practices in their programs play a vital role in fulfilling this prescription for relatively limited goals. Depending on the structure and situation of political markets, factors driving change may morph into something else faster than the desired goals of long-term interventions. One evidence of this is the rate at which changes in the intensity and sites of violence took place during the 2013 civil war in South Sudan. Short-term goals enable interventions to have the ability to respond to such unpredictable outcomes.

[15] For an in-depth discussion, see De Waal et al. (2020).

NGO activities do not automatically influence the behavior of actors in a political market. However, they are a clear target of rent-extraction as the PMF shows how resources and cash are essential for the flow of political funds, determining the general shape of political markets. For the PMF, NGOs have limitations in engineering changes from below and from above (de Waal et al., 2020). Although there is a recognition that NGOs have the vital function of providing development support and humanitarian assistance, there is a need to realize the politics that comes into play upon initiating such interaction to avoid undesirable outcomes.

NGO – POLITICAL ACTOR INTERACTION IN SOUTH SUDAN'S POLITICAL MARKET

In Clements' (2018) view, political actors, especially the armed ones, enjoy a stronger initial bargaining position than NGOs. However, describing the relationship of NGOs with different political actors in South Sudan is just the tip of the iceberg. NGOs must navigate the intricate cleavages in society as political actors organize and claim authority at varying levels. When entering negotiations, NGOs must confront the multiplicity of these competing authorities, along with the existence of village-based militias, the instrumentalized ethnic identities of Nuer versus Dinka, and the presence of revenge violence. An AU (2014) report documented the deplorable violence against civilians and the wide distribution of armed groups, which changes allegiance from time to time that humanitarians had to consider in their calculus.

General Hoth Mai's statement provides a glimpse of political elites' attitude towards NGOs. When asked why they did not integrate other armed militias under the SPLA in December 2013, he said that *"every time we integrate, someone declares in Khartoum that we have a militia...Most of these militias are illiterate. Even today, we have not integrated them. It was like dealing with NGOs, all with their leadership, each sponsored by a different country"* (African Union Draft Report[16]). This view reflects how political actors think about NGO 'legitimacy' and its motivations.

Hilda Johnson, the head of UNMISS who shepherded the transition from CPA in 2005 to independence in 2011, has aptly summarized how NGOs would play a part in the post-

[16] Taken from the leaked draft report of the African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan (2015), https://www.nyamile.com/press-release/draft-report-of-the-au-commission-of-inquiry-on-south-sudan/ . The draft report was subsequently revised as it drew flak because it blamed the US, UK, and Norway for hurriedly and prematurely supporting South Sudan's independence leading to the Civil War in 2013.

independence of South Sudan. According to the leaked AU Report (2015), Johnson puts the agenda and rationale for institutionalizing South Sudan as a global dependency: *"…the donors had already established the Capacity Building Trust Fund, …I argue that NGOs and UN agencies had to be major beneficiaries of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund and help to implement programs 'on contract' from the government…neither the government nor the World Bank had this capacity…such agreement could facilitate the continuation of UN and NGO programs in the South, with no gaps, at the same time ensuring government leadership and ownership."* NGOs did indeed play a huge role in South Sudan by providing welfare services and being the first responders during outbreaks of war and disasters.

On the one hand, reducing the humanitarian spaces due to regulation and bureaucratic costs does not only reflect the different political-business strategies of political actors. In studying taxation and private sector regulation in South Sudan, Twijnstra and Titeca (2016) find that the various outcomes of these governmental rules depend on the options available for a bureaucrat (or political actor), which reflects the older practices of politico-military authority in structuring regulatory realities.

This paper banks on De Simone's (2018) study that shows how political actors promptly incorporated the flows of external resources for humanitarian assistance into what she calls the 'extraverted strategies of state building' by appropriating material assets and discourses. She contends that the discourse revolved around playing the 'fragile state' card and underscoring fears of governance failure and state collapse (de Simone, 2018).

NGOs have responded to these realities when interacting with political actors in South Sudan by forming coalitions. Coalitions are not a new strategy, as when crises become more complex, the need to pool information, funds, lessons, and security for humanitarians becomes even more significant. The second need that necessitates this formation is avoiding duplication of programs and projects for intended beneficiaries, especially after the aid effectiveness initiative from donor countries. This strategy is also reflective of the institutional practices of the UN and humanitarians.

One example of such a coalition is the South Sudan NGO Forum. This network body is composed of 414 national and 119 international NGOs. Established in the early 1990s, the Forum functioned as a coordination mechanism for NGOs under Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS). According to its description, the Forum works to support the priority interest of members with

authorities, donors, UN agencies, and other stakeholders. This structure mirrors that of the UN system in South Sudan. The Forum provides NGOs several tools in designing programs and projects but most especially practical knowledge on how to engage with political actors and the security situation in the country.

Before South Sudan's independence, UNICEF with WFP led the negotiations with the then non-state armed groups (NSAG), SPLM/A for OLS (1989 – 2005). According to Lam Akol[17], the decision to let UNICEF lead the engagement was not a neutral choice but a conscious move to prevent any indications of recognizing the SPLM/A while providing humanitarian assistance. In a report written by Tanner and Moro (2016) for UK NGOs[18], they contend that OLS has set important precedents for South Sudan. NGOs negotiated with conflict actors to secure the access of humanitarian resources to affected populations through humanitarian ceasefires and 'corridors of tranquility' (Tanner & Moro, 2016). However, OLS has also received criticism. Tanner and Moro (2016) list some of these: prolonging the conflict, fostering a sense of expectation and entitlement to aid, disrupting social relations in beneficiary communities, and conferring legitimacy to non-state actors.

A comparative study by Carter and Haver (2016) reveals that several NGOs and UN agencies directly negotiate with NSAGs at the field level within their period study (2012-2014). A theme that emerges from their study of humanitarian negotiations in South Sudan is that permissions and assurances from higher-level NSAG authorities do not guarantee a smooth passage of humanitarian resources. Problems at checkpoints often arise because the command did not communicate with fighters operating the activity (Carter & Haver, 2016).

DILEMMAS OF NGOs AND POLITICAL ACTORS IN A POLITICAL MARKET

There are several ways to draw the line that mediates the interaction of NGOs and political actors. This paper focuses on outlining the dilemmas these actors face in South Sudan.

[17] Lam Akol is a member of the National Liberation Council of SPLM/A. See his article for Conciliation Resources, https://rc-services-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Accord16_12OperationlifelineSudan_2005_ENG.pdf

[18] Christian Aid, CAFOD' and Trócaire in Partnership, Oxfam GB and Tearfund

1. NGOs and their dilemmas

In providing humanitarian assistance and development for beneficiaries, NGOs have the self-ascribed mission to alleviate human suffering. This goal is their raison d'être. However, embarking on such a mission is not always easy, especially in conflict zones.

The first dilemma NGOs face is balancing their impartial and neutral principles with the operational possibilities on the ground and their sustainability. This dilemma could refer to how they access funding from Western governments to sustain their work (Hoelscher et al., 2017). Studies show how government-donors tend to give aid to NGOs than state actors and enmesh with the agendas of humanitarian organizations (Acht et al., 2015; Narang, 2016; Vestergaard, 2013). On the other side, this dilemma points to their evolution as a social force with ascribed moral high ground. Jansen (2017) notes the merging of humanitarianism with post-conflict state-building, peacebuilding, and military intervention. This merger has blurred the lines of intervention programs that constitute a powerful external force within their vicinities in the view of many local governments (Jansen, 2017). The securitization of humanitarian aid is a clear example of this merger.

The second dilemma NGOs face when giving in to bribes is the only way to enable humanitarian access. Jansen (2017) has described this ubiquitous form of negotiation of humanitarian presence in South Sudan as part of the *"balancing between practical considerations and principled ideas."* He contends that the dilemma lies in the embeddedness of NGOs in the state-building process, peace programs, and cooperation where NGOs' 'willingness to stay' and the negotiation for access is one way in which humanitarians become part of the neo-patrimonial network (Jansen, 2017). In Jansen's (2017) view, this balancing may include the 'abuse' of aid and legitimizing the very 'abusers' in the process by accommodating them in one way or another because of their willingness to stay. Jansen's (2017) study reveals the many instances where NGOs stayed dealing with the demands of political actors, but they refrain from reporting or complaining publicly due to fears of retribution.

The final dilemma this paper discusses is related to identity negotiation among UN agencies, INGOs, and NGOs, which leads to operational challenges of service delivery among humanitarians. In Tanner et al.'s (2017) assessment in South Sudan, national NGOs are often contracted for UN organizations and INGOs activities but often experience exclusion from funding, coordination, and decision-making. NGOs face several challenges in their activities in

South Sudan. One is the protection challenge of both beneficiaries and aid workers, leading to coordination and information sharing problems. Another is the INGO and local or national NGO diversity. INGOs usually have access to funding while they lack necessary access at the community level. On the contrary, national or local NGOs lack access to funding, but they usually have closer access to potential beneficiaries (Jones, 2017).

The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit committed to local turn in humanitarian systems: an initiative for shifting resources and decision-making power to local NGOs. In Moro et al.'s (2020) view, questions on localization commitments in conflict settings exist as donors, and international NGOs are contentious on trusting local and national NGOs in an environment where political actors capture resources and polarized communities are common.

2. Political actors and their dilemma

Political actors in South Sudan are far from homogenous. According to Jansen (2017), what shapes NGO interaction with political actors is the attempt of the latter to hamper aid delivery, which is their method of exerting 'sovereignty over humanitarians.' This way, humanitarians would feel insecure and would force them to negotiate and coordinate with political actors, usually pushing the bounds as far as they could.

However, the argument above is oversimplistic. The sovereignty argument cannot just explain the experiences of several countries in the Horn of Africa limiting humanitarian presence. In the PMF, restriction of humanitarian presence is one of the strategies political actors deploy when NGO activities are lucrative. The very reason that Viet's (2010) exposé about intermediaries in indirect governance, where both aid workers and local authorities define access depending on personal capacities, relations, and motivations, aptly describes how these actors use different strategies to influence aid delivery. The different political-business strategies of these actors and the political market dynamics explain the differences in how local authorities confront NGO activities. This difference is why Jansen (2017) observes that some NGO activities with political actors work well, while some have more challenging relations: in Raga, Lakes, and Warrap are seen as more complicated, and Western and Central Equatoria are seen more easily.

Following the political marketplace logic, the sovereignty argument is secondary to political actors' motivation to capture aid resources for political funds or seek legitimacy among constituents to compete in the political market.

LIMITATIONS

The study's limitation rests on the use of process tracing as a method. The study cannot make inferences on whether NGO activity is the only cause of the outcome. Likewise, the method cannot logically claim the necessity or sufficiency of the mechanism concerning the population of the studied phenomenon (Beach & Pedersen, 2013). However, these trade-offs underscore the added value of case-specific inferences that is making explicit how causal forces transmit from NGO activities to political market reproduction in South Sudan.

Outside the hypothesized mechanism of this paper, NGO activities can also contribute to the reproduction of political markets when they legitimize political actors. This paper does not explicitly explored this. Likewise, the use of reports and databases cannot always capture the activities of relevant actors for each part of the mechanism, primarily since the paper's theory lies at the macro level where structural 'actions' can be challenging to conceptualize.

Secondly, the decision to use available reports and databases ultimately limits this study since it cannot draw inferences from what was left out from these documents. In essence, the inability to inquire on silent evidence has limited the study to achieve its objectives. The study attempted to minimize possible biases arising from data collected through triangulation. Nevertheless, it does not remove the danger that these reports and documents reflect its authors' subjectivities.

CONCLUSION

This paper demonstrates the causal mechanism where NGO activities contribute to the political marketplace reproduction by investigating the conditions that make NGO activities become a cause. This paper links these conditions within South Sudan's context where NGOs operate. This paper also identifies the conditions surrounding the political-business strategy of actors and the availability of political finance as determinants of the probability of NGOs contributing to the political marketplace reproduction. When political finance is scarce, political actors respond to this condition by shifting their political-business strategies towards benefit-maximization from NGO activities.

As evidence suggests, the political actors preventing access, looting, and attacking NGOs are lower-level political actor networks. The license to loot and pillage allowed by political

managers enables these attacks against NGOs with impunity. The regulatory infrastructure of South Sudan also strengthens these actions. Political managers design these strategies to expand political finance by using the material rewards extracted or finding a substitute to cash as loyalty payments. The need for political finance in South Sudan due to the disintegration of its political actors grew alongside the increase of violent attacks against NGOs. Amassed resources that make up the political budgets are further used to fund wars. While political actors use political funds for personal enrichment, this study finds not enough evidence in utilized reports that there are NGO activities that enable political actors' enrichment. At most, it finds that the insecurity NGOs face had turned them to be the largest consumer of security services. Documented reports only reveal that one security business is tied with relatives of a political actor. The exchange of loyalty and allegiance and violence directly reproduce South Sudan's political market. This reproduction signifies the persistence of the transactional, monetized, personalized, and competitive logic of political markets.

Through the process-tracing method, the paper shows the transmission of the causal force that determines the possibility of NGOs contributing to political marketplace reproduction. Upon analyzing the found evidence against the predicted evidence for each part of the causal mechanism, and the theoretical prior, the paper finds that the hypothesized causal mechanism functioned in South Sudan as expected. However, the paper views that primary information from key political actors could further increase the confidence for the proposed mechanism. This data could further tease out how NGO activities influence the political-business strategy of actors and how they manage the flow of political finance (i.e., Parts 2 and 3). This conditional confidence then signifies that Parts 2 and 3 are the weakest links of the hypothesized mechanism. Despite this weakness, the study was able to infer the presence of these parts through the utilized reports.

This paper has outlined the view of the political marketplace framework on NGO activities, underscoring the ways humanitarian work can positively disturb political markets. Likewise, the study traced how NGOs and political actors have negotiated in South Sudan. Lastly, the research identified the dilemmas of NGOs and political actors.

The paper's theoretical and empirical contribution is demonstrating what happens when NGOs contribute to political marketplace reproduction. The practical implication of this study is related to NGO engagement with political actors, most especially in violent political markets. NGOs may reproduce the transactional, personalized, competitive and monetized logic of the

political marketplace by subscribing to the same logic in the spirit of wanting to alleviate peoples' suffering. The same avowed mission of aid workers brings in not only the much-needed resources but also negative and positive disturbances to the prevailing politics by shifting the incentive structure of political actors.

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APPENDIX

TECHNICAL NOTES ON NGO ACTIVITIES-POLITICAL MARKETPLACE CAUSAL MECHANISM

Developing the Predicted Evidence

Each specific part of the hypothesized causal mechanism necessitates case-specific predictions about the expected observable manifestations if the causal mechanism is present. Suppose there is an expectation that NGO activities contribute to the reproduction of the political marketplace. Each part of the theorized mechanism between NGO activities and the reproduction of the political marketplace should reveal the predicted empirical manifestations observed in the empirical material.

The study relied on the available literature to develop case-specific predictions or the predicted evidence. The recommendation is to formulate predictions to capture both the entity and the activity involved in each part of the causal mechanism to reveal the traces of the transmission of causal forces through the theorized mechanism (Beach & Pedersen, 2013).

This study also explicitly states its rival hypotheses (~h) for each part of the mechanism (h). The study uses the negation of the hypothesis as its rival since having several alternative for each part of the mechanism would mean the necessity of several iterations for each hypothesis. While the recommendation of Fairfield and Charman (2017) is to elaborate an exhaustive set of mutually exclusive hypotheses, it is more applicable to explaining-the-outcome process tracing and would require extensive specifications for each part of the mechanism. So, this study considers only the negation of the hypothesis as its alternative because it is enough for the theory testing variant for process tracing (Beach and Pedersen, 2013).

Likewise, there is a need to design empirical tests to maximize the inferential ability of evidence to update the confidence in the validity of the hypothesis (Beach & Pedersen, 2013). This study follows Beach and Pedersen's (2013) suggestion to formulate robust predictions about:

1. What evidence is expected to see if a part of the causal mechanism exists?
2. What counts as evidence for alternative hypotheses?
3. What can be concluded when the predicted evidence is not found (i.e., what counts as negative evidence)?

In developing the predicted evidence, the study used the four types of tests to identify which evidence to expect to find if the hypotheses are valid, as recommended by Beach and Pedersen (2013). These tests are ideal types and works along a continuum. These tests, according to Beach and Pedersen (2013), are the following:

1. Straw-in-the wind: empirical predictions with the lowest level of uniqueness and low level of certainty that the predicted evidence exists. These tests do little to update the confidence in the hypothesis.
2. Hoop tests: predictions that are certain but not unique. The failure to pass the test reduces the confidence in the hypothesis but finding this prediction does not enable inferences to be made.

3. Smoking gun tests: highly unique but have low or no certainty in their predictions. The passage of this test strongly confirms a hypothesis, but failure does not strongly undermine it. Unless the study finds evidence, a smoking gun test is pointless because no updating is possible.
4. Doubly decisive tests: combine both certainty and uniqueness. If the study does not find evidence, it follows the reduction of confidence in the validity of the hypothesis.

Beach and Pedersen (2013) suggest that the measures used for each part of the mechanism are formulated in a manner that *"maximizes the certainty and uniqueness of the predicted observable manifestations and at the same time making sure that the test is feasible."* While the doubly decisive test is the most ideal, this is the most difficult to find. The following paragraphs detail the study's attempts to maximize the certainty and uniqueness of each of the predicted evidence while ensuring its feasibility. For some parts of the hypothesized mechanism, the feasibility condition became the determining factor in designing the test for each part of the mechanism.

Part 1: NGO activities influence the political-business strategy and tactics of actors in the political marketplace when rents are dwindling

For the first part of the hypothesized mechanism, the study formulates the predicted evidence where political actors: (1) co-opt or attempt to direct NGO activities and (2) minimize the negative disruptions caused by NGO activities on their operations.

As discussed by the paper, no document maps out what influences the political-business strategy and tactics of actors in the political marketplace that can affirm the hypothesized part of the mechanism. However, finding that political actors do this two predicted evidence suggests that NGO activities trigger some action or reaction from political actors. Finding the predicted evidence would suggest the certainty that NGO activities influence the political-business strategy of political actors. Moreover, if found, the evidence does not explain the alternative hypothesis, which maximizes its uniqueness. The alternative hypothesis of this part is that NGO activities challenge the sovereignty of their country-beneficiary, which shifts the political-business strategy of actors towards sovereignty preservation. If the alternative is valid, the paper will not find the predicted evidence formulated in this part of the mechanism.

What this paper is looking for at the minimum is the systematic action from political actors generated by the presence of NGO participation in South Sudan. The study formulates the predicted evidence so that it heavily relies on political actors' actions as observations collected rely on reports, making it impossible to gauge the actions of political actors outside the government entirely.

Both predicted pieces of evidence formulated for this part of the causal mechanism are closer to a doubly decisive test as predictions are certain and unique. This test means that failure of finding the predicted evidence for this part of the mechanism reduces the confidence in the hypothesis, and the test discriminates strongly between the evidence that supports the hypothesis and the alternative (Beach & Pedersen, 2013).

Part 2: Actors in the political marketplace attempt to maximize the benefit of intervention-derived rents for their political budgets

If this part of the causal mechanism exists, the paper formulates the predicted evidence as political actors designing political-business strategies to ensure the flow of political finance from NGO activities.

From the theory of the political marketplace, central to the political-business strategy is the flow of political finance. However, this centrality is contingent on its function for political markets. The predicted evidence then constitutes two parts that are needed to be tested. The first is the presence of political budgets, and that political-business strategy is indeed designed to ensure the flow of political budgets. Secondly, political-business strategies of political actors related to NGO activities have rent-extracting goals. Finding these two would imply the certainty that political actors make active steps in ensuring that they maximize benefits from NGO activities.

The alternative hypothesis of this part of the mechanism is that political actors do not attempt to seek to maximize benefit from NGO activities. If the alternative is valid, the paper will not find any trace of the predicted evidence formulated.

Like the last part of the mechanism, the paper expects systematic traces of the predicted evidence to infer that this part of the causal mechanism exists. However, the formulated predicted evidence is challenging to operationalize, which permits close observation of causal forces enabling this part of the mechanism. The theory informs this paper that political actors in the political marketplace behave in a kleptocratic manner, which lends confidence to the expectation that these actors intend to maximize benefits from lucrative activities such as NGO operations.

The paper utilized account evidence (i.e., NGO reports) to observe the existence of political actors' rent-seeking on NGOs activities. From this evidence, the paper infers that the design of political-business strategies and tactics of actors in a manner where repeated experiences of NGOs constitutes a pattern. The study juxtaposes this supposition against the regulatory infrastructure in South Sudan. However, observing the rent-seeking on NGO activities does not necessarily mean that political actors' political-business strategies exist, nor it confirms that rent-extraction constitute actors' political-business strategies and tactics. This test means that there is low uniqueness of the predicted evidence. Instead, rent-seeking activities of political actors could reflect other motivations such as systematic corrupt activity for enrichment, a phenomenon that does not fully explain the presence of political budgets. This test is a smoking gun test, where finding the predicted evidence updates the paper's confidence in the hypothesized part being valid, but failure to pass the test does not strongly undermine the hypothesis.

Part 3: Managing the flow of political finance involve the exchange of loyalty and allegiance, funding violence, and personal enrichment

The predicted evidence for each use of political finance if this part of the causal mechanism exists are: (1) expect to see political actors to make, receive, demand, and supply loyalty payments; (2) expect political actors to use their amassed political budgets (in whatever form) to fund violence to destroy their competitor or to ensure to outbid their competitor using political funds; and (3) expect to see political actors using NGO-derived rents for personal enrichment.

The study hypothesized this part of the mechanism according to the political marketplace framework. The predicted evidence used is hoop tests as it offers certainty but low uniqueness that the hypothesized mechanism occurs. The failure of the test (i.e., not finding the predicted evidence) reduces the confidence in the hypothesis but finding the predicted evidence does not enable inferences to be made. However, this paper improves the inferential value of the prediction by strengthening the uniqueness and certainty of the hoop test as recommended by Beach and Pedersen (2013).

The alternative hypothesis for this part of the mechanism is that managing the flow of political finance does not involve exchanging loyalty and allegiance, funding violence, and personal enrichment. If the alternative is valid, the paper will not find the predicted evidence related to the hypothesis of this part of the causal mechanism.

As seen in Part 2 of the causal mechanism, the causal forces that enable the formulated predicted evidence to be evident are difficult to observe closely. This paper used pattern and account evidence (i.e., reports and official documents) to trace the predicted pieces of evidence. From this, the paper deduced that the political finance extracted by political actors from various sources enables specified activities of political actors. This point is where contextual conditions become vital in the hypothesized NGO activities–political marketplace causal mechanism. First, NGO activities are not the sole source of rent of political actors. This condition is why the study frames the first hypothesis so that NGO activities only contribute to the reproduction of the political marketplace. What is critical to this causal mechanism is establishing that NGO activity triggers some action from political actors, and it is a source of rent. The study cannot solely attribute the threat of violence, the exchange of loyalty and allegiance, and personal enrichment of political actors to the first condition this study implicates - NGO activities. Instead, the paper imagines that NGO activities play a particular role in a political market. Second, with this clarification, while the study formulates the predicted evidence for Part 3, it looks explicitly at evidence where NGO activities are implicated in the flow of political finance, exchange of loyalty allegiance, and persistent violence and personal enrichment of political actors.

Part 4: The exchange of loyalty and allegiance and violence contribute to the reproduction of the political marketplace

The paper formulates the predicted evidence if this part of the causal mechanism exists so that the reproduction of political markets is observed when changes in the pattern of violence and exchange of loyalty and allegiance occur.

The paper formulated the hypothesis based on the political marketplace framework. The predicted evidence is closer to a double decisive test in that it offers certainty and uniqueness that the hypothesized mechanism occurs. When preceding parts of the theorized mechanism (i.e., parts 2-3) transmits the causal force, part 4 occurs: the outcome expected is the reproduction of the political marketplace.

The alternative hypothesis of this part is that violence and the exchange of loyalty and allegiance do not lead to the reproduction of the political marketplace. If the alternative is valid, the paper will not find the predicted evidence formulated for this part of the mechanism.

The study formulates the predicted evidence as a double decisive test. This test means that failing the test (not finding the predicted evidence) would reduce the confidence in the validity of the hypothesis.

Since, according to the political marketplace framework, the transactional and competitive exchange of loyalty and services dominate political markets over other logics that structures the exercise of authority, finding the exchange of loyalty and violence transmits the causal force that shapes the political marketplace. This study considers the exchange of loyalty and violence as the ultimate expression of the logic of the political market that characterizes its reproduction.

This paper has operationalized the empirical tests of the causal mechanism by developing theory-based prediction on what to expect in the empirical record if the hypothesized part of the

mechanism is present. The study endeavored to formulate the predicted evidence to maximize the level of certainty and uniqueness recommended by Beach and Pedersen (2013). This way, the study's inferences on the presence of the causal mechanism depend on its ability to test each part of the mechanism to update its confidence on the hypothesized causal mechanism. However, not only certainty and uniqueness play a determining role in formulating the predicted evidence, but the study also needed to consider feasibility. Due to this, feasibility became the limiting factor in formulating the predicted evidence. The paper, for various reasons, is restricted to collecting reports, official documents and academic literature.

Formulating the Type of Evidence used to Measure Prediction

Part 1: Expect to see political actors: co-opt or attempt to direct NGO activities for their benefit, and minimize the negative disruptions caused by NGO activities on their operations

This paper used trace and account evidence to see how political actors respond to NGO activities in South Sudan. The paper used trace evidence of government policies and laws related to NGO activities to see the level of restrictions. The trace evidence proves that this part of the mechanism exists (Beach and Pedersen, 2013). The account evidence from NGO reports would lend this study the in-depth knowledge of how political actors attempt to monitor, disrupt, restrict, and gatekeep NGO activities.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE	
E1.1	Major incidence of violent attacks against aid workers (Aid Worker Security Database)
E1.2	UN OCHA's annual Humanitarian Access Incidence Overview
E1.3	Regulatory infrastructure on NGO activities in South Sudan
E1.4	Historical sources of rents in South Sudan
E1.5	Humanitarian space - presence and size of NGOs
E1.6	UN findings on South Sudan's political actors in relation to its national security architecture
E1.7	Strategies and tactics of political actors in South Sudan's political market (De Waal, 2019; Boswell et al., 2019)

The study used Aid Worker Security Database to see the major incidence of violent attacks against aid workers. Complementing this database is the UN OCHA's annual Humanitarian Access Incidence Overview, which comprehensively documents violent and non-violent attacks against humanitarian workers.

Both databases allowed this study to investigate the contexts and possible patterns of attacks against humanitarian workers to infer that forms of reactions from political actors are present. The attack method lends the study a peek into possible motivations behind the attacks, allowing the study to know who among the political actors are conducting such attacks and why it is happening.

In the cross-country study of Stoddard et al. (2012), their linear regressions indicate correlations between aid worker violence and low levels of political stability, high 'state fragility' scores, institutional weakness of the regime and low levels of 'the rule of law.' Furthermore, they found no correlation between aid worker killings and the general homicide rates in the host country, suggesting that violence against aid workers is not indicative of the overall crime

environment but exists as a separate phenomenon connected to failed or failing state institutions and the dynamics of war (Stoddard et al., 2012). Likewise, they found no correlation between violence against aid workers and government corruption or openness within society (Stoddard et al., 2012).

Part 2: Expect to see political actors designing political-business strategies to ensure the flow of political finance from NGO activity-derived rents

This paper used pattern and trace evidence on political actors profiteering from NGO activities and account evidence on how rents are derived from NGO activities. Through these types of evidence, the study can demonstrate what political-business strategies political actors employ and how they ensure the flow of political finance from NGO activities.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE	
E2.1	Strategies and tactics of political actors in securing political finance
E2.2	Non-payment of government and military wages
E2.3	Strategies and tactics of political actors in seeking benefit from NGO activities
E2.4	NGO security spending
E2.5	Status of oil rents as political budgets
E2.6	NGO's assessment on South Sudan's humanitarian space

The study investigates the historical sources of rents in South Sudan to identify the presence of political budgets. The flow of political budgets and incentive structures then is traced to see if the architecture of political-business strategies ensures such flows. Concerning NGO activities, the study used assessment reports of NGOs to identify if political actors in South Sudan shape the regulatory and access structures for aid in a way that encapsulates rent-extracting goals.

Part 3: Expect to see political actors to make and receive loyalty payments; expect violence among political actors to persist contingent on the availability of political finance; expect political actors to use political budgets for personal enrichment

This paper used trace and account evidence of loyalty payments between political actors using political finance. Likewise, the paper used trace and account evidence of funding conflict actors using political finance. Lastly, the paper used trace and account evidence of corrupt practices of political actors for personal enrichment. Collectively using these pieces of evidence, this paper builds on NGOs, UN, and AU reports, investigative reports, and other literature to demonstrate how political actors build, collect, and utilize their political budgets.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE	
E.3.1	AU Commission's report on how political actors maintain its patronage networks
	Government jobs as patronage
	SPLM used funds to build vast clientelist structures
E.3.2	Oil rents are used to fund war
	Violent capture of NGO resources
E.3.3	Creation of the military aristocracy (Pinaud 2014)

	Social capital
	Documented enrichment of political actors (The Sentry and Global Witness)

The evidence used is relevant for the hypothesized causal mechanism as it reveals the various uses of political finance in political markets. It shows the dynamics within which NGO activities transmit its causal force that manifest itself in the various dimension of the political market as stated by the hypothesized causal mechanism.

Part 4: Expect to see changes in the characteristics of the political market when violence and exchange of loyalty and allegiance occurs

The paper used sequence and account evidence of South Sudan's political market. Through these types of evidence, the paper demonstrates how changes in the 'rules' of loyalty exchanges and the conduct of violence influence the political marketplace.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE	
E.4.1	Personalized and transactional exchanges of loyalty (AU Commission report, UN report, Day et al., 2019)
E.4.2	Boswell's analysis on how the characteristics South Sudan's political marketplace changed over time

This paper reveals how NGO activities reproduce the political marketplace in South Sudan through these types of evidence. As argued, the exchange of loyalty and allegiance and perpetuation of violence is the material expression of political marketplace reproduction. These two are emblematic of the competitive, transactional, and monetized logic that dominates the practices of actors in political markets.

Turning Observations into Evidence

The study based the collection of empirical material on the type of evidence each part of the predicted evidence of the hypothesized mechanism requires. Beach and Pedersen (2013) recommended this paper turn the collected observations into pieces of evidence by evaluating each observation using the case-specific knowledge obtained from existing literature. This study conducted the following steps to turn the observations into pieces of evidence:

Step 1: Collection of empirical material
Step 2: Assessing the content of observations
Step 3: Evaluating the accuracy of observations
Step 4: Determining the evidential weight of the evidence: the probability of finding the evidence per se

The study collected 30 materials in the form of NGO assessment reports, South Sudan laws, government memoranda, investigative reports, Aid Worker Security Database, UN OCHA's Annual Humanitarian Access Incidence Overview and official documents from UN Security Council, UN OCHA, and the AU Commission. This study recognizes that there are always potential risks of systematic and non-systematic bias in the collected material. An attempt to control biases is made through hoop tests and triangulation, as recommended by Beach and Pedersen (2013). Likewise, the study evaluates each material for its content, and if it shows

uncertainty, additional material is collected. The study further elucidates the decisions taken in Table X.

Table X: Transforming observations into evidence

HYPOTHESES	PREDICTED EVIDENCE	TYPE OF EVIDENCE USED TO MEASURE PREDICTION	OBSERVATIONS	CONTENT EVALUATION	SOURCE OF OBSERVATION & CONTEXT WHICH IT WAS PRODUCED	INFERENTIAL WEIGHT OF EVIDENCE
Activities of NGOs contribute to the reproduction of the political marketplace	*Plausibility probe mechanism*	*Literature review*	*1. Historical and institutional links between NGO activities and South Sudan's political actors in the political market* *2. Characteristics of South Sudan's political market and political actors* *3. Characteristics of NGO activities and the humanitarian landscape in South Sudan* *4. Aid and development flows in South Sudan*			
NGO activities influence the political-business strategy of political actors when rents are dwindling	Expect to see political actors: (1) co-opt or attempt to direct NGO activities, (2) to minimize negative disruptions caused by NGO activities on their operations	Assessed using trace and account evidence on restrictions of NGO activities	1. NGO assessment reports 2. Humanitarian Access Incidence 3. Aid Worker Security Database	Content of observations indicates critical issues on how NGOs navigate South Sudan's humanitarian and development landscape.	USAID, UN OCHA, UN CHR, Humanitarian Exchange, CAFOD, Trócaire in Partnership, Christian Aid, OXFAM GB, Tearfund, UK aid, The Research People, SAVE, Norwegian Refugee Council, Aid Workers Security Database	Updating the confidence in the validity of the hypothesis needs several evidence from multiple sources: South Sudan government offices and NGO experiences.
		Assessed using trace evidence of government policies and laws	1. 2016 NGO law 2. 2019 NGO Recruitment Guidelines 3. Memoranda of government offices related to NGOs	Content of observations indicates how political actors in South Sudan structure or justify laws and policies on NGO activities.	South Sudan's government offices	
Actors in the political marketplace maximize the benefit of intervention-derived rents for their political budgets	Expect to see political actors designing political–business strategies to ensure the flow of political finance from NGO-derived rents	Assessed using trace evidence (reports) on political actors profiteering from NGO activities;	1. NGO assessment reports 2. UN reports 3. Investigative reports	Content of observation shows the traces of political actors' behaviour in the presence of NGOs and what strategies they employ to profit from NGO activities.	Humanitarian Exchange, SAVE, The Sentry Report, UN Security Council Reports on South Sudan	Updating the study's confidence in the validity of the hypothesis need several pieces of evidence as there is an expectation that the probability of finding the evidence is high.

		Assessed using account evidence how rents are derived from NGO activities.	1. NGO assessment reports 2. UN reports 3. Investigative reports	Content of observation show the experiences of NGOs in negotiating with political actors	Humanitarian Exchange, Government of South Sudan laws and regulations on NGO activities, UN Security Council Reports on South Sudan, Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network, World Bank Technical Report	
Political budgets are used for the exchange of loyalty and allegiance, violence and personal enrichment	Expect to see political actors make, receive, demand, and supply loyalty payments	Assessed using trace and account evidence of loyalty payments between political actors using political funds	1. AU Commission reports 2. UN reports 3. Investigative reports 4. Literature review	Content of observation show the activities of political actors in the political marketplace of South Sudan	African Union Commission Report, UN Security Council Reports on South Sudan, Academic Literature	Updating the study's confidence in the validity of the hypothesis need a high number of unique pieces of evidence as the probability of finding the evidence is high
	Expect political actors to use their amassed political budgets (in whatever form) to fund violence to destroy their competitor or to ensure to outbid their competitor using political funds	Assessed using trace and account evidence of funding conflict actors using political finance	1. Investigative reports 2. AU Commission report 3. UN reports 4. Literature review	Content of observation show the activities of political actors in the political marketplace of South Sudan	The Sentry, Global Witness, African Union Commission Report, UN Security Council Reports on South Sudan, Academic Literature	
	Expect to see political actors using NGO-derived rents for personal enrichment	Assessed using trace and account evidence of profiteers in South Sudan	1. Investigative reports 2. AU Commission report 3. UN reports	Content of observation show the activities of political actors in the political marketplace of South Sudan	The Sentry, Global Witness, African Union Commission Reports on South Sudan	
The exchange of loyalty and allegiance and violence contribute to the reproduction of the political marketplace	Expect to see changes in the characteristics of the political market when violence and	Assessed using trace and account evidence of South Sudan's political market	1. AU Commission report 2. UN reports 3. Investigative reports	Content of observation demonstrate plausible explanations why violence, particularly the 2013 civil war, occurred	African Union Commission Report, UN Security Council Reports, The Sentry, Global Witness, Academic Literature	Updating the study's confidence in the validity of the hypothesis need a low number of evidence as finding a piece of evidence is improbable.

	exchange of loyalty and allegiance occurs	4. Literature review	and how did it affect the dynamics of the exchanges of loyalty and allegiance		