Implementation of peace agreements in Africa: a comparative study of Mozambique and Angola

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Abstract

There is normally a cause for celebration when parties to a protracted conflict enter into negotiations. When the adversaries complete the negotiations and append their signatures to a peace agreement, there is even more euphoria. As much as a successful negotiation process is vital, it is the implementation of the agreements that really determines whether the conflict will discontinue or not. While a peace agreement that is fully implemented will ascertain lasting peace, one that is not fully implemented will most likely lead the parties in conflict back to war. Recognising the nexus between the implementation of peace agreements and the stoppage of civil wars, this study sets out to explore the essential underlying conditions that will guarantee implementation success. To achieve this, the study begins by examining the pre-negotiation process (to determine how and why parties decide to enter into agreements), the negotiation process (to determine why parties agree to continue to negotiate until they reach an agreement), and the implementation process (to establish how the parties behave after a peace agreement has been signed and why). When these three processes have been scrutinised in their proper contexts, elements that can be used to explain implementation behaviour will be picked out. This study examines the peace agreements of Mozambique and Angola to determine the factor(s) that led to successful implementation in Mozambique and failure in Angola. This is done in the light of William Zartman's theory of ripe moments. The methodology of this study is case study-based where comparisons of phenomena in one country are done relative to the other. The cross-case comparisons were achieved by a mixture of field research and analysis of secondary data. To collect primary data, visits to the case study countries were done and interviews carried out with a number of relevant respondents. The data gathered was then subjected to an intense content analysis. The resulting data was also analysed with regards to available recorded books and journals. This study argues that when a peace agreement is negotiated at a ripe moment, it will be fully implemented. This means that the decision-making environment before negotiations begin determines whether the signed agreements will be adhered to or not. However, the study's findings established that concentrating on the pre-negotiation decision-making environment alone may not sufficiently explain implementation failure or success. In this regard, an expansion of the theory of ripeness was done when it became apparent that the conditions that make the parties to a conflict to enter into negotiations can change after some time. When this happens, the parties to the conflict may essentially forget the pain that had initially pushed them to negotiate. If this happens, something else needs to come in to fill the vacuum. The study found out that the factor of a mutually enticing opportunity came into play in the negotiation and implementation phase in Mozambique. Taking over from the concept of a mutually hurting stalemate (that is more effective at
the pre-negotiation stage); the mutually enticing opportunity was able to keep the parties to the conflict on the course of peace when the effects of the pain had waned. For Angola, in addition to the fact that the negotiations took place at moments that were not ripe, the mutually enticing opportunity factor was conspicuously missing. This was the reason for implementation failure. As a result, the study concluded that a combination of a mutually hurting stalemate and a mutually enticing opportunity can best explain implementation success or failure.