

# Is Identity the Root Cause of Sudan's Civil Wars?

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## Is Identity the Root Cause of Sudan's Civil Wars?

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### Chapter One: Sudan: A Background

Sudan, Africa's largest country is located in the North East of the continent, covering a total area of 2,505,813 square kilometres. It borders the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Libya and Uganda. Africa's longest river, the Nile, divides the country on an East West axis (Appendix 1) (Levy and Abdul Latif, 2007:7, The World FactBook, 2010). Sudan shelters a diverse religious and ethnic population, which during the vigorous spread of Islam in North Africa became divided along clear geographical, ethnic and religious lines; of the mostly Arab Muslim North and the Christian/Animist South (Appendix 2). Timothy Insoll (2003) in *The Archaeology of Islam in sub-Saharan Africa* provides a detailed account of the spread of Islam in Sudan. Insoll (2003) explained that in 652AD Muslim Arabs entering from Egypt invaded the Northern part of what is now modern Sudan, transformed its people's religious identity, changed its ethnic affiliations and acquired African slave[1] recruits from the Southern region. Christianity however persisted in the South since arrival in 569AD (Insoll, 2003; Yoh, 1999). This ideological division later became more apparent when politicised and consolidated during the British colonial era when Sudan acquired its first governmental structure, and which later led to its on-going civil war[2].

#### Ethnicity and Religion

In July 2000, the population of Sudan was estimated at 35,079,814 representing a net growth of 2.84 per cent in comparison with 1999 and estimates increased to 36,080,373 by July 2001 (Encyclopaedia of the Nations, 2010). The Sudanese population consists of about 19 different ethnic groups and almost 600 subgroups (ibid). Most of the inhabitants are of Black origin, accounting for 54.8 per cent (Nilotic 24.4 per cent who predominantly inhabit the Southern region and Sudanic 12.9 per cent, Nuba Mountain people 6.5 per cent, Cushitic 6 per cent and other 6 per cent all spread across the Centre, Eastern and Western regions) (Operation World, 2010). Arabs account for 45.2 per cent of the population and are predominantly in the North (ibid). Due to the deeply religious nature of the Sudanese people, most of the population are adherents to a certain faith, mainly to Christianity or Islam, however indigenous religions still persist.

In the North, Islam not only served as a faith but it became a way of life, and a specific prestigious cultural and ethnic identity associated with Arabism. Northerners acquired the ideological belief that "human history is a salvation history that has reached its culmination with the prophetic mission of Mohamed" (Ajwain & De Waal, 2002:275). For that reason, the Northerners have always aspired to build a bridge connecting them to the Arab world in order to collectively revive the divine plan of salvation communicated by Mohamed and spread Islam, the divine truth (Insoll, 2003). Conversely, the identity of Southern Sudan has been shaped primarily by the prolonged resistance to the imposition of Arab and Islamic culture from the North (Deng, 2001), which unified them as Black Africans and has geared them toward Christianity as means of combating Islam and Arabism. For Southerners, Islam symbolises not just a religion, but also (and linked to Arabism) an ethnic and cultural phenomenon that historically suppressed them as slaves and remains to exclude them as Black Africans and adherents to a different faith (Yoh, 1999). The Southerners have long resisted the reconstruction of their religious and ethnic identity to be constructed any differently, which therefore led to on-going civil strife.

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## Economy

Sudan is considered as one of the most socially unequal countries in the world and its people are highly reliant on its vast landmass as means of livelihood and survival, however its economy is rapidly expanding due to an increase in oil production (17<sup>th</sup> fastest growing economy in the world) (Pantuliano, 2007). Sudan's economy heavily relies on the agriculture sector that employs 80 per cent of the population, and whilst Khartoum serves as the financial capital where economic development is concentrated; the South possess rich land which fuels the economy (Levy & Latif, 2007). Due to numerous tributaries of the Nile in southern Sudan, the south has greater access to water, and has therefore much more fertile soil while the north of the country is on the edge of the Sahara desert (Pantuliano, 2007). Furthermore, the rapid expansion in the oil production since its discovery in the Southern region (Appendix 3) during the 1970s has come to play a significant role within the economy. Oil revenues are very important for the General Government of Sudan (GGOS) as they make up about 70 per cent of Sudan's export earnings and contribute 50 per cent of its GDP (De Waal, 1999; Switzer, 2002). Therefore, the attempt by the GGOS to control these resources to ensure survival of the Northern regime, and the Southern resistance have also contributed to Sudan's on-going civil strife.

## The British Rule

In *Sudan: Ethnicity and National Cohesion*, Mohamed Omer Beshir (1984), explains that Sudan's present civil boundaries, its political, religious and ethnic divisions, highly centralised and militarised system of governance began to take shape in the 1820s during the first Turko/Egyptian (1821-1885) colonial regime. The second colonial administration, Anglo-Egyptian condominium (1899-1956) reinforced the previous colonial structure from Khartoum, which the GGOS made its base. Robert Collins (2008) in *A History of Modern Sudan* provides a sophisticated account of the colonial regime in Sudan. Collins (2008) explains that the first step towards politicising the Sudan's North/South ideological divisions occurred when the colonial regime administrated the North and South as separate regions; Christianity was encouraged and Arab or Muslim-related practices were prohibited in the South (Deng, 2001). This strategy was partly because the colonial regime perceived the South to be similar to the East African colonies whilst the North was similar to Middle East; and partly to build a bulwark against the spread of Islam to avoid return of Mahdi[3] like national movements in a "land whose conquest (or reconquest on behalf of Egypt in official parlance, to legitimise their actions) had taken them three years (1896-99)" (O'Fahey, 1996: 260).

## The Road to Independence

The North and South regions became integrated into a single administrative region following the British decision to grant Sudan independence in 1956. The Line of Demarcation drawn on 1 January 1956 provided exclusive governmental control to the North (Khartoum) and semi-autonomous rule for the South (Maitre, 2009) (Appendix 4). Douglas Johnson, (2003) in *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars*, explains that "Sudanese independence was thrust upon the Sudan by a colonial power eager to extricate itself from its residual responsibilities; it was not achieved by national consensus expressed through constitutional means" (Johnson, 2003:24). The Sudanese therefore gained independence with a temporary constitution in which two issues arose which were to prevent agreement on a permanent constitution:

- 1) Whether Sudan should be a federal or unitary state, and
- 2) Whether it should have a secular or an Islamic constitution

While Southern politicians favoured federalism as a way of protecting the southern provinces from being completely subordinated to the Northern-dominated central government (Malwal, 1981). Most northerners rejected the idea of federalism, seeing it as a first step towards separation, a dichotomy that came to characterise modern Sudan. Failure to achieve a federal constitution therefore was seen by the South as a beginning of the North colonisation of the South (ibid). The colonial regime left behind a style of governance which was characterised by individualism and rigidity (Beshir, 1984). This left Sudan to Arab Muslim Northern rulers who lacked the leadership qualities to govern a modern state system and the ability to approach solving political problems from a rational scientific manner; the

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qualities needed to keep the country intact.

## First Civil War (1955-1972)

In *The First Sudanese Civil War: Africans, Arabs, and Israelis in the Southern Sudan, 1955-1972*, Scopas Poggo (2009) provides a detailed account of the first Sudanese civil war. Poggo explains that the civil war began in 1955 before the Sudan became officially independent, whilst the transfer of power from the British to the mostly Northern administrators was in transit. Due to the political uncertainty, Southern insurgents from the Equatoria Corps (from the South) mutinied at Torit (a district in East Equatoria) (Appendix 4), and this sparked off the separatist movement, Land Freedom Army (better known as the Anya-Anyas (AN) guerrilla movement) (which later emerged to form the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SSLM/A)) (Poggo, 2009). When the AN escalated their attacks, a low intensity civil war started against the newly formed GGOS with the aim of achieving autonomy for the South. The AN began to burn villages and arrest and torture Northern administrators in the South, as a symbol of increased opposition to the GGOS. This was met with further repressive action by the GGOS, which further fuelled the conflict (Johnson, 2003, DeRouen, 2007). However Douglas Johnson (2003) argues that it was the 1964 mutation that was seen as the true beginning of Sudan's civil war. In 1964 General Ibrahim Abboud an Arab and Muslim military man, became Sudan's first official president (Appendix 5). As a reflection of his religious zeal he was devoted to pursuing programs of Islamisation and Arabisation in the South, and as part of his policy that rested on the belief that homogenising the country would ensure national unity (Johnson, 2003; Poggo, 2002). These programs led to open revolts in the South and galvanised the AN into more effective organisation forming the SSLM/A led under General Joseph Lagu at the time, which continued to fight the GGOS until the war came to an end after the signing of the Addis Ababa Peace Accord in 1972.

## The Addis Ababa Peace Accord

In *The Southern Sudan...* Robert Collins (1962) offers a detailed account of the Addis Ababa Peace Accord (AAPA) signed between the GGOS and the SSLM/A in 1972. The AAPA was a series of compromises aimed at appeasing the SSLM/A leaders after the first civil war proved costly to the GGOS. The SSLM/A wanted a full federal structure, however after long lasting negotiations, the South were pleased that the GGOS granted them autonomy for their Southern region composing of the three provinces of Equatoria, Bahr al Ghazal, and Upper Nile. This was under a regional president, appointed by the national president who would be responsible for all aspects of the government in the region except areas of significant importance such as defence, foreign affairs, currency and finance, economic and social planning and interregional concerns which remained under the GGOS control (Johnson, 1998, Collins, 2008). However, the AAPA did not reach an effective compromise between North and South for long-term stable peace. After a decade of relative peace, in 1983 the agreement was cut-off by the then-president of Sudan, Gaafar Nimeiri, (5th president of Sudan and leader of the Sudanese Socialist Union party (SSUP) whilst in power) (Appendix 5) who imposed *Sharia* law in the South as part of his commitment to the spread of Islam.

## Second Civil War (1983-2005)

Sudan's second civil war started as a continuation of the first civil war. It broke out in 1983, between the SSLM/A under its then leader John Garang and the GGOS, taking place for the most part in Southern Sudan. It has been described as one of the longest lasting and deadliest wars of the later 20th century where approximately 1.9 million civilians were killed (U.S. Committee for Refugees, 2001) and more than 4 million southerners have been forced to flee their homes since the war began. Gaafar Nimeiri infringed the AAPA, by revoking the autonomy of the southerners when he declared his intention to transform Sudan into a Muslim Arab state by imposing *Sharia* law across the country including the South, an action that started the conflict anew. Robert Collins (2008) explains that after the conversion of Gaafar Nimeiri to fundamental Islam he emphasised that religion was 'not just an individual matter of faith but the cornerstone and basis of all social and political institutions in society as a whole' (Collins, 2008:145).

Nimeiri attributed the backward condition of the Sudanese to the creeping decadence of Islamic societies and the introduction of western governance, economics, education and values under colonial rule that after political

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independence had disrupted the proper practice of Islam in Sudan. Furthermore Nimeiri very condescendingly not only saw himself as guardian of this backward brethren in the South, but felt obliged to replace the Southerner's religion with a better one, which was Islam; he also came to see the South's rich resources as a bonanza to develop the North, and to view the Southerners merely a source of cheap labour for the North (Deng, 1978). Nimeiri's successors continued his legacies which led the war to continue for years, until diplomatic intervention and the GGOS cooperation, under president Omar Al-Bashier (current president of Sudan and leader of the National Congress Party (NCP) (Appendix 5) eventually leading to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 which brought one of the world's deadliest wars to a halt.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)

In *The Comprehensive Peace Agreement Sudan 2005: An example of successful peace building*, Julian Warczinski (2008) provides a comprehensive account of the CPA and its controversies. The signing of the CPA between the GGOS and the SPLM/A in Naivasha, Kenya on the 9 January 2005 effectively ended the second civil war, Africa's longest-running war. Joel Adechi of Benin, the then United Nations Security Council president described it as a "historical moment of great opportunity for the country" (Warczinski, 2008: 7). The CPA occurred as a result of diplomatic efforts led by the East African Regional Organisation (EARO) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and found robust support from the international community, particularly the USA, UK, Norway, Italy and others (Warczinski, 2008). The CPA ended the war and tried to balance the NCP's insistence on retaining Islamic law in the North, with the SPLM/A's demand for a "New Sudan" (project to replace the polarised identities of the Sudanese with a common commitment to a national project of equality and democracy) (De Waal, 2007). The CPA, established a six-year autonomy for the South (national elections were held in April 2010), incorporated agreements on boundaries, the state security (where Southern rebels were to be integrated into the regular army), and equal revenue sharing from the South oil fields (a matter that caused concerns regarding peaceful North/South relations) (Jobbins, 2008). Furthermore it set a timetable by which Southern Sudan would have a referendum on its independence (January 2011) (Africa Briefing, 2008). Dr. Samson Kwaje, SPLM Minister for Information and Broadcasting sums up the CPA thus:

"The CPA sets out the framework for a just and lasting peace in the Sudan and along with the subsequent Interim National Constitution (INC) and the Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan (ICSS), establishes a new political, military and economic system based on the values of justice, democracy, and human rights that give a voice and role to all the peoples of the Sudan and paves the way for restored dignity and well being, security and equality for all" (The Comprehensive Peace Agreement: A Summary Booklet, 2007:1)

However, the CPA's bold attempt to square several circles at the same time rendered it prone to problems. Despite its framework, the SPLM/A and the GGOS continue to oppose each other. The SPLM/A has accused the GGOS of violating the terms of the CPA in many ways, particularly failing to implement The Protocol on the Resolution of the Abyei Conflict (Reeves, 2005, Jobbins, 2008) De Waal, 2007). Analysts noted that the agreement had been disintegrating for some time, not just due to endless disagreements between the GGOS and the SPLM/A, but notably because of international focus on the conflict in the nearby regions, particularly with reference to Darfur (Darfur issues are not explored in this paper) (Africa Briefing, 2008). However despite the disagreements the SPLM/A stated that it was not returning to war, therefore the years 2010 and 2011 are of great importance in determining the validity of this statement and the future of the North and South peace relations.

## Conclusion

Sudan's civil strife as depicted in this paper is a result of direct identity clashes between the GGOS and the SSLM/A. Positions of the North and South on identity are not likely to change, however, compromises can and ideally should be reached in order to allow Sudan to live in peace. However there are many questions that need to be addressed in order to fully comprehend the role of identity in Sudan's civil strife: What does the concept of identity mean, and what are its components? Why and how can a state man sense of identity become a strong driving force behind his actions to the extent of leading his country into war? Can a state acquire an identity? Chapter Two provides a comprehensive theoretical overview of the concept of 'identity', that addresses such questions and many others that

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may consequently arise, in order to fully aid the reader's understanding of the important role identity came to play (and indeed continues to play) in Sudan North/South conflicts.

## Chapter Two: A Conceptual Overview of Identity

### Establishing the Context

In a journal article entitled *What is Identity?* James Fearon (1999) referred to identity as a very a complicated and unclear concept that has come to mean so many things that by itself it means nothing. What Phillip Gleason (1983: 924) observed years ago remains true today: "*The meaning of identity as we currently use it is not well captured by dictionary definitions, which reflect older senses of the word, but rather our present idea of identity is a fairly recent social construct and a rather complicated one at that*". Nonetheless, in spite of the wide range of meanings the concept of identity could carry, it continues to play a central role in on-going debates in every sub-field of political science. In terms of understanding the role of identity within Sudanese politics, this paper precisely focuses on identity role within: nationalism, nation state building (Smith, 1991), ethnicity, cultural cohesion and ethnic conflict (Horowitz, 1985, Deng, 1995) and the idea of forging a 'state identity' which comes at the heart of the constructivist analysis of state sovereignty (Wendt, 1992; Biersteker & Weber, 1996). Exploring these theoretical explanations will provide the reader with the essential background knowledge that they could carry across when reading the preceding chapters in order to fully comprehend the important dynamics identity plays behind the causes of the Sudan civil war.

### Defining Identity

In the 1950s, psychologist Erik Erikson's work explained the general concept of identity as "*a cognitive schema in which one constructs images or attributes as set of meanings to oneself while taking the perspective of others*" (Katzenstein, 1996: 59). Thus, identity as a psychological phenomena becomes one's "feelings or rather definition about one's self, character, goals, and origins which enables the actor to determine 'who I am/we are' in a situation and positions in a social role structure of shared understandings and expectations" (Wendt, 1994: 395). Therefore, identity is used in two linked sense, 'social' and 'personal'. At the 'personal' level an identity is some distinguishing characteristics that a person takes special pride in or views as socially consequential but more or less unchangeable (Fearon, 1999). This suggests that one carries along these characteristics when relating to a social category, in order to determine who one is in relation to the different other.

A 'social' category, on the other hand refers to a "set of persons marked by a label and distinguished by implicit or explicit rules deciding membership and (alleged) characteristics, such as beliefs, desires, moral commitments, or physical attributes thought typical of members of the category such as race, gender, ethnicity, religion, language, and culture" (Deng, 1995:1), or behaviours expected or obliged of members in certain situations, as in the case of roles, such as a state or religious leader, a professor, and so on (Fearon, 1999). However, due to the complex nature of the concept of identity, there exists two schools of thought who carry contradictive views on identity. The essentialist and constructivist schools of thought carried endless debates on whether one's identity is a predetermined fact or socially constructed phenomena.

### Essentialist School of Thought

Essentialists' traditionally explained one's identity as consisting of things that are in some way essential (not meaning constitutive but rather important) to one's definition of oneself, particularly speaking of consisting of aspects of oneself that are predominantly given and which they feel powerless to change, cannot or did not choose and are mainly conscious of (Andrews, 1997). Particularly speaking of ethnicity as a deeply rooted conflictual issue within Sudanese politics, Essentialists would argue that 'ethnicity (is) deeply rooted in historical experience that it should properly be treated as a given in human relations' (Esman, 1994:10 a). For example in Sudan to be black automatically means a descendant of historical slave recruits. Similarly other examples that would be defined in a similar pattern are biological and physical attributes such as skin colour, being tall, race or membership in a certain social category, in which one adheres to specific customs, beliefs or religions. Religion is another important topic in relation to Sudan and therefore should be touched upon. Religion supplies one with cosmologies, moral frameworks,

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institutions, rituals, traditions and other identity-supporting content that answer to individual's needs of belonging, self-esteem and even self-actualisation (Seul, 1999). Even though religion can be acquired as a faith rather than being predetermined, Essentialists would argue that the same manner of one's ethnicity, physical attributes etc are predetermined so is one's religion by the conduct of the social category they happened to exist in.

## Constructivist School of Thought

However, the Constructivist school of thought would disagree with the Essentialists' notion of predetermined identities. Rather, they emphasise that religious (Peek, 2005; Castells, 2000) and ethnic identities have no natural or objective existence as such, but rather they are socially constructed since social categories tend to vary over time, historically, and are the products of human thinking, discourse, and action (Barth, 1968, 1975, Lal, 2001). Martin Bulmer therefore defined:

an ethnic group (as) a collectivity within a larger society that form defined communities, that are distinguished by having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared past and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements which define the group identity such as kinship, religion, language, shared territory, nationality or appearance in which members of an ethnic group are conscious of belonging to the group (Bulmer, 1986: 54).

Joanne Nagel asserts that both ethnicity and religion in this context are "(a) result of dialectical process involving internal and external opinions and processes, as well as the individual's self-identification and outsiders' ethnic (or religious) designations" (Nagal, 1994: 154).

Religion and ethnicity are not predetermined, but a highly adaptive and malleable phenomenon, and primarily a practical resource that individuals and groups deploy opportunistically to promote their more fundamental security and economic interests that they may even discard when alternative affiliations promise a better return (Esman 1994 b). These tangible characteristics are important as they contribute to these notions or sense of a group's self-identity and uniqueness. This therefore explains why and how state leaders play a major role in the deliberate process of ethnic and religious labelling. It also explain that there could exist specific motives behind the various forms of radicalised definitions and representations of the us versus the other that occurs in the wider society (Omi and Winant, 1994, Nagel, 1994) and which tends in return to be a strong drive to ones actions.

## Identity Motivates Action

Since one's identity at the basic level can be defined by relating to a social category or in the sense of personal identity; therefore one's actions are derived by the means to fulfil one's personal sense of understanding, affirmation and belonging to a social group. Since a social category is frequently made up of norms attached to or associated with membership in the category, members in that category tend to act in accordance to the norm to maintain their membership to that specific social category (Fearon, 1999). Therefore one's identity tends to work as a moral code or compass that shape one's interests and guides one's actions in accordance of fulfilling these interests, therefore "(one's) identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which (one) can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what (one should) endorse or oppose" (Taylor, 1989: 27). This formulation helps explain that any actions that are perceived to threaten to 'violate one's identity' will be rejected almost independent of their material consequences because it undermines a person's basis for thinking well of himself or herself. (Fearon, 1999)

Thus, ethnic and religious conflicts are particularly prone to violence because they involve matters of identity, because membership in ethnic categories and one's religion are often an important basis for peoples' sense of self-worth or dignity, and threats to this sense are in general likely to produce powerful emotional reactions (Horowitz, 1985; Calhoun, 1991). One's religious and ethnic ties and affiliations can be activated in particular times and can be used as resources in a variety of contexts in response to current needs or in terms of material, power, competition with outside groups and other interests (Cohen 1974: Yancey *et al* 1976, Patterson 1975). This formulation therefore suggests a straightforward explanation for why nationalism, particularly in its more ethnic and religious articulations, tends to be highly problematic in developing countries such as Sudan. Not just because it just involves matters of

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identity, but because it appeals most strongly to people with relatively low socio-economic status (Thompson, 1992). Since occupation and social ranks are not available as sufficient sources of living or self esteem (Laitin, 1998).

## Nationalism

National identity “describes that condition in which a mass of people have made the same identification with national symbols and have internalised the symbols of the nation[5] ...” (Bloom 1990: 52). At the heart of nationalism lies the notion that the world is divided into diverse and distinctive nations. That being so, each nation should focus on its own unique political identity, and should have self determination (Simpson, 2008). This could either be as having its own governing units within a larger nation or having a state of its own ruling over its demarcated territory (ibid). Nationalism is a cultural ideal held by states, that claims whilst people tend to describe their identity in many different ways it is being part of a particular nation that provides them with their primary form of belonging to that nation (Evera and Snyder, 1997). Based on this premise, in *Nations and Nationalism*, Ernest Gellner (1983) explains therefore that Nationalism becomes a “...doctrine that the state and the nation should be congruent. Nationalism holds that legitimate rule is based on the sovereignty of a culturally or historically distinctive people in a polity that expresses and protects those distinctive characteristics” (1983:8).

Joseph Nye (1993) elucidates that the concept of nationalism is not merely a descriptive term, it is also prescriptive and as such is a political word used in struggles for power. National movements tend to be of elites or masses who shape the people's national sentiments and ideology and relate it to their sense of identity and belonging to their state and nation. Since national communities embody their traditions, values and memories, in this manner state elites become inevitably involved in recognising and reproducing particular ethnocultural groups, and so the politisation of cultural identities is to some extent inevitable (Kymlicka, 2000). Therefore nationalism can be state strengthening or state subverting, and a major force behind the breakup of states and creation of new ones. State strengthening nationalism accepts an existing state as broadly legitimate but seeks to strengthen it, internally by “purifying” the nation and reforming government, externally by reclaiming ‘national’ territory and extending power (Norman, 2006). This strategy in itself however can be subverting when a state shelters different nations and so in the sense that it is a moral ideal promoting one's loyalty to one's nation, it becomes an ethic of heroic sacrifice and so it can justify the use of violence leading to wars, ethnic conflict, persecution of minorities and belligerence (ibid), in the name of one's loyalty and defence to one's national community against enemies, internal or external (Ignatieff, 1994) and seeks to create a new state usually by separation from a larger state, sometimes by unifying smaller states, that has an autonomous rule over its own state.

## State Identity

People who value their autonomy also value their national culture, since their national culture provides the most important context within which people develop and exercise their autonomy. Therefore promoting integration into a societal culture is not only part of national cohesion but also a state identity-building project. A state in its simplest meaning is a legal entity, which possesses a sovereign (collectively determined social convention that varies over time, (Biersteker and Weber 1996; Wendt 1999) power both internally and externally. In a spatial form (refers to territory which is a central aspect of statehood and represents the physical underpinning of the state) and at a social level over its members. Based on this notion Krancberg (1982) explains that Karl Marx defined the state as the institution used by the ruling class of a country to maintain the conditions of its rule. Alternatively, according to Max Weber (1967), the state is an organisation with an effective monopoly on the use of legitimate violence in a particular geographic area. By contrast to the sense of personal and group identity, “state identity” would refer to distinguishing features of a *state* that form the basis for its self-respect or pride. Therefore metaphorically speaking for a state to acquire an identity requires it to have a sense of self-definition and identification, which distinguishes it from other states.

However, sovereign states while they differ economically militarily politically and in territorial and population terms they are legally equal. The state identity tends to be determined by the state government. The government is an important political institution designed to make decisions for the populace as a whole and administer policy processes, and is one of the key executors of sovereignty domestically (Simpson, 2008). Governments differ as each

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state has a different history, territorial size and location. In the case of Sudan it could be argued that it combines two types of government; the official one, which in principle relies on the democratic model (presidential or parliamentary) and the totalitarian reality in which is the prevailing one in which the government seeks to penetrate and totally change society by attempting to build a nation state based on ideological criteria which do not necessary meet the needs of the Sudanese nation as a whole.

## Building a Nation State

The concept of a nation state combines both of what has been written on nationalism and state identity. Archie Simpson (2008), in *Nations and States* explains that the concept of the nation state encompasses the nationalist idea of a marriage between the nation and the state. Not a theory in itself, the concept of nation state promoted the idea of an integrated political community (such integrated communities were seen as both ends and means) as both a precondition for the development of modern democratic polities and as its outcome (Kook, 2000). However if each separate national and ethnic group however defined were to obtain self-determination and build their own nation state, there would uncountable numbers of nation states in the international system. Srebrnik (2001) explains that most of the world's sovereign states are multinational patchwork units of different and often hostile-ethnic communities. Therefore minority issues regarding their different culture, languages, religion, traditions, questions of tolerance, assimilation, education and their representation within the state has become an important political issue, and if not considered by the government could lead to civil conflict. Therefore building a nation state based on the nation identity is seen to be not merely integrative but assimilating in as much as minority identities would eventually become obsolete and blend almost naturally into the new identity (Kook, 2000) however this is never the case when minorities resist.

The building of a nation state occurs in a variety of ways. The one to be considered in relation to this paper is how nationalist political elites attempt to nationalise regional, ethnic and religious minorities by the use of state institutions and other means to incorporate minorities in the larger majority national identity. The most repressive way to create a nation state is through repressing minorities groups by killing them, coercing them into changing their religions, language etcetera. Whilst a more progressive way would be thinning out the majority identity for example by de-emphasising its ethnic roots, or by decoupling it from the majority religion, language etcetera so that it could be willingly embraced by members of the national minority alongside their existing national identity (Norman, 2006). In attempt to build a nation state however, Sudan became what is referred to as a Quasi state. While such states maintain the Westphalian sovereignty they are internationally recognised. However they lack the corresponding domestic sovereignty and established institutions capable of constraining and outlasting the individuals who occupy their offices. Consequently, they do not enjoy many of the advantages traditionally associated with independent statehood (Jackson, 1990).

## Conclusion

It is clear that one's ethnic and religious identity is vital to ones sense of uniqueness and of belonging to the wider society. Therefore understanding the perspective, from which the North and South identities are defined, helps explain and understand how these groups different identities clashed leading to ongoing civil were in Sudan. While the Arab Muslim Northern believed that their superior ethnic and religious identity is predetermined by the conduct of Islam and by being Arab, it is essential to understand however that polarised identities of the North and South are constructed. However dealing with identity at a political level, it is those who hold the power within a state that determine what identity the nation should acquire. For this reason, the separate identities of the North and South were bound to clash when the Northern government, holding the power to forge the nations sentiments sought to ethnically and religiously purify the nation creating an Arab Muslim nation state. This has led the emotionally driven South to wage war against the Northern government that through its policies has forged a threat to the South's identity and sense of self worth. How then did identity come to play a vital role in causing Sudan's civil wars? Was the war exclusively identity related or is it that the structural weakness of the state and the Northern government's economic and ideological objectives, and hunger for power has led Sudan in to war for decades? Chapter 3 seeks to answer to such questions, and provides scenarios to address the most important question at hand: Is identity the root cause of Sudan's civil wars?



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## Chapter Three: Causes and Consequences of Sudan's Civil War

### North-Versus South: The Background

The multiplicity of causes of the civil war in Sudan makes it peculiarly intractable. However, it still remains feasible to distil all the perceived factors of war causation and reach the base to discover that the direct ethnic and religious identity clashes between the North and South, is the igniting point from where Sudan's civil strife emerged. However whilst ethnic and religious identity remains of great significance, there still remain many other underlying causes to the war. The North has racially and religiously subjugated the South for centuries. Therefore British colonial legacy to grant Sudan's independence to the North has provoked great sense of fears in the South of Northern colonisation, which led to the 1955 mutiny, the point where Sudan's civil war escalated. The Northern government identity and the way it chose to impose it upon Sudan's diverse nation, has come to determine Sudan's fate since. The Northern government's attempt to create of Sudan an Arab Muslim nation state, and their refusal to preserve the South's ethnic and religious rights by granting them any form of political self-determination, resulted in Sudan's political turmoil throughout the 1960s. However while ethnic and religious identity are clearly of great significance in causing Sudan's civil wars, it has been argued that the South's economic significance to maintaining the North's regime, the Northern government weakness and its inability to consolidate the state and the structural feature of Sudanese governance that led to a pattern whereby the most ruthless and/or opportunistic individuals repeatedly held the initiative has been another major cause of the escalation and continuation of Sudan's civil wars.

### The Colonial Legacy

The igniting point of Sudan's civil war was the 1955 mutiny that occurred as a result of the British colonial decision to grant Sudan's independence to a newly created Northern elite. This exacerbated, in the South, pre existing fears of centuries of inferior ethnic and religious relations with the North. The North South relations were very sensitive, particularly for the Southern Sudanese who had long been subjugated by the Arab North through the slave trade (MacMichael, 1923; Bestwick, 2004) a brutal legacy that shaped the Southerners' psych, leading the South to take for granted that their Northern compatriots were their traditional enemies (Government of Sudan, Commission of Enquiry, 1956). Furthermore the British colonial administration did not bridge this gap before granting Sudan's independence to the North, but rather widened it during their colonial rule, which became problematic to the North South relations after decolonisation (Johnson, 2003). Sharkey (2003) captures this notion well by explaining that British Major-General Charles George Gordon, might have abolished the slave trade in 1898, but the British colonial administration did not promote egalitarianism thereafter.

On the contrary, the British education policy favoured Arab males of high local status for academic education that would lead to administrative jobs within the government, as part of the process of co opting these men into the political system and thwarting their resistance to the colonial regime that evolved since the Mahdi's national resistance. Those of slave descent, whom they variously called 'Sudanese' or 'detribalised blacks', were guided into army careers and manual jobs. Based on this premise the South had all the right to fear its fate under the North, which now held the power to regenerate history (ibid). Muhammad al-Makki Ibrahim provided an elegant and precise description of those who inherited independent Sudan, he explained that they were the product of...

historical 'cross pollination' through which there 'emerged a new creature who was the modern Sudanese, who was formed neither of pure Arab blood nor of pure African, but who certainly combined in his tissues the two kinds of bloods, and carried in his brain the product of the more powerful and more perfect culture: Arab Culture (al-Makki Ibrahim, 1989: 11-12).

The 1955 mutiny was an eye opener to the serious problems and the distrust prevailing, but the new governing elite failed to address themselves in a constructive way to these issues involved. Rather, after independence Sudan was led into civil strife as a result of the Northern leaders' determined policies to build of Sudan an Arab Muslim nation state.

### Building a Nation State

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In 1967, the Northern government attempted to build a Sudanese nation state on a cornerstone of Northern Arab Muslim identity, deliberately ignoring the religious and ethnic diversity of Sudan and led the country into civil war. In 1967 General Abboud rose in status and became Sudan's first president, ruling the state under a military regime he perceived the ideal way of governing Sudan was by achieving national unity through assimilation into the Northern Arab Muslim culture. Nyombe (1994) explains that General Abboud's great sense of nationalism, religious and ethnic prejudice blinded him with regard to Sudan's religious and ethnic diversities, and the strong psychological barriers that had long existed between the North and South. He perceived that the way to achieving national cohesion was by clearing the Sudan from any colonial footprints and creating a homogeneous Arab nation; a nation with one language (Arabic), one religion (Islam), one culture (Arab-Moslem culture), and most importantly, one race (Arab). General Abboud's policy to nationalise the education system and to go back to the Mahdist *Sharia* vision was seen as the first step to achieving his objectives while suppressing the indigenous culture (Hasan, 1985).

In attempt to explain General Abboud's legacy, what Johnson (2003) referred to as the legacy of Islamisation and Arabisation, Bushara Ahmed Gumma provided a simple explanation in his article *The Sudanese Identity* (2006); that the Northerners considered themselves as first class citizens in the Sudan and therefore Northern leaders like General Abboud were likely to impose their own identity as the unique national identity, ignoring the other identities. For the South however, their fears before independence have certainly been made manifest. The British colonial rule was perceived to be replaced by the hegemonic rule by Northern riverine leading to what the Southern Sudanese historian and nationalist Deng called "a change of masters entailing the rise of a new, internal colonialism" (Deng, 1994: 72). This in return led the Southern Sudanese to rise against non-foreign colonisers for their independence. Therefore, what followed was great sense of nationalism in the South as well as the desire for self determination and the only way that was to be recognised was through a federal structure, a *right* that the Northern ruling elite had long been reluctant to grant the South.

## Building a Federal State

The Northern elites refusal to preserve the South's ethnic and religious rights by granting them a federal state within which they could practise their autonomy, thus contributed to Sudan's political turmoil and full-blown civil war throughout the 1960s. Principally fearing perceived future Northern domination; Southerners demand for federation was expressed as early as 1947 in the Juba conference during the run-up to independence, as a structure of future relations between the North and South. In spite the fact that members of the Legislative Assembly promised the South that newly elected members of the GGOS would consider federal system post independence; shortly after independence Northern politicians led by Ismail al-Azhari, reneged on this guarantee seeing a federal structure as secession in disguise (Johnson, 2003; Albino, 1970). Several national ruling coalitions came and went since independence, and it became increasingly clear to Southerners that the federalists' aims of home rule and a secular constitution were not attracting sufficient political will in Northern. The North and the South could not reach national consensus on the South's right for self-determination, and so military attacks between the GGOS and SPLM/A escalated throughout the decade (Kebbede, 1999).

Based on what Daniel Elazar (1984) outlines the GGOS failed to see that a federal government would be a sufficient device by which the federal qualities of a society are articulated and protected. However the essence of federalism in Sudan lies not in institutional or constitutional structures that could be granted to the Southerners as a symbol of recognition but rather this recognition has to come from within the Sudanese society itself in order for a federal structure to work. In principle self-determination of the South should have been recognised as a right rather than a political reward for armed struggle. However the South's persistence led the government that came to power in 1969 led by Colonel Jaáfar Numeiri to reconsider its strategies. Colonel Numeiri embarked on the federal question and took steps towards recognising a regional autonomy under the AAPA within a united Sudan, where the South could practise their ethnic and religious rights but it was not long until he infringed this agreement. Even though the federal principle proved to be very instrumental in Sudan's quest for peace and democracy, it has long remained an elusive concept, due to the economic significance due to the South's economic significance in maintaining the North regime.

## The South Resources

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The South's economic significance to the North was the main drive that led Nimeiri to infringe the Addis Ababa agreement causing civil war to escalate once again but on a larger scale. Ismail al-Azhari made it clear as early as 1940 that the South's agricultural land was of great importance to the economic prosperity of the North upon which they needed to build and maintain their regime power, identity and prosperity. This therefore could be sufficient reason in disguise behind the North's long resistance the South secession and their determination to create a united state. While ethnic and religious significance cannot be denied, the South's land recourses are of great significance in explaining the former points explored in this paper. Furthermore, with the oil discovery in the South and owing to the fact that the Southern government was entitled to revenues received from its natural resources under the Addis Agreement, they were enthusiastic in wooing oil companies to explore the region. Indeed United States oil company Chevron Incorporated agreed to explore Southern Sudan in 1974 and in 1978 and discovered significant oil reserves that would generate high revenues for the development of the Southern region (Amnesty International, 2000) and maybe forge a threat to the prosperity of the North.

The North considered oil to be a national resource instead of a southern one. Therefore the war began with, and has been sustained by, violence towards the Southerners, seizing assets, particularly land, and gaining control of a labour force, all as a deliberate attempt by the Northern ruling elite to subjugate communities by destroying their capacity for independent organisation and, ultimately, their distinct ethnic identities (Sharkey, 2004). Furthermore export from oil revenues financed the Northern government war effort and bolstered the North's military arsenals by giving rise to an internal arms industry With increase in oil revenues the war continued for years, and it was estimated that the government spent up to \$1 million per day for the war in 2001 (ibid). However it could be argued that while the North saw great opportunities to use oil revenues to suppress the South, this was not their sole reason behind their desire to take control of the oil fields. Rather the discovery of oil in the South provided a possibility to escape Sudan's economic decline which had escalated in the 1970s as a result of Nimeiri's poor management of the national economy which had put Sudan in an to overwhelming debt to the IMF (Nelson, 1990). This claim remains valid; it still however does not eliminate the North deliberate strategies to subjugate the South while attempting to take control of oil fields. Non the less it draws attention to another prevailing issues behind the war and that is the weakness of the Northern governance in managing the state affairs, and maintaining security and order within the country.

## Consolidating the State

Whilst ethnic and religious identity is clearly of great significance in causing Sudan's civil wars, it is argued that it is only secondary to the main underlying issues in the Northern governmental structural weakness. Alex De Waal (2007) particularly agrees on this notion, arguing that since Sudan acquired a state system the new Sudanese government was unable to develop its own enforceable rules for political bargains. Therefore by going back to the Mahdist revivalist perspective of ruling the state according the Prophetic model as embodied in the Medina state, imposing Islam on Sudan seemed to have the attraction of providing a set of preordained and blessed rules with which the North could govern the Sudan. Such policies where therefore merely (despite the ideological claims) state-centred rather than nation centred, as means to enhancing political legitimacy and power at the centre and drawing support from other Muslim states, while supplanting local languages with Arabic and quashing claims to peripheral autonomy (Sharkey,2008).

Furthermore, all the aspects highlighted from the start projects the inability of the Northern government to take effective control of the State. While not denying the significance of issues concerning identity, Peter Woodward (1999) argues that root cause of Sudan's civil war relies on the internal tussles for power between governing elites that took control of Sudan since independence. Non of the ruling elites that took over the government managed to consolidate their rule over the government, and so in return this rendered Sudan chronically unstable and prone to intractable conflict. Woodward (1999) explains that the first two dominating sectarian parties that dominated each of Sudan's parliamentary periods (1953-58, 1964-69 and 1985-89); the Mahdist movement and its associated Umma Party, the Khatmiyya sect and the Unionist Party, have long had overlapping interests, loyalties and long competed for power to control the Sudan's newly formed government (Woodward, 1999; Collins, 2008). The Islamic political groups that later emerged drew their membership from each of the above groups, and so followed the already founded structure of power struggles.

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Most Northern leaders, who took the states leadership, gained their positions through military coups (Appendix 7) rather than democratic elections or agreements of power transfer. Nevertheless, Nimeiri is considered the motivational and spiritual leader of those military dictators who came after him particularly the government of President Al-Bashier that has been in control since and re-elected once again in April 2010. President Al-Bashier, who led the 1989 coup in an attempt to overcome this elite fragmentation, was the basic co-operator with Nimeiri during the 1980s to produce what they call the *Sharia* laws. However just like his predecessors President Al-Bashier failed to consolidate the state and his rule over the government. Internal divisions were highlighted in August 1990 when President Al-Bashier promised the Kuwaitis, Egyptians and Saudis that Sudan would stand with them against Iraq, only to be countermanded by Turabi's declaration of support for Saddam Hussein, after which he became imprisoned based on allegations of conspiracy (Burr & Collins, 2003).

## A Vicious Cycle

In final attempt in addressing the root causes of Sudan's civil war Alex De Waal (2002) explains that adopting Islamic ideology as a form of governance and the structural features of the Sudanese government that led to a pattern whereby the most ruthless and opportunistic individuals repeatedly held the initiative; has become a way of life and so it eased the process by which the war escalated and indeed continued. De Waal (2002) explains that once Nimeiri has taken a step towards adopting political Islam to govern the state it is remarkably difficult for any of his successors to reverse it, even if it such an action was perceived as essential for the state stability. Islamic ideology is what holds the North intact and so any compromise could not only lead to upheaval in the North and instability, but could also anger other leading Muslim states like Saudi Arabia, who are supportive of the Northern regime. Therefore the Islamist regime's military nature and the religious and exclusivist nature of its ideology that does not tolerate opposition have combined to bring into being a context that has been conducive to some of the grossest human rights abuses since independence to the present day.

In an attempt to explain what has lead political conflict in Sudan to become violent, Alex De Waal (2007) proposed the "brute causes" hypothesis by which explains that those who run the country are brutish, any authority that took over the government consisted of individuals who's only concern was to hold power at any price, and so he referred to them as criminals and necessarily behave as such. According to this framework, President Al-Bashier and selected members of his inner circle (most of them generals and security officers but including some civilians too) long ago hatched a plan for the ruthless consolidation of power and the waging of war on all who stood in their way. Therefore following on from De Waal's argument what John Garang stated in 1984 sums up the Sudanese situation

Curses (of injustice) have plunged the country into an abysmal ocean not only of the poverty and suffering, but also of a total confusion, which the Sudanese are experiencing, and which will be hard to fix. The succeeding Sudanese generations, who had inherited the war, have a test before them, and they will have to choose whether to continue falling into the abyss, to continue following suit with the previous practises of injustice done by the previous regimes that led to the failure of the Sudanese state, or to take an alternative route which might be better for the future of their country (Garang, 1984:25).

However, despite Sudan's years of struggle for peace and the great challenges in governing the state, the GGOS should still be credited for co-operating with the international community to help acknowledge the South's rights and achieve peace in Sudan through the signing of the CPA. Yet many questions regarding the efficient implementations of the CPA are still to be answered in order to comprehend if future peaceful relations are to exist between the North and the South.

## Conclusion

The superior nature of the Northern identity is not only embedded by the conduct of Islamic religion and Arab race, but also history played a major role in widening this gap between the North and the South. Upon granting independence to the North the South feared a new form of neo colonisation by the North, and these anxieties eventually led the civil war to escalate. Despite the prevailing distrust between the South and North, the Northern government yet went ahead and imposed its identity on the South by attempting to create of Sudan a nation state and

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eliminate all traces of British colonialism. However while the North perceived it this way, the South perceived it as a form of neo-colonialism by the North, and so provoked the South's strong sense of nationalism which eventually led civil war to escalate. Federalism was seen as a solution to solving the North/South conflict, it's a right that the Northern government has long refused to grant the South. However the South's persistence has led the North to eventually acknowledge their rights, but it was not so long until this right was evoked by the oil discovery in the South. While some argued that oil was important to solve Sudan's economic decline, it was clear that oil was needed to finance the identity war against the South. Identity played a major role in causing civil war in Sudan, and so did the state's governmental structural weakness, that is characterised by internal tussles for power, by which the most opportunistic individuals repeatedly took control of the government and who were never able to reverse the brutal Islamic regime, and so Sudan's civil strife never came to an end. According to this framework, the key to stability in Sudan lies through the centre, which is the North, even though the CPA is promising for Sudan's national democratic transformation, it seems to appear as a recipe for future instability in Sudan.

## Chapter Four: Discussion and Conclusion

Sudan has for so long experienced civil strife and so war has become a norm within Sudanese political society. So far this paper has provided the reader with the essential empirical background knowledge to understanding the issues of the Sudan civil war and how it came to existence. It further provided a theoretical background of the concept of identity that further aides the reader understanding of the proceeding chapter that fully addressed the question at hand. Sudan at present however faces insuperable challenges in its attempt to break free from its conflictual tradition and achieve peace, democracy and fair distribution of national wealth and power. This has been the most sustained attempt to resolve Sudan's structural crisis since independence, however it is not without flaws and many of its aspects have not been efficiently implemented, which therefore hinders trust that it will change much in Sudan's future. However the agreed upon elections and the referendum are both the central pillars around which a form of democratic governance in Sudan could be built. The long-term future of Sudan however, will still be defined by the outcome of the election in April 2010, and the referendum in the south the following year will dictate the shape of Sudan as a political entity and redefine what it means to be 'Sudanese'.

### The Comprehensive Peace Agreement

The CPA might have solved one of Africa's longest civil wars, and so provided hope and peaceful future to the Sudanese people, however its flaws can form a major threat to future stability in Sudan. The post-CPA government and federal structure remained persistent and so it reflects many pre-CPA features. Jobbins (2008) agrees with this statement and explains that the CPA failed to address the most important issue in Sudan and that is the question of: "What is Sudan?", an important question if not promptly addressed threatens to put the country in a risk of disintegration. The differences between the artificially constructed groups in Sudan were not addressed in order to devise solutions or the reconstruction of a national identity and the creation of a more pluralistic system. Instead, it has recognised these differences by giving the leaders of the North the right to continue an Arab-Islamic agenda, and giving the South in the interim its own virtual independence but with the option to secede. Peace-making remains a product of politics Jobbins (2008) asserts, and so based on that the CPA can be seen as a product of the GGOS to maintain control over the state by bringing a powerful rival into its coalition, the SPLM/A, in order to have sufficient time and capacity to deal with other rivals that rose in other regions sequentially (for example, Darfur).

Sudan's political scene with regard to the South relations might have improved, however still the North form of thinking and objectives regardless remained unchanged and incursion into South continues. When one asks people, what was the war all about in the South and now in Darfur and possibly in the East, one word summarises it all: marginalisation by the Arab centre of the non-Arab periphery!. One has established that this has long existed in Sudan, so it remains unchanged alongside the lack of precision as to the future of the North-South relationship, and leaders in the North and South's willingness to reach achievable solutions and compromises. Goldwyn (2008) explained that the Diplomats close to the CPA negotiations were skeptical about the low degree to which emphasis on the implementation of the agreement was included in both North and South parties' calculations. The negotiating parties did not internalise the importance of reaching an implementable agreement, instead focused on easier and often ambiguous and imprecise compromises, which could be explained with the relative complacency as favouring

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the status quo. So neither side was able or willing to actually put the agreements into practice.

Furthermore, the CPA did not address one of Sudan's major issues and that is the weakness in its governmental structure that further increases the North South disputes over oil resources. Security might have improved but the unwillingness or rather inability of the both parties to tackle the Abyei impasse has yielded one of the greatest threats to Sudan's peace. Donald (2008) explained that Khartoum would not want to relinquish authority over the oil regions, and the weak governmental institutions and the lack of technical capacity in the South has resulted in its oversight of oil sharing, which therefore allows the North to access and continue exploiting the oil regions in the South and focus on investment in Northern infrastructure whilst the South remains unable to ensure the protection of their share in the oil wealth. Therefore the likelihood of a military resolution to disputes over these areas remains high, ultimately leading to a return to war driven by their reflection on the failure of the 1972 Addis Agreement.

## The 2010 Elections

The April 2010 elections, were a remarkable event within Sudanese politics and essential for the transformation of Sudan's future political. It marked the first democratic elections in Sudan since 1986 and despite the delays in the election process, it was nonetheless a peaceful event unlike what many have previously predicted. Although widely considered to have been marred by unacceptable irregularities, and the outcome of the polls were still endorsed by the international community, creating a huge incentive for the country's rival leadership to live up to the terms of the CPA. Sudan, therefore for the very first time in years, managed to project itself to the outside world as being more than capable of holding democratic elections. The elections confirmed the dominance of the NCP and the SPLM/A in the political life of Sudan. With 68% of the votes cast, President Al-Bashier is retained, an outcome that his supporters have touted as proof ICC charges against, President Al-Bashier are unfounded. However Alex De Waal (2007) argues that the outcome of the elections projects that the most likely scenario is that the structure of the centralised political power in Sudan remains unchanged, and one must face the probability of continued turbulence and paralysis in Sudan – a political process marked by constant motion but no forward movement. With the elections now over the future of Sudan hinges on the answers to a number of thorny questions, which although not unfamiliar to Sudanese and their international sponsors, have been made even trickier by the outcome of the April 2010 polls.

## The 2011 referendum

One of the most important concerns lies over the willingness of the President Al-Bashier and SPLM/A to live up to their post election promises to reach out to each other in the interest of a successful implementation of the CPA. Although clinging to their respective presidencies, President Al-Bashier and Salva Kiir have emerged from the elections with deeply prided polities. Therefore avoiding prejudiced policies that could hinder peace in Sudan becoming key to ensuring stability in the country, particularly mutual agreements between the two parties on issues concerning the 2011 referendum. In the light of the dismal performance of the GGOS in the South and the overwhelming support for Salva Kiir's presidency, President Al-Bashier at this point should be convinced of the popularity of the secession option among Southern Sudanese, but is he? Since the CPA outlines the South's right to a referendum along with the region of Abyei this poses a question mark to the extent to which the two arch foes would be willing to compromise on key settlement issues, such as the demarcation of their oil-rich borders. While secession is the ideal scenario, it is however the most unlikely. If achieved without implementable agreements regarding oil lands, violence could escalate between the North and South, exacerbate violence elsewhere, and leave the newly independent South with a weak governmental economic base. Therefore what remains open for conjecture is whether, President Al-Bashier and Salva Kiir, with the help of their international sponsors, can bring forth the tact and political will necessary to overcome the obstacles on the path to the referendum, and heal the poisons of their respective polities thereafter.

However whatever the ultimate result of the referendum, and however the parties choose to resolve current disputes on particular components of the agreement, the more fundamental need is to establish more effective and sustainable working relationships between leaders, both North and South. The SPL/A are resilient, but unless the historical grievances of oppressed sections of the population are redressed, a new social contract is negotiated within a framework of political restructuring, and a conducive environment created for a just political system which

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accommodates the interests of all, otherwise if these needs are not met by the GGOS, the seeds of further conflict will continue to be sown. As Jobbins (2008:14) framed it:

the crucial point to get across is not to talk of the probability or the possibility of war, but to make all the Sudanese realise that whatever the outcome of the referendum, good working relations between North and South will be essential if the country is not to slip back into war and chaos.

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[1] A profitable trade for the Arabs legitimised by the conduct of Islam, which was common during the Turko-Egyptian colonial rule. It was not abolished until 1898 by British Major General Charles George Gordon, yet it took decades for the practice to die out (Allen, 1931). However the southern sense social inferiority it created remains engraved in the

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psyche of the Sudanese people to the present day.

[2]van Creveld (1991) characterises a state of modern civil war as one in which armed force directed by social entities that are non-state, and where the legal monopoly of armed forces, long claimed by the state, is wrestled out of its hands, and existing distinctions between crime and war break down. Furthermore it cuts across neat and tidy demarcations between states and non-states (Rupesinghe, 1998).

[3] Muhammad Ahmed Al Mahdi (1844-1885), a Sufi sheikh of the Samaniyya order in Sudan, whom in 1881 proclaimed himself as the messianic redeemer of the Islamic faith, led an independence movement to free Sudan from the Turko/Egyptian rule, and later became a national hero to the Muslim Arab in the North which its leaders aspire to (Nicholl, 2004).

[4] *Sharia* is an Arabic word meaning 'way' or 'path', and it refers to the sacred law of Islam. It is God's law that is derived from two primary sources, the divine revelations set forth in the Qur'an, and the sayings and example set by the Islamic Prophet Muhammad in the Sunnah (Abdal-Haqq, 2006).

[5] Archie Simpson in *Nations and States (2008:47)* defines a nation as "a collective group of people who share a number of common social, cultural and ethnic characteristics. These characteristics can include language, tradition, religion, myths, beliefs, symbols and blood ties. The combination of such features along side other factors such as economics and sharing a homeland become so strong and pervasive that a collective consciousness emerges to bond this group of people together." He further asserts that the idea of a nation is largely subjective and is self-selective, and in that sense each nation defines what it is to be part of that nation.

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