Durability in Darfur? Assessing the Darfur Peace Agreement

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The underlying factors that produce durable peace agreements have, for some time, remained elusive. Scholars have conducted both case and empirical studies in attempting to better understand the determinants of peace agreement durability, but results have been largely inconclusive. This article surveys the literature concerning the durability of peace agreements and presents three distinct hypotheses: peace agreements are epiphenomenal, successful peace agreements depend on activities of external actors, and successful peace agreements depend on their content. The article applies these three hypotheses to the Darfur Peace Agreement, concluding that this case represents a failed peace agreement. The failure of the Darfur Peace Agreement is best explained by a lack of international/regional support. In response, this article advocates for the creation of an index to help practitioners prioritize the variables that are most likely to result in durable peace. To achieve this goal, future research is needed to determine why certain mechanisms are more successful than others. In particular, it would be helpful to have a better understanding of what confluence of variables will provide the highest probability of success in a given context.

Introduction

Given the recent history of civil wars, the trend toward negotiated settlements, as opposed to decisive victories, is becoming clear. Between 2000 and 2005, the number of conflicts ended by a negotiated peace outnumbered those ended by military victory by a factor of four to one (Sisk 2008, 195). The trend toward this ratio began in the 1990s, when 41 conflicts were settled by negotiation compared to 23 ending in outright military victory (Harbom, Hogbladh, and Wallensteen 2006, 618). Prima facie, this trend suggests that conflict management practitioners are utilizing more effective strategies for settling conflicts. However, among the myriad of approaches that have been undertaken, it remains unclear which work best, and why.

Peace settlements are not all equally effective. While some have resulted in a permanent cessation of hostilities, others have fallen apart within months. Why is this the case? The academic literature on this question is decidedly unclear. Some scholars have argued that the contents of peace agreements
are a crucial determinant of the durability of any given agreement. Others have argued that the success of an agreement depends upon the timing of the settlement. Still others have suggested that the strongest predictor of a successful peace agreement is the degree to which one party to the conflict has been effectively eliminated; the more decisive the victory, the more durable the peace. The primary objective of this article is to test these hypotheses using the 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) as a case study.¹

There are a number of reasons for which the DPA has been selected for this case study. First, the DPA represents one of the international community’s most recent attempts to secure a peace agreement. As such, it provides a contemporary example of a peace agreement in which the details and text of the agreement are readily available. Second, because this agreement was signed in 2006, an appropriate observation period has lapsed. Thus, the degree of success attained by this particular agreement can be properly assessed. Finally, as an ongoing, contemporary, and failed agreement, the DPA is one of the few cases that present an opportunity to provide timely reflection and advice, so as to deliver present-day impact.

By understanding the determinants of a successful agreement, conflict management practitioners can focus on the elements that are most likely to result in durable peace, and thus be better able to tailor their approaches to conflict management. In the absence of such knowledge, practitioners will be left with the dismal prospect of simply applying whatever techniques are available and hoping for a positive result. In an era that ostensibly supports the primacy of evidence-based decision making, such an approach is rightfully viewed as unacceptable. This article attempts to bridge the academic/policy gap, identified by scholars such as Joseph Nye (2008, 650–51), by providing the type of systematic analysis that is often unavailable in policy circles.

The above observations inspire the research question: what explains the outcome of the DPA? The first section of this article reviews some of the contending explanations concerning the durability of peace agreements. This literature review yields three hypotheses that will be tested: (1) peace agreements are epiphenomenal; (2) successful peace agreements depend on external actors; and (3) successful peace agreements depend on their content. The article’s second section evaluates the DPA, arguing that it is a failed peace agreement. The third section seeks to determine whether or not any of the hypotheses from the academic literature can account for this failure. Little support is found for the first hypothesis, but strong support is found for the second, and mixed support is found for the third. The article’s final section offers policy recommendations and suggests areas for future research. Ultimately, this article advocates for the creation of an index to help practitioners prioritize the factors that are most likely to result in durable peace, necessitating future research on why certain mechanisms are more successful than others.
Literature Review and Hypotheses

The purpose of the following literature review is to outline three main explanatory categories that will eventually be tested with regard to the DPA. It should be noted that the hypotheses outlined below are not mutually exclusive; some overlap between them is possible. While a presentation of mutually exclusive hypotheses is easier to evaluate, it should be noted that such an arrangement does not accurately represent the interrelatedness of the explanatory categories, nor would it reflect the reality that durable peace is often achieved through a combination of factors. The categories only provide a general framework to logically test the hypotheses.

Hypothesis I: Peace agreements are epiphenomenal

The first hypothesis argues that peace settlements are irrelevant to the durability of peace. This hypothesis stems from the realist theory of international relations, which broadly posits that actions taken within the international system are best explained by the national interests of individual states in the context of anarchy. Realists argue that peace agreements have no intrinsic value. This assertion analogizes the argument made by John Mearsheimer (1994) that international institutions are epiphenomenal. Accordingly, peace agreements are merely “scraps of paper” which are not binding in the system of international anarchy and will not influence the behaviour of parties to a conflict (Fortna 2003, 338). Realists consequently argue that the only reason parties sign peace agreements is to further their self-interests. For example, a signatory may want to create illusions of goodwill, create a tactical opportunity to remobilize, or may fear potential sanctions from the international community. As realism is one of the dominant theories of international relations, the realist notion that peace agreements are epiphenomenal is an important hypothesis to examine.

Other scholars have demonstrated the epiphenomenal nature of peace agreements through analyses of conflicts’ contextual variability. One variable concerns the notion of timing, or what William Zartman (2008, 22) calls “ripeness,” whereby peace is unlikely to be durable in the absence of a “mutually hurting stalemate.” According to Zartman (ibid.), this phenomenon arises when “parties find themselves locked in a conflict from which they cannot escalate to victory and this deadlock is painful to both of them (although not necessarily in equal degree or for the same reasons).” Another approach emphasizes the nature of the dispute. For example, Paul Collier and Ank Hoeffler (2002) have sought to determine whether conflict is motivated by “greed” (material resources) or “grievance” (ethnic, religious, cultural divisions). Although their research is not concerned with the durability of peace agreements, the logic of their argument suggests that peace agreements would be irrelevant when greed and/or grievance underlie a dispute. These specifications provide more nuanced explanations as to why peace agreements may be epiphenomenal to a durable settlement.

In sum, this explanatory category holds that the durability of peace
settlements depends on the relative position and abilities of the belligerents. Positions and abilities include factors such as military strength, access to resources, and the influence of domestic stakeholders or constituency groups. Common to this explanatory category is that prospects for peace depend inherently and entirely upon the positions of the parties and the motivating factors behind the conflict.

**Hypothesis II: Successful peace agreements depend on outside actors**

The second hypothesis posits that the durability of an agreement is determined by the involvement of external actors. Fen Hampson (1996, 19) argues that conflicts generally are part of a larger “regional security complex.” According to this hypothesis, peace agreements will be most successful when a combination of international and regional actors are engaged in a concerted strategy to terminate the conflict (ibid., 206–17). Engagement may include, but is not limited to: opening diplomatic channels, hosting peace talks, or threatening the use of force in order to bring an end to hostilities. The absence of such commitments, regardless of the terms of agreement, risks a high rate of failure. This is an important hypothesis to investigate because if it holds true, then a tangible policy recommendation flows naturally: parties interested in peace should seek regional and international support.

A concept related to external engagement is the presence or absence of third-party guarantees. Barbara Walter (2002, 26–27) suggests that durable peace is most closely associated with the inclusion of a third-party guarantor. She argues that combatants will only sign a peace accord in the presence of credible commitments from international actors that ensure their safety and that guarantee them a role in the new post-conflict power structure. Therefore, the durability of an agreement depends on the demonstrable willingness of third parties to act as guarantors of the peace agreement. Although there is growing consensus among scholars that third-party guarantees are necessary for durable peace, problems of political will and capacity continue to inhibit the degree to which the requisite commitments can be achieved (Hartzell and Hoddie 2007, 88–91).

Other forms of third-party engagement, while helpful, are contingent upon different factors. For example, Michael Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis (2000) find that pure enforcement operations can end violence, but cannot promote longstanding peace. Virginia Fortna (2004, 189–93) notes that the success of peacekeeping operations depends on the timing of force deployment and the level of violence existing at the time. Although some academics have found that ongoing third-party mediation is an ineffective tool (ibid., 195), others have suggested that it is a crucial form of post-conflict dispute resolution (Hampson 1996, 227–29). In support of the latter view, scholars have pointed out that while haphazard third-party mediation may undermine a peace settlement, if done properly, it can actually help identify alternatives, modify perspectives, package and sequence issues, and generally build trust between belligerents (ibid., 12–13). Therefore, any conclusion with
respect to third-party interventions and durable peace must be tempered with the knowledge that exogenous factors may also contribute to the ultimate success or failure of a peace agreement.

**Hypothesis III: Successful peace agreements depend on their content**

The content of agreements is perhaps the most highly malleable factor determining the durability or fragility of peace agreements. Fortna (2004, 113), who is a central proponent of this hypothesis, argues that the content of peace and ceasefire agreements directly affects the durability of the ensuing peace. This argument is largely constructed in opposition to the arguments made in support of the first hypothesis.

Fortna’s argument revolves around two main assertions. First, she states that the baseline prospects for peace, referring to those pre-existing conditions that characterize the conflict, either have little predictive value in determining whether peace will ensue or actually make peace less likely. Second, the mechanisms incorporated into a peace agreement can help predict whether or not a given agreement will succeed (ibid., 172). She uses large-N statistical methods to support her assertions and controls for baseline prospects to improve the validity of her conclusions. Her work represents one of the only attempts to quantitatively test hypotheses about the effect of peace accord provisions on the cessation of hostilities. Regarding agreement content, Fortna (2003, 342–44) finds that agreements can help ensure peace in three principal ways: changing incentives, reducing uncertainty about the actions and intentions of belligerents, and controlling accidental violations.

From her statistical analysis, Fortna finds that internal control over rogue groups and arms control measures have no effect on supporting a lasting peace. She also finds that the withdrawal of forces to ceasefire lines is generally unlikely to contribute to durable peace (ibid., 357). In contrast, there is significant evidence to suggest that the establishment of demilitarized zones and joint commissions with representatives from each side are effective measures in ensuring peace (Fortna 2004, 179; Fortna 2003, 362). Lastly, Fortna (2003, 362) finds that the more specific and formal the agreement, the more likely it is to succeed.

Other scholars have found further reasons for which the contents of peace agreements matter. Arend Lijphart (1991, 494), for example, has emphasized the importance of power-sharing provisions. It has been argued, however, that such arrangements can only endorse peace in the short term (Sisk 2008, 196). Other hypotheses concerning the content of peace agreements have been derived from Hampson’s (1996, 218–20) case study of five conflict settlements. His research reveals that agreements generally require the support of all parties to the conflict, as those who do not have their interests met will have a high incentive to defect. Moreover, he finds that there must be a place for both “winners” and “losers” in any power-sharing agreement. Finally, he notes that peace agreements must be sufficiently flexible to permit some renegotiation during the implementation phase, because inflexibility can lead to breaches and
outright failure. Arguments about flexibility and robustness have been affirmed by Suzanne Werner and Amy Yuen (2005, 288–89), who find that the terms of a settlement must be flexible enough to accommodate changing realities, or must make the cost of returning to war high enough to dissuade parties from defecting. Therefore, any conclusions about the connection between the content of peace agreements and durable peace must recognize that content analysis must include both mechanisms (i.e., peacekeeping forces and demilitarized zones) and principles (i.e., inclusivity and rigidity).

Concluding remarks on the literature

The above discussion illustrates that the literature’s hypotheses can be put into three distinct categories. The first hypothesis suggests that the durability of peace depends entirely upon the situations of the parties to a conflict. By contrast, the second hypothesis suggests that the involvement of regional and international actors can best predict the durability of a negotiated settlement. Finally, the third hypothesis suggests that the nature and mechanisms within the peace agreement itself are the most important factors in ensuring a sustainable peace. As illustrated above, there are a variety of nuanced arguments in support of the three general hypotheses, all of which should be taken into account when conducting a case analysis.

The following section seeks to apply the hypotheses derived from the academic literature to the case of the DPA. The analysis proceeds in three parts. First, the content of the DPA and the context in which it was signed will be presented. Second, it will be argued that the DPA is an example of an unsuccessful settlement because it failed to satisfy two conditions: the parties did not abide to the terms of the agreement and cessation of hostilities was not sustained. Lastly, the three hypotheses will be applied to the case study to assess their persuasiveness in explaining why the DPA failed.

Case Study: Sudan and the Darfur Peace Agreement

The Darfur Peace Agreement

Conflict in Darfur, Sudan, dates back to the post-independence era, when Darfuris fought on the side of the Government of Sudan during the first North-South war, and includes the Arab-Fur war of 1987, when drought caused clashes over fertile lands. It has been marked by neglect, be it by former colonial powers or the central government in Khartoum. When the National Islamic Front came to power in 1989, it operationalized its Arab supremacist ideology in Darfur by treating it “as if it were an appendage of pagan Africa . . . [resulting in the] rejection of old traditions of coexistence and the bonds of Islam” (Daly 2007, 260). In the late 1990s, the Janjaweed was created as a coalition of Arab militias, which conducted numerous attacks against the non-Arab Zaghawa and Masalit peoples of Darfur with impunity (ibid., 262–69). Protest by these non-Arab groups was ignored by the Government of Sudan,
which was complicit in their persecution, and eventually led to the unification of these groups in military opposition to their persecutors.

In February 2003, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) rebel groups launched a successful attack on Jebel Marra province in Darfur (Toga 2007, 214). The groups demanded that the Government of Sudan end its policy of oppression and genocide against the black African population of Darfur and halt the activities of the Janjaweed militia (ibid.). Initially, fighting occurred primarily between the Darfur rebel groups and the Sudanese Armed Forces supported by their Janjaweed proxy force. Eventually the latter shifted their tactics to target civilians, in what became a well-documented division of labour: the Sudanese Armed Forces would conduct aerial attacks on villages with helicopter gunships and the Janjaweed would follow up to rape, pillage, and execute the survivors (ibid., 183). Hundreds of thousands have lost their lives as a result of the fighting, and between two and three million people have been displaced both within Darfur and across the border in neighbouring Chad.3

On 5 May 2006, the DPA was signed by Majzoub al-Khalifa, advisor to Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, and by Minni Minnawi, chairperson of one of the SLM/A’s factions (ibid., 242). Despite being parties to the negotiation, the JEM and the SLM/A’s other faction rejected the DPA (Daly 2007, 310). The agreement was achieved following seven rounds of peace negotiations, known as the Abuja Talks, chaired by the African Union (ibid., 302). The document contains the following six chapters: (1) Power Sharing; (2) Wealth Sharing; (3) Comprehensive Ceasefire and Final Security Arrangements; (4) Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultations; (5) General Provisions; and (6) Implementation Modalities and Timelines.

A failed settlement

Evaluation of peace agreement success is a contentious matter for scholars of conflict management. Some consider the fact that any peace agreement was signed at all, despite the rejection of the agreement’s content by two parties, constitutes a success. However, a more rigorous test for the durability of peace settlements requires, at minimum, that two obvious conditions be met. First, a successful peace agreement is one where the signatories abide by the terms of the agreement. Second, a successful agreement is one that results in the cessation of violence between the parties.5 If these conditions are not achieved, a peace settlement cannot be qualified as successful because it will have failed to achieve both peace and agreement.

According to the criteria outlined above, the DPA clearly constitutes a failed settlement. First, signatories to the agreement have not abided by its provisions. The DPA required the Government of Sudan to completely disarm the Janjaweed within 159 days of signing the agreement. It also stipulated that the Government of Sudan would establish a US$300 million Darfur Reconstruction and Development Fund (DRDF) available to the authorities in Darfur, along with an additional US$200 million each year for two years after ratification. Furthermore, the DPA called for increased
patrolling and protection of internally displaced persons (IDP) camps by the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS). Unfortunately, the parties involved have not abided by these terms. The International Crisis Group reported in 2007 that the Janjaweed had not been disarmed, that DRDF funding had not been allocated, and that the AMIS was unable to fulfill its obligations under the DPA due to a lack of capacity and resources (ICG 2007, 22).

The level of violence in Darfur since the signing of the DPA is also indicative of the agreement’s failure. Some have argued that the agreement has actually heightened conflict (Nathan 2007, 266); since May 2006, over half a million people have been displaced (ICG 2007, 6), and in September 2006, the Government of Sudan launched major offensives in Darfur, including bombing villages and terrorizing IDP camps (Nathan 2007, 246). The violence is not one-sided. Despite having signed the DPA, the SLM/A faction headed by Minnawi has been accused of carrying out many attacks (ICG 2007, 11). Violence continues to the present: in May 2010 alone, over 600 people were killed as a result of conflict in Darfur (BBC 2010a). Thus, it is clear that the DPA has failed to achieve a durable peace.

**Explaining failure**

Having established that the DPA represents a failed peace agreement, it is possible to critically assess to what extent the hypotheses discussed above are able to explain this outcome.

**Hypothesis I**

The first hypothesis argues that peace agreements have no impact on the durability of peace. The failure of the DPA would appear to provide a high degree of support for this hypothesis. Since the agreement failed, it would seem logical to conclude that it was futile and meaningless. However, in order to accept Zartman’s ripeness argument, the absence of a mutually hurting stalemate should be conclusively proven. If a mutually hurting stalemate were present, the hypothesis would lead to the conclusion that peace should be durable.

Some scholars have suggested that the situation in Darfur was ripe for resolution between 2005 and 2006 (Brooks 2008, 415). In other words, the parties to the conflict were, and remain, in a mutually hurting stalemate. For the Government of Sudan, the chief pressure came from the international community. After successfully concluding the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended the decades-long civil war between northern and southern Sudan, the Government of Sudan faced significant pressure from the international community to focus its attention on resolving the conflict in Darfur (ibid.). Moreover, the Government of Sudan was vulnerable to the pressures of domestic politics. Upcoming national elections meant that the ruling National Congress Party needed to demonstrate to Darfuris that their concerns were being taken seriously (ibid., 422). The government was also concerned with the decision by the United Nations Security Council
(UNSC) to refer the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court (ICC) (UN 2005). In July 2008, the ICC’s chief prosecutor brought charges against al-Bashir for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide and a subsequent arrest warrant was issued in July 2010.

The rebel groups were also hurting from the stalemate. Despite fighting a common enemy, they had been divided among one another, and groups themselves had been prone to splintering and factionalism. This lack of solidarity was due to competition for power and leadership, and suspicion that the government was making separate deals with individual leaders. The divide between the SLM/A and the JEM and the split of the SLM/A into two factions supports the observation that the position of the rebels was weakening. Despite their unified position early in the rebellion, patterns of violent clashes between the SLM/A and JEM continued until the signing of the DPA (Flint 2007, 159). Animosity was based, in part, on ideological divides between the secular SLM/A and the Islamist JEM, resulting in a weak tactical alliance. It has been observed that the SLM/A “was never more than a loose alliance between its two main tribal components,” with Abdul Wahid al-Nur representing the Fur tribe and Minnawi representing the Zaghawa tribe (ibid., 152). Lastly, rebel leaders have also been indicted by the ICC, including former JEM commander-in-chief Abdallah Banda Abakaer Nourain (ICC 2011). Therefore, while the DPA provides support for the first hypothesis, the ripeness argument does not provide a complete explanation as to why the peace settlement failed. If the first hypothesis were correct, the hurting stalemate between the Government of Sudan and the rebels should have resulted in peace, but it clearly did not.

As mentioned above, one modification of the first hypothesis emphasizes the nature of the dispute, suggesting that peace agreements are epiphenomenal to the durability of peace agreements when hostilities are based on greed or grievance. Both greed and grievance underlie the conflict in Darfur. Similar to what was observed above, if the first hypothesis were correct, then peace in Darfur should not be achieved. Although this is indeed the outcome that was observed, the logic of the hypothesis may not be applicable in the case of the DPA because the agreement itself attempted to resolve financial and social inequalities. As such, the lack of durable peace might be attributed to dissatisfaction with the agreement itself rather than a proclivity for hostilities between the parties based on greed or grievance. This would lend support to the third hypothesis, rather than the first.

**Hypothesis II**

The second hypothesis predicts that successful agreements involve commitments from regional and international actors. The failure of the DPA provides strong support for this hypothesis, not only because it supports the notion that peace agreements require a guarantor, but also that negative influences from regional and international actors may contribute to the erosion of peace settlements.

The conflict in Darfur must be analyzed as part of a broader regional
security complex that is closely tied to the situation in Chad. Chad and Sudan have long been uneasy neighbours, with each country accusing the other of supporting and harbouring rebel groups in their respective territories. Khartoum is accused of supporting the United Front for Democratic Change rebels in Chad, while N’Djamena is accused of supporting the JEM and the SLM/A in Sudan. Chad allegedly supports these movements in exchange for support in fighting the Chadian rebel groups that are seeking to overthrow the government (Hanson 2007). Although the hypothesis holds that peace is most durable when regional stakeholders are actively engaged in a concerted effort to terminate the conflict, the reverse also applies. Chad’s support of both the JEM and the SLM/A lends credibility to the argument that the DPA’s failure can be attributed to destabilizing regional influences (Heavens 2009). Chad and Sudan have indicated that they will seek to normalize relations, but no concrete steps have been taken to reduce the power of proxy militias operating out of each country (BBC 2010b). Therefore, at best Chad has been indifferent to the peace process in Darfur; at worst, it has been actively undermining it.

The failure of the DPA also lends support to the hypothesis that peace agreements are most durable when the international community credibly commits to enforce their terms. In the case of the DPA, such commitments are noticeably missing. While then U.S. deputy secretary of state Robert Zoellick was present at the negotiations, the most credible support provided by the United States was a letter from then president George W. Bush claiming that any party breaking the agreement would be “held accountable” by the UNSC (Kessler 2006). This commitment, if it can be characterized as one, is not only ambiguous but incredible. The United States could not guarantee enforcement because it could not be sure that other permanent members of the UNSC would not veto any attempt to punish violations. Similarly, the African Union, which played a prominent role in negotiations, did not meet its commitments to provide AMIS with adequate resources. Finally, although Canada, Egypt, Eritrea, France, Libya, the Netherlands, Norway, and the United Kingdom were involved in the negotiations at some stage (Daly 2007, 303), the extent to which these actors were willing to underwrite the agreement is unclear. The lack of support from the international community is also reflected in the joint United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), which was reported to be lacking key capacities in 2007 (UN News Service 2007). Despite receiving five Mi-35P helicopters from Ethiopia, by February 2010 UNAMID still lacked 18 utility helicopters that it required to fully operationalize its mandate (UNAMID 2010). The absence of concrete commitments from both regional and international actors could fully explain why the JEM and part of the SLM/A refused to sign the DPA, and why the signatories were not committed to abiding by its terms.

Hypothesis III

The final hypothesis states that the content of the agreements themselves has a significant impact on the durability of peace. The failure of the DPA provides mixed support for this hypothesis. Notably, the agreement did not
contain the demarcation of demilitarized zones, which Fortna found to be an important mechanism for increasing the durability of peace. According to the agreement, the production of a final map establishing demilitarized zones, and the physical demarcation of these zones, was not to begin until 37 days after the agreement was signed. Parties were not expected to withdraw from these zones for between 47 and 82 days after the conclusion of the agreement. By not prioritizing a demilitarized zone within the agreement, the parties failed to include an element that could have significantly improved prospects for durable peace.

Other mechanisms that have been found to improve prospects for peace are present in the agreement, but did not result in durable peace. The DPA established a joint commission with representatives from both sides, a measure that the academic literature suggests should improve peace prospects (Hampson 1996). The DPA Joint Commission, mandated to examine disputes concerning the interpretation of the agreement, has met regularly and has been active in investigating violations. Twelve investigations were conducted between October 2006 and January 2007 (OAU 2007), although admittedly the parties have been recalcitrant in taking responsibility for alleged violations. Another predictor of durable peace agreements is their level of formality. The DPA bears all the hallmarks of a formal agreement: it was signed by the leaders of two key parties, resulted from multiple rounds of negotiations involving extensive preparations, and was supervised and witnessed by prominent members of the international community (Daly 2007, 302). These factors predict that peace should be durable.

The DPA also provides mixed support for other elements discussed under the third hypothesis. Since it was not signed by the JEM and one faction of the SLM/A, the agreement did not have support from all parties to the conflict. This is a highly plausible explanation for its failure. At the same time, many other mechanisms that increase peace prospects were incorporated into the DPA. For example, the agreement envisioned an elaborate mechanism for power-sharing. The agreement’s first chapter specifically recognizes the importance of power-sharing as “vital for national unity” and envisions devolution of power from the Government of Sudan to a Transitional Darfur Regional Authority (TDRA). It stipulated that the chairperson of the TDRA would receive the fourth highest position within the government, a position that was granted to Minnawi (Hottinger 2006). The agreement also appears flexible: the creation of the Joint Commission indicates a pragmatic recognition that some violations might occur accidentally (Daly 2007, 312). By granting this body investigative and reporting functions, accidental violations would less likely result in repudiation. The settlement was also flexible in that it provided for ad hoc arrangements that allow non-signatories to submit declarations of commitment to its principles and hence is not restricted to signatories alone (ibid., 306).
Conclusion

This article has sought to explore some of the leading hypotheses about the determinants of peace settlement durability. To this end, it has examined the case of one demonstrably failed peace agreement, the DPA, and attempted to evaluate three hypotheses explaining its failure. Although the scope of this article could only consider the single case of the DPA, it should be recognized that the context in which this agreement was signed is based upon an ongoing, longer history of conflict that involves not only Darfur, but other regions of Sudan as well. The analysis demonstrates that while the first hypothesis might partially explain the failure of the DPA, its logic must be further refined. Since this article argued that the situation in Darfur constituted a mutually hurting stalemate, according to the ripeness argument, the DPA should have been a case in which peace was durable. The failure of the DPA does not, in and of itself, invalidate the ripeness argument. It does, however, suggest that a mutually hurting stalemate is a necessary, but not necessarily sufficient, condition for durable peace. In other words, a mutually hurting stalemate enticed the parties to enter negotiations, but was not sufficient to promote lasting peace. If this assessment is correct, then scholars and practitioners can and should accept that peace agreements are not automatically epiphenomenal. Efforts to secure peace settlements would only be in vain when one party has the ability and incentive to continue escalation. Furthermore, the greed and grievance hypothesis could not be adequately assessed because the agreement itself sought to address these problems in the context of Darfur. Further research could be conducted on ceasefire agreements that do not seek to address social and economic inequalities in order to properly assess the logic of this hypothesis.

With respect to the second hypothesis, the DPA confirms the importance of external actors in achieving durable peace. The (in)action of regional and international stakeholders involved in the Darfur conflict—Chad has caused negative interference and the United States has failed to offer credible commitments—provides a persuasive explanation for the settlement’s failure. This finding has important implications for conflict management practitioners. It suggests that while attention should be focused on resolving the dispute between parties to the conflict, equal attention should be spent on securing credible commitments from the international community and ensuring that regional influences are supportive of peace efforts. Scholars should further investigate the concept of a regional security complex and explore the ways in which a supportive regional security complex can be fostered during and after peace negotiations.

Finally, there is mixed support for the third hypothesis. By not providing for the immediate use of demilitarized zones, the parties failed to include an element that has been found to improve prospects for durable peace. The utility of demilitarized zones could not be evaluated in the DPA case study because the agreement’s provisions on this issue did not come into force at the time the agreement was signed. Although the Joint Commission has
highlighted violations of the settlement, it has not been able to solicit general compliance. A power-sharing mechanism, despite being clearly articulated in the agreement, has failed to pacify the parties. However, the explanation that the DPA failed because some of the participants in the conflict did not sign the agreement appears to be the most relevant. Overall, while many factors might support a durable agreement, failure to meaningfully consult all participants in a conflict presents a serious risk to any agreement.

Additional research on the third hypothesis should be conducted in order to better explain why certain mechanisms, such as demilitarized zones and joint commissions, are more successful than others. As such, process-tracing methodology should be used to determine the causal sequence between a given mechanism and a peaceful outcome. Scholars and practitioners need to know specifically how and why a mechanism influences signatories to a peace agreement. The development of a rigorous evidence base will help practitioners justify their selection of mechanisms in conflict settlement. This evidence base can be created through the compilation of a rank-ordered index of measures to indicate the most effective mechanisms contributing to a successful agreement. Such indicators could ostensibly help practitioners secure agreement on measures that would most likely result in a durable settlement, especially in time- or resource-constrained situations. Scholars could also use the index to judge peace prospects in a given situation following a negotiated settlement.

An important caveat should be observed: the creation of an index cannot supplant the value of context-specific research. Conflict origins and motivations are significantly different across cases. As such, formal tools like indexes are inferior to a context-specific approach to conflict resolution. Nevertheless, in situations where information about the conflict is unavailable or resources are limited, a list of conflict management measures ranked according to their historic track record may prove to be a useful tool for practitioners.

Although the scope of this article is limited to the case of the DPA, it should be recognized that the context in which this agreement was signed is based upon an environment that involves not only Darfur, but other regions of Sudan as well. Thus, future research could analyze other peace agreements that have been part of Sudan’s history, such as the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the North and South (which resulted in the independence of South Sudan in 2011), the 2007 Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement, or the peace agreement signed between the Government of Sudan and the Liberation and Justice Movement, another rebel group operating out of Darfur, in July 2011. This article’s methodology could easily be replicated for any of these agreements and has the potential to provide greater insight into the durability of peace agreements in the Sudanese context.
Notes

1. In July 2011, a second Darfur Peace Agreement was signed between the Government of Sudan and the Liberation and Justice Movement. For disambiguation, generally the 2006 agreement is referred to as the Abuja Agreement and the second agreement is referred to as the Doha Agreement. This article is concerned exclusively with the 2006 Abuja Agreement.
2. For example, while the involvement of third parties logically fits with the second hypothesis, it is also possible that the terms of a peace agreement contain provisions that pertain exclusively to the role of third parties. Also, proponents of epiphenomenal peace agreements (hypothesis I) would assert that the need for third-party involvement (hypothesis II) supports their own claim.
3. Estimates on the number of deaths and displacements are impossible to report accurately because of the complexity of gathering reliable data. Refugees International (2012) reports that more than 2.6 million people have been displaced within Darfur and that another 250,000 are refugees in Chadian camps. Determining the number of deaths is even more complicated, especially because battle-related deaths are difficult to separate from deaths from other factors, like disease and malnutrition.
4. The JEM, along with one faction of the SLM/A (led by al-Nur), denounced the agreement, claiming that power- and wealth-sharing and compensation provisions were insufficient, and that the Government of Sudan had not provided enough guarantees to disarm the Janjaweed.
5. The framework utilized in this article borrows from the guidelines established by Hampson (1996, 9–10). Admittedly, this is not the only criteria by which peace settlements can be evaluated. However, these two criteria should be the minimum required to qualify any agreement as successful.
6. In 2007, charges were also laid against then Sudanese minister of state for humanitarian affairs Ahmad Harun and alleged Janjaweed leader Ali Kushayb.
7. Although President Idriss Déby was involved in mediating a ceasefire between the SLM/A and the Government of Sudan in September 2003, it is reasonable to assert that the Government of Chad has not, overall, been an active supporter of the peace process.

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