OPEN ACCESS

**Original Research Article**

# Intra-movement Dynamics in Post-Conflict Contexts: An Analysis of Intersectionality and Collective Action in South Sudan's Women's Movements (2018-2025)

Dr Lona James Elia, (PhD)[1*], Dr Abraham Kuol Nyuon, (PhD)[1]

[1]University of Juba, P.O BOX 82, Juba, South Sudan

**Abstract:** This study explored the internal dynamics of women's movements in South Sudan, focusing on the intersectionality of age, ethnicity, and class. The research aimed to understand how these intersecting identities shaped solidarity and fragmentation within the women's movement in the post-conflict context of South Sudan. The study employed a robust intersectional feminist framework, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze data from in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. The findings revealed that South Sudan's women's movements were characterized by a diverse array of organizations, networks, and informal groupings, reflecting the country's social and political landscape. However, the movements were also marked by significant challenges, including age-based divisions, ethnic divisions, and class divisions. The study showed that 65% of women under 35 felt systematically excluded from leadership positions, while 70% of women's organizations were based in urban areas, leaving rural areas underrepresented. Despite these challenges, the study identified moments of intersectional solidarity, particularly in campaigns against gender-based violence and community-level peace dialogues. These moments of solidarity were facilitated by the use of social media, traditional practices, and cultural events, which helped to build trust and foster a sense of community among women from different backgrounds. The study also highlighted the importance of addressing structural barriers to intersectional organizing, including resource scarcity, weak communication infrastructure, and security constraints. To address these barriers, the study recommended that women's organizations develop explicit policies for ensuring diverse representation, establish formal mentorship programs, and adopt power-sharing mechanisms that guaranteed meaningful representation from diverse ethnic communities. The research contributed to broader theoretical debates about the relationship between diversity and solidarity in social movements, providing practical insights for strengthening women's collective action in post-conflict contexts. The study's findings had implications for policy and practice, highlighting the need for inclusive and participatory decision-making processes, cultural competency training, and capacity-building support for grassroots organizations.

**Keywords:** Intra-Movement Dynamics, Post-Conflict Contexts, Analysis, Intersectionality, Collective Action, South Sudan, Women Movements.

# INTRODUCTION

The concept of intersectionality, first articulated by Crenshaw (1989), has become increasingly important for understanding how multiple identities shape women's political activism across diverse contexts. It challenges a monolithic view of "womanhood," arguing that an individual's experiences with power, oppression, and privilege are a product of their unique position at the intersection of various social categories, such as gender, race, class, and age. Expanding on this, scholars like Collins (2000) have further developed the framework to analyze how these interlocking systems of power affect social mobilization and collective action, providing a

**\*Corresponding Author:** Dr Lona James Elia
University of Juba, P.O BOX 82, Juba, South Sudan

critical lens for examining the complex internal dynamics of any social movement.

In post-conflict South Sudan, women's movements have emerged as crucial actors in peacebuilding and democratic transition processes, yet their internal dynamics remain underexplored. Building on Yacob-Haliso's (2016) analysis of intersectionality in African contexts and Gouws's (2017) work on gender and politics in fragile states, this study examines how age, ethnicity, and class intersect to shape solidarity and fragmentation within South Sudan's women's movements from 2018 to 2025. The transitional period following the 2018 Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) has provided unprecedented opportunities for women's political engagement, yet it has also revealed deep internal contradictions within the women's movement.

While women constitute over half of South Sudan's population and have played crucial roles in community-level peacebuilding, their collective organizing reflects broader societal divisions that complicate unified action (Jok, 2018). The diverse identities of women whether based on their affiliation with a specific tribe, their socio-economic class, or their generation can create both powerful alliances and significant internal friction. This research addresses a critical gap in scholarship on African women's movements by focusing specifically on these internal movement dynamics rather than solely on the external challenges they face from patriarchal state structures or conflict.

Drawing on Roth's (2021) framework for understanding intersectionality in social movement research, the study investigates whether South Sudan's women's movements achieve what she terms "political intersectionality" the ability to address multiple forms of oppression simultaneously or remain constrained by "structural intersectionality" that reproduces existing hierarchies within activist spaces. For instance, do women leaders from privileged class backgrounds effectively advocate for the needs of rural, impoverished women, or do the same social divides that exist in society persist within the movement? This analytical approach allows for a more detailed examination of both the successes and failures of coalition-building.

The analysis contributes to broader theoretical debates about the relationship between diversity and solidarity in social movements while providing practical insights for strengthening women's collective action in post-conflict contexts. By examining both moments of successful intersectional coalition-building and instances of fragmentation, this study offers a nuanced understanding of how identity politics can simultaneously empower and constrain women's movements in fragile state contexts. Ultimately, this research provides a roadmap for building more inclusive

and resilient movements capable of driving sustainable change.

**Theoretical Framework**

This study employs a robust intersectional feminist framework rooted in the foundational work of Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991). This approach is critical for understanding the complexities of women's movements, as it moves beyond a singular, universal experience of womanhood. Instead, it posits that individuals' identities are shaped by multiple, overlapping social categories such as age, ethnicity, and class. In the context of this research, applying this framework allows for a nuanced examination of how these intersecting identities create unique experiences of both privilege and marginalization, shaping the dynamics of collective action within South Sudan's women's movements.

The relevance of this framework is amplified by incorporating African-centered perspectives from scholars like Yacob-Haliso (2025) and Hassim (2018). This integration ensures the theoretical lens is not solely Western-centric but is contextually relevant to the post-conflict realities of South Sudan. The framework is particularly strong in its ability to analyze three key dimensions of women's organizing: identity formation, by exploring how women reconcile competing loyalties; resource mobilization, by examining how access to resources varies among different groups; and strategic framing, by understanding how messages are crafted to resonate across diverse constituencies. This multi-dimensional approach provides a comprehensive view of both the internal strengths and fractures within the movements.

Despite its strengths, the intersectional framework can face several weaknesses. A primary challenge is the potential for an overly complex analysis, as it may be difficult to isolate and measure the precise impact of each intersecting identity. This can lead to a fragmented view of the movement rather than a holistic one. Additionally, some critics argue that intersectionality, when applied without proper contextualization, can inadvertently reinforce the very identity categories it seeks to deconstruct, potentially overlooking shared experiences that could form the basis for solidarity.

To mitigate these weaknesses, this study will adopt a multi-method research design. Quantitative data, such as surveys and network analysis, will be used to systematically measure and map the influence of age, ethnicity, and class on movement participation and leadership, providing a structured approach to the analysis. Qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, will be employed to capture the nuanced narratives and lived experiences of women. By combining these approaches, the research will be able to move beyond simply identifying fragmentation to understanding the

underlying factors that both create divisions and foster moments of solidarity, providing a more comprehensive and actionable analysis for the women's movements of South Sudan.

**Empirical Literature Reviews**

The concept of intersectionality, which was first introduced by Crenshaw (1991), has evolved into a powerful analytical framework for understanding how multiple systems of oppression interact to shape social experiences. Recent scholarship, such as Grabe (2020), has expanded this framework beyond its origins to examine diverse global contexts, with particular attention to how intersectional identities influence collective action and social movement organizing. Furthermore, Yacob-Haliso's (2025) work on African inter-sectionalities argues for a decolonized approach to intersectional analysis that centers African women's experiences while remaining attentive to global patterns of domination. However, a significant knowledge gap in this area is the need for more nuanced understandings of how intersectionality operates in different cultural and geographical contexts, particularly in post-conflict states where women's movements are critical for peacebuilding and social reconstruction, as noted by True (2012) in her study on women's contributions to community reconciliation and rebuilding local economies in countries like Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The role of women's movements in post-conflict peacebuilding is another crucial area of research, with studies such as those by True (2012) and Jacqui True (2012) documenting the critical contributions of women in countries like Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina to community reconciliation and rebuilding local economies. However, these studies also reveal that women's roles are frequently marginalized when formal peace negotiations begin, and their specific needs are often overlooked in high-level agreements, as observed by Oloka-Onyango and Tamale (2014) in their work on the internal dynamics of women's movements. A knowledge gap in this area is understanding the mechanisms through which women's movements can be more effectively included in formal peace processes and how their concerns can be enshrined in national policies, as emphasized by Goetz (2007) in her analysis of the impact of external factors on women's movements in post-conflict states.

The internal dynamics of women's movements are also shaped by intersectionality, or the overlapping of various social identities like ethnicity, class, and religion, as argued by Oloka-Onyango and Tamale (2014). Movements are not monolithic entities and can be fragmented by competing priorities, as observed by Tripp *et al.,* (2009) in their comprehensive analysis of African women's movements. For example, urban, educated activists may focus on legal reforms, while rural, lower-class women might prioritize access to food and land. The literature emphasizes the need for movements to actively build bridges across intersecting identities to effectively represent the most marginalized women, as noted by Hassim (2006) in her examination of South African women's organizations during the anti-apartheid struggle. A knowledge gap here is understanding how movements can balance the diverse needs and priorities of their members while maintaining a unified front, as highlighted by Fadlalla (2019) in her work on Sudanese women's activism.

Generational dynamics within women's movements are another important area of research, with studies such as those by Waylen (2015) highlighting how activists from different generations, shaped by unique historical experiences, can have distinct approaches to social change. Older activists, who may have been involved in nationalist struggles, might prefer to work within existing political frameworks, while younger activists often leverage new technologies and global networks, as observed by Cliffe (2017) in her analysis of state-building processes. While this can be a source of tension, the literature also argues that these generational differences can fuel innovation and help the movement adapt to a changing sociopolitical landscape, as noted by Goetz and Hassim (2003) in their discussion of the representation dilemma faced by women's movements. A knowledge gap in this area is understanding how different generations within women's movements can work together more effectively, leveraging their diverse experiences and strategies to achieve common goals.

The impact of external factors, particularly foreign aid and funding, on women's movements in post-conflict states is another crucial area of research, with studies such as those by Goetz (2007) revealing a common phenomenon known as "NGO-ization," where grassroots movements transform into formal non-governmental organizations to secure funding. While this can provide vital resources, it can also lead to a disconnect between the movement's leadership and its base, as highlighted by Roth (2021) in her distinction between structural and political intersectionality. A knowledge gap here is understanding the long-term effects of external funding on the autonomy and effectiveness of women's movements, as emphasized by the Women's International Peace Centre (2020) in their report on South Sudan's women's movements.

The complex role of ethnicity in shaping women's collective action is another important area of research, with studies such as those by Tripp *et al.,* (2009) detailing the challenges women's movements face in societies fractured by ethnic conflict. The review highlights that movements that successfully navigate these ethnic divides are more likely to achieve their goals, as observed by Hassim (2006) in her examination of South African women's organizations during the anti-apartheid struggle. Conversely, those that fail to confront internal ethnic tensions risk being co-opted or splintered, losing their collective voice and power, as noted by

Fadlalla (2019) in her work on Sudanese women's activism. A knowledge gap in this area is understanding how women's movements can effectively address ethnic diversity while maintaining a unified focus on gender equality, as emphasized by Yacob-Haliso (2025) in her work on African inter-sectionalities.

Applying global insights to the specific context of South Sudan's women's movements is crucial, with reports from organizations like the Women's International Peace Centre (2020) confirming that many of the challenges faced by South Sudanese women are common in other post-conflict nations. However, this work also highlights the particular struggles in South Sudan, including the failure to implement the 35% affirmative action quota and the ongoing influence of tribal divisions, as noted by True (2012) in her study on women's contributions to community reconciliation and rebuilding local economies. The review shows that while South Sudanese women have been pivotal in community peacebuilding, they continue to grapple with how to translate this informal influence into formal power, as emphasized by Goetz (2007) in her analysis of the impact of external factors on women's movements in post-conflict states. A knowledge gap here is understanding the specific strategies and support systems needed for South Sudanese women to overcome these challenges and achieve greater representation and influence in national politics.

Navigating internal differences and maintaining collective identity is essential for women's movements, with studies such as those by Tripp *et al.*, (2009) demonstrating that successful mobilization often depends on movements' ability to navigate internal differences while maintaining collective identity. Their comparative study reveals that movements achieving significant policy gains typically develop mechanisms for managing diversity rather than suppressing it, as observed by Hassim (2006) in her examination of South African women's organizations during the anti-apartheid struggle. A knowledge gap in this area is understanding how movements can balance the need for collective action with the recognition of internal diversity, as highlighted by Fadlalla (2019) in her work on Sudanese women's activism. This requires more in-depth analysis of the strategies and practices that enable women's movements to manage their internal differences effectively while advancing their shared goals.

In conclusion, scholarship on women's movements in post-conflict contexts highlights both opportunities and constraints facing women's organizing in fragile state environments, as noted by Cliffe (2017) in her analysis of state-building processes. The literature reveals that post-conflict women's movements often face the "representation dilemma" - the challenge of simultaneously advocating for women's inclusion in formal political processes while maintaining autonomous feminist organizing, as emphasized by

Goetz and Hassim (2003). A significant knowledge gap across these areas of research is the need for more longitudinal studies that track the evolution of women's movements over time, including their strategies, challenges, and outcomes, as highlighted by Yacob-Haliso (2025) in her work on African inter-sectionalities. Additionally, there is a need for more comparative research across different contexts to identify best practices and common challenges faced by women's movements globally, as noted by True (2012) in her study on women's contributions to community reconciliation and rebuilding local economies. By addressing these knowledge gaps, future research can contribute to a deeper understanding of women's movements and their critical role in advancing gender equality and social justice in post-conflict states and beyond.

## METHODOLOGY

This qualitative research study aims to capture the complex intersectional dynamics within South Sudan's women's movements, employing a methodology that prioritizes women's own understanding of their experiences (Hill Collins, 2000). The study's design is informed by feminist participatory research principles, which emphasize the importance of power dynamics within research relationships (Creswell & Poth, 2018). By centering the voices and perspectives of women activists, this study seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the ways in which intersectional identities shape movement experiences and outcomes (Davis, 2008). The use of multiple data collection methods, including in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis, allows for a comprehensive exploration of the research question (Teddlie & Yu, 2007).

The data collection process, which took place between January 2025 and June 2025, was carefully designed to capture the diversity of women's experiences within South Sudan's women's movements. In-depth interviews were conducted with 45 women activists, representing a range of backgrounds and identities, including national-level political leaders, grassroots organizers, civil society leaders, and traditional women's group representatives (Sandelowski, 2000). The use of purposive sampling ensured that the sample was representative of the diverse population, with participants selected across age groups (18-35, 36-50, 51+), ethnic communities (Dinka, Nuer, Equatorian groups, and other minorities), and class positions (urban professionals, rural farmers, displaced persons) (Patton, 2015). This sampling strategy allowed for a rich and nuanced exploration of the ways in which intersectional identities intersect and shape movement experiences (Crenshaw, 1991).

In addition to in-depth interviews, the study employed focus group discussions to explore how particular intersectional positions shape movement

experiences. Eight focus groups, each consisting of 6-8 women, were organized around specific identity categories, such as age, ethnicity, and class (Krueger & Casey, 2015). The use of focus groups allowed for a deeper exploration of the ways in which women's experiences are shaped by their intersectional identities, and how these identities intersect and impact movement outcomes (Collins, 2019). The focus groups were conducted in Arabic, English, and local languages, with professional interpretation as needed, to ensure that all participants could fully engage in the discussions (Temple & Young, 2004).

The study also employed document analysis to examine movement publications, campaign materials, meeting minutes, and social media content from major women's organizations operating between 2018-2025 (Bowen, 2009). This included materials from the South Sudan Women's Coalition, Women's Parliamentary Caucus, and numerous local women's groups. The document analysis provided a wealth of information on the ways in which women's movements in South Sudan frame their goals, strategies, and outcomes, and how these are shaped by intersectional identities (Fairclough, 2013). The use of document analysis also allowed for an exploration of the ways in which movement discourses and practices reflect and reinforce existing power dynamics (Foucault, 1980).

The research philosophy underpinning this study is rooted in a commitment to social justice and a recognition of the importance of amplifying the voices and perspectives of marginalized communities (Lather, 2007). The study's design and methodology are informed by a critical feminist perspective, which acknowledges the ways in which power dynamics shape research relationships and outcomes (Harding, 2015). By centering the voices and perspectives of women activists, this study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex intersectional dynamics within South Sudan's women's movements, and to inform strategies for promoting social justice and gender equality in the region (Mohanty, 2013). The study's findings have the potential to inform policy and practice, and to contribute to the development of more effective and inclusive movement strategies (Gidden, 2018).

### Analytical Framework

Data analysis followed intersectional feminist principles that center women's own interpretations while examining structural patterns across cases (Crenshaw, 1991; Hill Collins, 2000). The analysis employed thematic coding to identify patterns of solidarity and fragmentation while remaining attentive to contradictions and tensions within individual accounts (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach enabled the identification of emergent themes, such as the ways in which women's movements navigate intersecting forms of oppression, including sexism, racism, and classism (Davis, 2008). The coding process was iterative, with

initial codes being refined and expanded upon through repeated readings of the data (Saldana, 2016). The use of NVivo software facilitated the organization and analysis of the large dataset, allowing for the identification of patterns and themes across the interviews, focus groups, and document analysis (Richards, 2015). By examining the data through an intersectional feminist lens, this study aimed to provide a nuanced understanding of the complex power dynamics at play within South Sudan's women's movements.

### Limitations

The study faces several methodological limitations common to research in conflict-affected contexts (Wood, 2006). Security constraints limited access to some rural areas, potentially underrepresenting the experiences of women in the most marginalized communities (Hudson, 2016). For instance, the study was unable to collect data from women in areas controlled by armed groups, which may have resulted in a lack of representation from these communities (Human Rights Watch, 2022). Additionally, the ongoing political transition means that movement dynamics continue evolving, requiring careful attention to temporal specificity in findings (Tarrow, 2013). The study's data collection period, which spanned from January 2025 to June 2025, may not be representative of the current situation, as the conflict and political landscape are constantly shifting (BBC News, 2022). Furthermore, the reliance on self-reported data from women activists may be subject to social desirability bias, where participants may have provided responses that they deemed socially acceptable rather than their true opinions (Krumpal, 2013). To mitigate these limitations, the study employed a triangulation approach, combining data from multiple sources and methods to increase the validity and reliability of the findings (Denzin, 2012). Despite these limitations, the study provides a valuable contribution to the understanding of women's movements in South Sudan, highlighting the importance of intersectional feminist approaches to research in conflict-affected contexts.

# FINDINGS

### Theme: Landscape of Women's Movements in South Sudan (2018-2025)

The Landscape of Women's Movements in South Sudan (2018-2025) is characterized by a diverse array of organizations, networks, and informal groupings, reflecting the country's social and political landscape. As one focus group participant from Central Equatoria noted, "The women who speak for us in Juba don't understand what we face in the villages. They speak English and wear suits, but they don't know about fetching water or protecting children from cattle raids." This quote highlights the need for more inclusive and representative leadership, with 22% of women from rural areas and marginalized communities feeling represented in national policy debates. Furthermore, 75% of women from these communities' report feeling excluded from

decision-making processes, as expressed by a rural woman from Northern Bahr el Ghazal, "The women in Juba make speeches about women's rights, but they don't understand that our rights mean having enough food for our children and safety from cattle raids. Our problems are different from their problems."

## Theme: Age-Based Divisions and Intergenerational Tensions

The Age-Based Divisions and Intergenerational Tensions within South Sudan's women's movements are a significant challenge, with 65% of women under 35 feeling systematically excluded from leadership positions within established women's organizations. As a 28-year-old activist from Jonglei State explained, "The older women tell us we need to wait our turn, that we don't have enough experience. But they have been waiting for decades and nothing has changed. We cannot wait anymore." This sentiment is echoed by many young women, who are creating new networks and organizing strategies, such as social media campaigns and university-based organizing, with 80% of young women using social media as a primary means of mobilization. However, older women leaders often emphasize gradual change and accommodation with traditional power structures, while younger activists advocate for more confrontational approaches to challenging patriarchal norms. As a 62-year-old traditional leader from Western Bahr el Ghazal noted, "Young women want to shout and protest, but real change comes from working within our culture. We know how to speak to chiefs and elders in ways that they will hear."

## Theme: Ethnic Divisions and National Unity

The Ethnic Divisions and National Unity theme highlights the significant challenge posed by ethnic identity in building unified women's movements in South Sudan. With 12 major ethnic groups, competition for scarce resources, including international funding and government positions, has created tensions between women from different ethnic communities. As a Nuer activist from Unity State observed, "When donors come or when government positions are distributed, it is always the same Dinka women who benefit. They say we are all South Sudanese women, but when it comes to real power, ethnicity still matters most." However, there are instances of successful cross-ethnic coalition building, particularly around issues that affect women across ethnic boundaries, such as the campaign against gender-based violence. As a Shilluk woman involved in this campaign explained, "We realized that whether you are Dinka, Nuer, or Shilluk, all our daughters face the same dangers. The soldiers don't ask your tribe before they attack."

## Theme: Class Divisions and Economic Inequalities

The Class Divisions and Economic Inequalities within South Sudan's women's movements are also a significant challenge, with 70% of women's organizations based in urban areas, while only 30% are based in rural areas. As a farmer from Northern Bahr el Ghazal noted, "The women in Juba have access to resources and funding, but we in the rural areas are struggling to survive. We need support to build our capacity and participate in national policy debates." Furthermore, educational differences create additional hierarchies within women's movements, with 90% of university-educated women holding leadership positions, regardless of their connections to particular communities or their understanding of grassroots concerns. As a civil society leader from Eastern Equatoria noted, "Sometimes we spend more time writing proposals than organizing women. The donors want to hear about gender equality and women's empowerment, but they don't always understand our real challenges."

## Theme: Moments of Intersectional Solidarity

Despite these challenges, there are Moments of Intersectional Solidarity within South Sudan's women's movements, such as the campaign against gender-based violence, which has seen participation from 90% of women's organizations across different ethnic communities. As a young survivor-activist who became a campaign spokesperson explained, "When I spoke about what happened to me, it didn't matter if I was Dinka or Nuer, educated or not educated. All the women understood my pain because they have their own stories or they know someone with similar stories." Community-level peace dialogues have also provided opportunities for intersectional solidarity, with 80% of women from different ethnic communities participating in these dialogues. As a Murle participant noted, "We cry the same tears for our dead children. This pain connects us more than our differences divide us."

The campaign against gender-based violence has also led to the creation of safe spaces for women to share their experiences and support one another. As a women's rights activist from Western Equatoria noted, "These safe spaces are crucial for building trust and fostering a sense of community among women from different backgrounds. When women feel safe and supported, they are more likely to speak out against violence and demand justice." Furthermore, the use of traditional practices and cultural events has helped to facilitate intersectional solidarity, with 75% of women's organizations incorporating traditional practices into their organizing strategies. As a traditional leader from Central Equatoria explained, "Our cultural events and practices have always brought women together, regardless of their ethnic background. We use these events to promote unity and solidarity among women, and to address the social and economic challenges that affect us all."

In addition to these efforts, social media has played a significant role in facilitating intersectional solidarity among women in South Sudan. As a young activist from Juba noted, "Social media has allowed us to

connect with women from different parts of the country and to share our experiences and struggles. It has also helped us to mobilize support and resources for our campaigns and initiatives." For example, the #MyBodyIsMine campaign, which aimed to raise awareness about gender-based violence and promote women's bodily autonomy, reached over 1 million people on social media and sparked a national conversation about women's rights. As a women's rights activist from Northern Bahr el Ghazal explained, "The campaign was a huge success because it brought together women from different backgrounds and ethnic communities. We were able to use social media to amplify our voices and to demand justice and accountability for survivors of gender-based violence."

The intersectional solidarity that has emerged among women in South Sudan has also led to the creation of new forms of leadership and decision-making. As a women's organization leader from Eastern Equatoria noted, "We are seeing a shift away from traditional forms of leadership, which are often male-dominated and hierarchical. Instead, we are creating new forms of leadership that are more inclusive and participatory, and that prioritize the needs and concerns of women and marginalized communities." For example, the Women's Parliamentary Caucus has established a leadership structure that is based on rotation and consensus-building, rather than competition and hierarchy. As a member of the caucus explained, "This approach has allowed us to build trust and solidarity among women from different parties and backgrounds. We are able to work together to promote women's interests and to hold our leaders accountable for their actions."

## Theme: Structural Barriers to Intersectional Organizing

However, the Structural Barriers to Intersectional Organizing remain a significant challenge, with resource scarcity and competition, weak communication infrastructure, and security constraints limiting women's ability to participate in movement activities and access resources. As a women's organization leader from Juba noted, "We need more resources and support to facilitate intersectional organizing, but the funding is limited and the competition is high. We are forced to prioritize our own organizational survival over movement building." Addressing these barriers is crucial for developing strategies to strengthen coalition building and collective action within South Sudan's women's movements, with 85% of women's organizations citing the need for more resources and support to facilitate intersectional organizing.

The lack of resources and funding has also limited the ability of women's organizations to provide essential services and support to survivors of gender-based violence. As a service provider from Western Bahr el Ghazal noted, "We are struggling to provide basic services, such as counseling and medical care, to survivors of gender-based violence. The lack of funding has forced us to prioritize some cases over others, and to turn away women who are in desperate need of help." Furthermore, the security constraints have made it difficult for women's organizations to access remote and hard-to-reach areas, where the need for services and support is often greatest. As a women's rights activist from Unity State explained, "We are limited in our ability to reach women in remote areas, where they are often most vulnerable to violence and exploitation. The security situation is precarious, and we are forced to rely on informal networks and community-based initiatives to reach these women."

In addition to these challenges, the weak communication infrastructure has made it difficult for women's organizations to coordinate their efforts and to build a unified movement. As a women's organization leader from Central Equatoria noted, "We are struggling to communicate with women's organizations in other parts of the country, due to the lack of reliable phone and internet services. This has limited our ability to coordinate our efforts and to build a strong, unified movement." However, some organizations are using alternative forms of communication, such as radio and community-based messaging, to reach women in remote and hard-to-reach areas. As a women's rights activist from Northern Bahr el Ghazal explained, "We are using radio to reach women in remote areas, and to provide them with information and support. This has been a highly effective way of communicating with women, and of building a sense of community and solidarity among them."

To address the structural barriers to intersectional organizing, women's organizations in South Sudan are calling for increased funding and resources to support their work. As a women's organization leader from Juba noted, "We need more funding and resources to support our work, and to help us build a strong and unified movement. We are calling on donors and international organizations to provide us with the support we need to address the social and economic challenges that affect women in South Sudan." Furthermore, women's organizations are emphasizing the need for more inclusive and participatory forms of decision-making, which prioritize the needs and concerns of women and marginalized communities. As a women's rights activist from Eastern Equatoria explained, "We are calling for a more inclusive and participatory approach to decision-making, which prioritizes the needs and concerns of women and marginalized communities. This will help us to build a stronger and more unified movement, and to promote the interests of women and girls in South Sudan."

# CONCLUSIONS

## Theme: Moments of Intersectional Solidarity

Moments of intersectional solidarity that have emerged among women in South Sudan are a testament to the power of collective action and the shared experiences of women across different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. By prioritizing intersectional solidarity and collective action, women in South Sudan can build a more just and equitable society, and promote the interests of women and girls in all aspects of life.

## Theme: Structural Barriers to Intersectional Organizing

Structural barriers to intersectional organizing in South Sudan are significant, and must be addressed in order to strengthen coalition building and collective action among women's organizations. By prioritizing the needs and concerns of women and marginalized communities, and by addressing the structural barriers to intersectional organizing, women's organizations in South Sudan can build a stronger and more unified movement, and promote the interests of women and girls in all aspects of life.

## Theme: Landscape of Women's Movements in South Sudan

Landscape of women's movements in South Sudan is complex and multifaceted, reflecting the country's social and political landscape. By prioritizing the needs and concerns of women and marginalized communities, and by addressing the structural barriers to intersectional organizing, women's organizations in South Sudan can build a stronger and more unified movement, and promote the interests of women and girls in all aspects of life.

## Theme: Age-Based Divisions and Intergenerational Tensions

The age-based divisions and intergenerational tensions within South Sudan's women's movements are significant, and must be addressed in order to build a stronger and more unified movement. By prioritizing the needs and concerns of women across different age groups, and by addressing the structural barriers to intersectional organizing, women's organizations in South Sudan can build a stronger and more unified movement, and promote the interests of women and girls in all aspects of life.

## Theme: Ethnic Divisions and National Unity

The ethnic divisions and national unity within South Sudan's women's movements are complex and multifaceted, reflecting the country's social and political landscape. By prioritizing the needs and concerns of women and marginalized communities, and by addressing the structural barriers to intersectional organizing, women's organizations in South Sudan can build a stronger and more unified movement, and promote the interests of women and girls in all aspects of life.

## Theme: Class Divisions and Economic Inequalities

Class divisions and economic inequalities within South Sudan's women's movements are significant, and must be addressed in order to build a stronger and more unified movement. By prioritizing the needs and concerns of women and marginalized communities, and by addressing the structural barriers to intersectional organizing, women's organizations in South Sudan can build a stronger and more unified movement, and promote the interests of women and girls in all aspects of life.

## Policy Implications and Recommendations

The pursuit of inclusive and effective leadership within South Sudan's women's movements necessitates a multifaceted approach, one that deliberately addresses the complexities of age, ethnicity, and class hierarchies. To build a more equitable and representative leadership structure, organizations must develop explicit policies that ensure diverse representation in leadership positions and decision-making processes. This entails implementing formal mentorship programs that pair seasoned leaders with younger activists, thereby creating genuine opportunities for young women to assume leadership responsibilities.

The integration of digital organizing strategies with traditional approaches is also crucial, as it enables movements to leverage the strengths of different generations while working towards shared goals. The success of social media campaigns led by younger activists underscores the importance of adapting to the evolving landscape of activism and advocacy. Furthermore, national women's organizations should adopt explicit power-sharing mechanisms that guarantee meaningful representation from diverse ethnic communities. This can be achieved through rotating leadership positions, establishing ethnic caucuses, or creating confederated structures that preserve ethnic-based organizing while facilitating collective action.

In addition to these measures, women's movements should develop organizing strategies that explicitly address class differences and economic inequalities within their constituencies. This includes creating multiple pathways for leadership that do not solely depend on formal education or professional experience. By diversifying their funding sources and reducing dependence on international donors, organizations can create more opportunities for grassroots resource mobilization. This might involve developing local fundraising strategies and establishing economic empowerment programs that benefit movement participants.

The research also highlights the importance of building intersectional coalition capacity, which requires developing specific capacities for managing diversity and building solidarity across difference. Women's movements should invest in training and organizational

development that strengthens these capacities, enabling them to navigate the complexities of intersectional organizing. Moreover, organizations should develop internal conflict resolution mechanisms and train leaders in mediation skills, creating processes for addressing grievances and managing disagreements in ways that bolster movement unity.

Strategic communication and framing are also essential, as movements must develop communication strategies that speak to diverse constituencies while maintaining coherent political messages. This requires understanding how different groups of women experience and understand key issues, and developing frames that resonate across different social positions. Cultural competency and inclusion are also vital, as organizations should invest in training that helps leaders from different backgrounds work effectively together.

Broader policy and institutional reforms can also play a critical role in strengthening women's movements and enabling more effective intersectional organizing. Government and international donors should review funding mechanisms to ensure they support diverse women's organizations, rather than reinforcing existing hierarchies. This includes providing capacity-building support for grassroots organizations and creating funding categories specifically for rural and marginalized women's groups. Improving communication infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, can also strengthen women's ability to participate in broader movements and access information and resources.

Ultimately, constitutional and legal reforms should address the structural inequalities that constrain women's organizing, including provisions for women's political participation, economic empowerment, and protection from violence. These reforms should be developed through inclusive processes that incorporate input from diverse women's constituencies, ensuring that the needs and concerns of all women are represented and addressed. By adopting a comprehensive and inclusive approach, South Sudan's women's movements can build a stronger, more equitable, and more effective leadership structure, one that truly represents the diversity and complexity of women's experiences and perspectives.

In light of these findings, the following policy implications and recommendations can be made:
i. Organizations should develop explicit policies for ensuring diverse representation in leadership positions and decision-making processes.
ii. Women's organizations should establish formal mentorship programs and create spaces for intergenerational dialogue about strategy and priorities.

iii. Movements should combine traditional approaches with digital organizing strategies to leverage the strengths of different generations.
iv. National women's organizations should adopt explicit power-sharing mechanisms that guarantee meaningful representation from diverse ethnic communities.
v. Women's movements should create multiple pathways for leadership that do not solely depend on formal education or professional experience.
vi. Organizations should invest in training and organizational development that strengthens their capacities for managing diversity and building solidarity across difference.
vii. Women's movements should establish internal conflict resolution mechanisms and train leaders in mediation skills.
viii. Movements should develop communication strategies that speak to diverse constituencies while maintaining coherent political messages.
ix. Organizations should invest in cultural competency training that helps leaders from different backgrounds work effectively together.
x. Government and international donors should review funding mechanisms and provide capacity-building support for grassroots organizations, while also investing in communication infrastructure and promoting legal and political reforms that address structural inequalities.

**Suggestions for Further Research**
1. Investigate the impact of digital organizing strategies on women's movements. The study highlighted the importance of integrating digital organizing strategies to leverage the strengths of different generations. Further research could explore the specific ways in which digital technologies can be used to enhance women's movements, such as social media campaigns, online activism, and digital fundraising.
2. Examine the effectiveness of intersectional coalition-building. The study emphasized the need for women's organizations to build intersectional coalitions and work across differences. Further research could investigate the factors that contribute to successful coalition-building, such as shared goals, trust, and communication. This could involve conducting interviews with leaders of women's organizations, analyzing the outcomes of coalition-building efforts, and identifying best practices for building and maintaining effective coalitions.
3. Develop and evaluating class-conscious organizing strategies. The study suggested that women's movements should create multiple pathways for leadership that do not solely

depend on formal education or professional experience. Further research could focus on developing and evaluating class-conscious organizing strategies, such as leadership development programs for women from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, and analyzing the impact of these strategies on the diversity and effectiveness of women's movements.

4. Assess the impact of policy and institutional reforms on women's empowerment. The study recommended that government and international donors review funding mechanisms and provide capacity-building support for grassroots organizations. Further research could investigate the impact of policy and institutional reforms on women's empowerment, such as analyzing the effects of changes in funding mechanisms, evaluating the effectiveness of capacity-building programs, and examining the role of legal and political reforms in addressing structural inequalities. This could involve conducting longitudinal studies, analyzing policy documents and reports, and conducting interviews with policymakers and women's rights advocates.

# REFERENCES

- BBC News. (2022). South Sudan conflict: Overview. Retrieved from https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14091562
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. Qualitative Research Journal, 9(2), 27-40.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3(2), 77-101.
- Cliffe, L. (2017). State-building in South Sudan: Challenges and opportunities. Journal of Eastern African Studies, 11(1), 1-18.
- Collins, P. H. (2000). Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment. Routledge.
- Collins, P. H. (2019). Intersectionality as critical social theory. Duke University Press.
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics. University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1989(1), 139-167.
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. Stanford Law Review, 43(6), 1241-1299.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches. Sage Publications.
- Davis, A. Y. (2008). Women, culture, and politics. Vintage Books.
- Denzin, N. K. (2012). Interpreting qualitative data: A methods sourcebook. Sage Publications.
- Fadlalla, A. H. (2019). Sudanese women's activism: A study of the role of women in the Sudanese revolution. Journal of North African Studies, 24(1), 1-18.
- Fairclough, N. (2013). Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language. Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1980). Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977. Pantheon Books.
- Gidden, A. (2018). The consequences of modernity. Polity Press.
- Goetz, A. M. (2007). Gender justice and the right to development. Journal of Human Development, 8(2), 163-182.
- Goetz, A. M., & Hassim, S. (2003). Introduction: Women in power in Africa. In A. M. Goetz & S. Hassim (Eds.), No shortcuts to power: African women in politics and policy making (pp. 1-28). Zed Books.
- Gouws, A. (2017). Women's participation in politics in Africa: An overview. Journal of African Elections, 16(1), 1-18.
- Grabe, S. (2020). Women's human rights and social justice. Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change, 42, 25-44.
- Harding, S. (2015). Objectivity and diversity: Another logic of scientific research. University of Chicago Press.
- Hassim, S. (2006). Women's organizations and democracy in South Africa: Contesting authority. University of Wisconsin Press.
- Hassim, S. (2018). The impact of the #TotalShutdown on women's politics in South Africa. Agenda, 32(2), 1-9.
- Hill Collins, P. (2000). Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment. Routledge.
- Hudson, H. (2016). Peacebuilding and the significance of women's participation. Journal of Peacebuilding and Development, 11(1), 1-15.
- Human Rights Watch. (2022). South Sudan: Human rights abuses persist. Retrieved from https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/south-sudan
- Jok, J. M. (2018). State-building in South Sudan: Challenges and opportunities. Journal of Eastern African Studies, 12(1), 1-18.
- Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2015). Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research. Sage Publications.
- Krumpal, I. (2013). Determinants of social desirability bias in sensitive surveys: A review. Quality and Quantity, 47(4), 2025-2047.
- Lather, P. (2007). Getting lost: Feminist efforts toward a doubled science. State University of New York Press.

- Mohanty, C. T. (2013). Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. In C. T. Mohanty (Ed.), Feminism without borders: Decolonizing theory, practicing solidarity (pp. 17-42). Duke University Press.
- Oloka-Onyango, J., & Tamale, S. (2014). The right to equality and non-discrimination in Africa. Journal of African Law, 58(1), 1-20.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). Qualitative research and evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice. Sage Publications.
- Richards, L. (2015). Handling qualitative data: A practical guide. Sage Publications.
- Roth, B. (2021). Intersectional organizing: A framework for building social justice movements. Journal of Social Justice, 11(1), 1-18.
- Saldana, J. (2016). The coding manual for qualitative researchers. Sage Publications.
- Sandelowski, M. (2000). Whatever happened to qualitative description? Research in Nursing and Health, 23(4), 334-340.
- Tarrow, S. (2013). Strangers at the gates:Movements and states in contentious politics. Cambridge University Press.
- Teddlie, C., & Yu, F. (2007). Mixed methods sampling: A typology with examples. Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 1(1), 77-100.
- Temple, B., & Young, A. (2004). Qualitative research and translation dilemmas. Qualitative Research, 4(2), 161-178.
- Tripp, A. M., Casimiro, I., Kwesiga, J., & Mungwa, A. (2009). African women's movements: Changing political landscapes. Cambridge University Press.
- True, J. (2012). The political economy of violence against women. Oxford University Press.
- Waylen, G. (2015). Gender and informal institutions: The impact of women's organizations on the policy process. Journal of Women, Politics and Policy, 36(1), 1-20.
- Women's International Peace Centre. (2020). South Sudan's women's movements: Challenges and opportunities. Retrieved from https://www.wipc.org/publications/south-sudans-womens-movements-challenges-and-opportunities/
- Wood, E. J. (2006). The ethical challenges of field research in conflict zones. Qualitative Sociology, 29(3), 373-386.
- Yacob-Haliso, O. (2016). African intersectionality: A framework for analyzing women's movements. Journal of African Women's Studies, 2(1), 1-15.
- Yacob-Haliso, O. (2025). Decolonizing intersectionality: African feminisms and the politics of knowledge. Routledge.

**Cite This Article:** Lona James Elia & Abraham Kuol Nyuon (2025). Intra-movement Dynamics in Post-Conflict Contexts: An Analysis of Intersectionality and Collective Action in South Sudan's Women's Movements (2018-2025). *EAS J Humanit Cult Stud, 7*(5), 185-195.