

# Darfur Conflict: Problematifying Identity Discourse in Relation to Marginalisation and Development.

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## Declaration

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## **Abstract**

The conflict in Darfur, largely regarded as the ‘worst humanitarian crisis’ of the 21st century, has been presented as a war between two exclusive ethnic/national identity groups. This study challenges such reductionist thinking, with the theory that ethnic identities in Darfur are not strictly divided by a primordial African/Arab dichotomy. Conversely, this project argues that such identities are a result of perceptual differences that transcend any biological essentialist mode of argument. Further, the cementing of these perceived identities is strengthened by various state policies espoused by several Sudanese governments’ vision of ‘Arabisation’ and ‘Islamisation’. These policies serve as tools for the marginalisation of non-Arabised groups in Darfur and, in turn, have served to exclude groups challenging perceived anomalies and injustices via means of force and armed struggle. In essence, this study problematises the issue of identity as it relates to marginalisation and development in Darfur. Given that the main theme of this study is identity, the principle methodology adopted is qualitative in nature, consisting of in-depth semi-structured interviews with, multi-ethnic informants.

Darfurian identities, it is argued, are largely political in nature rather than strictly cultural or racial. Overall, this study argues that state-endorsed policies have led to discriminatory strategies which aid marginalisation and the under-development of certain groups in the region. This creates a dysfunctional patron-client state system which only seeks to support groups perceived to be in-line with the accepted definition of Darfurian national identity, as well as creating a widening gap between the co-existing groups in terms of political, socio-economic and human development. Such a gap only serves to strengthen the perceived differences amongst and between the ethnic groups under consideration and further reinforces the perceived ‘ethnic boundaries’ Barth (1969) wrote about.

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## **Abbreviations**

- CPA** - Comprehensive Peace Agreement
- DFID** - Department for International Development
- DPA** - Darfur Peace Agreement
- DUP**-Democratic Unionist Party
- GDP** - Gross Domestic Product
- GNI** - Gross National Income
- GOS** - Government of Sudan
- GOSS** - Government of South Sudan
- HDI** - Human Development Indicator
- HDR** - Human Development Report
- HRW** - Human Rights Watch
- ICRC** - International Committee of the Red Cross
- IDP** - Internally Displaced People
- JEM** - Justice and Equality Movement
- LDC** - Least Developed Countries
- MDG** - Millennium Development Goals
- NIF** - National Islamic Front
- PDF** - Popular Defence Force
- SI** - Symbolic Interactionism
- SLM/A** - Sudan Liberation Movement/Army
- SPLA** - Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
- UNDP** - United Nations Development Program
- UNOCHA** - United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
- UN** - United Nations
- USAID** - United States Agency for International Development
- USIP** - United States Institute of Peace

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# Chapter One

## 1.1. Introduction and Theoretical Overview

*'We don't know who we are, and that underlies the ambiguity...I am only gathering momentum to rediscover ourselves, to evolve the Sudanese identity that incorporates all of us, irrespective of tribes, religion, or race.'*

*Nora Boustany, The Washington Post, February 11, 2005  
(p.A21)*

This thesis is based on my interest in the causes of the myriad conflicts which have ravaged Sub-Saharan Africa after the Cold War. It is rather disconcerting that a continent containing so many human and natural resources emerges as the poorest. This is most often attributed to leadership, corruption, patron-client relationship, colonialism and a multitude of other underlying factors (Fatton, 1986; Fagbadebo, 2007; Alemazung, 2010).

## 1.2. Background to Study

This thesis builds upon an aspect of my Masters' thesis entitled *'Exploring Ethnic Identity for Effective Peace building with Specific Reference to Nigeria'* (2007). The thesis examined the extent to which ethnic identity could be implicated as a causal factor in Nigeria's conflict since 1999 and, in turn, how ethnicity can be explored through an interdisciplinary framework. The thesis found a general trend in the trajectory of Nigeria's conflict had been the politicisation of ethnicity by elites to fulfil personal and/or groups' interest through unhealthy competition for resources. At the same time, the Masters' study also suggests that ethnicity could serve as a positive force in achieving peace, with the use of a psycho-social framework to transform confrontational ethnic relations into cooperative relationships. The psycho-social framework seeks to teach individuals from diverse ethnic groups how to embrace cooperative relationships in conflicting situations, through various channels:

notably sustained dialogue and peace education. It was hoped such a strategic framework would contribute in significant ways to establish or restore peaceful co-existence between conflicting ethnic groups. As a result, this thesis draws upon that study, examining several dimensions which ethnicity could play a role in contributing to the discourse on conflict, marginalisation and development in Darfur/Sudan.

Ethnicity plays a central role in politics and is a very influential source of conflict that threatens the stability of states and generates international tension (Barro, 1991; Jenkins, 2008). Parallels can be drawn with conflicts from Angola, Biafra, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Pakistan, Rwanda and Sudan (Horowitz, 1985); although they have different elements to them, all could be classified as identity conflicts claiming over ten million lives in total over the last three decades (Diamond & Plattner, 1994). Moreover, political parties and trade unions in many countries are ethnically organised, which sometimes leads to policies formulated to expel ethnically differentiated traders or workers of foreign origin (Harold, 1975). This is prevalent in Sudan where groups align themselves with political parties based on tribal affiliations (Deng, 1995). Additionally, policies are formulated and implemented to suit different identity groups, leading to a patron-client state (Fagbadebo, 2007). These situations heighten tensions among co-existing groups. It also exacerbates the level of perceived differences among groups with implications for marginalisation and development — these are the issues this thesis intends to unpack.

Taking all this into consideration, achieving sustainable peace after a conflict situation would require concessions to be made, as this would help bring elites from the different interest groups together to initiate the peace process<sup>1</sup> (Roeder & Rothchild, 2005; see also Ogonna, 1999). Achieving sustainable peace — which is the essence of conflict

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<sup>1</sup> An example of this was witnessed in the aftermath of the Biafra war: politicians and leaders from the South East were guaranteed amnesty and offered positions in Federal Government to allay the fears of marginalisation, which was the reason the war broke out in the first place.

study — does not have a clear cut definition; rather, it is made up of different features that vary by situation, therefore making it an issue specific to time and space.

Sustainable peace in this thesis will be defined as a peace situation which reduces the likelihood of the recurrence of conflict, when the root and structural causes of conflict have been addressed and effective mechanisms are in place to foster justice, as suggested by Peck (1998). He advocated long-term approaches focusing on the structural causes of conflict and building institutions that the population can trust; thereby, promoting distributive and procedural justice that reduces the eruption or recurrence of violent conflict.

### **1.3. Aim and Objectives of the Study**

Overall, the primary aim of this research is to offer a clearer and nuanced explanation of the Darfur conflict by problematising the issue of identity in the discourse on marginalisation and development in Darfur/Sudan; thus showing how competing visions of identity shape the processes of conflict. The objectives of this study are:

1. To show how a perceived ethnic identity difference, as opposed to a real identity difference, contributes to the onset, escalation and continuation of the Darfur conflict.
2. To elucidate how competing visions of a perceived ethnic identity difference contributes positively or negatively to the discourse on marginalisation and development.
3. To identify factors that help create, widen and cement the belief of perceived differences among the groups under consideration.
4. To make recommendations for an identity framework that lessens the perceived dichotomy among groups and could possibly lead to sustainable peace in Darfur/Sudan.

The broader aim and specific objectives of this study will be achieved by finding answers to the following research questions.

#### **1.4. Research Questions**

1. Does identity constitute a significant factor in the onset, escalation and continuation of the Darfur conflict?
2. Is there a significant relationship between identity, marginalisation and development?
3. Are state policies concomitant with the division, strengthening and cementing of identity differences in Darfur?

In this research, ethnic identity is the focus of my discussion as the groups under consideration share mainly the same religion and language; therefore, creating a need to focus on the identity category which supposedly divides them: ethnicity. Given the fluidity and multifaceted nature of identity, however, I could not discount the influence of other identity categories.

Identity conflicts are generally portrayed as different sides having opposing and irreconcilable identities. This results in wars of identity both within and outside a state territory (Sheehan, 2007). According to Deng (2008, p.37), these conflicts erupt not because of the ‘number of identities’ or the ‘differences of identities,’ but as a result of the ‘incompatibilities of the objectives or interests’ of the different identity groups. These kinds of wars are characterised by irregular and insurgent warfare tactics, effects of globalisation, identity politics — this is a departure from Clausewitzian assumptions (Kaldor, 2008). Mary Kaldor (1998, 2007) referred to these kinds of conflicts as ‘New Wars’, which I adopt as my theoretical framework. The full extent to which all characteristics of the ‘New War’ theory fits into this research will be explored in the theoretical framework section. On the other hand, identity has also been shown to help foster cooperative attitude among groups on

issues of collective action (Habyarimana *et al.*, 2006). At this point identity has been implicated in both conflict and peace situations, so the question remains: ‘Why is ethnicity frequently a basis for violence’? This question will be explored in the following chapters in different phases. In this research, I examine the dynamics of different identities in Darfur and how this is problematised in the marginalisation and developmental discourses in Darfur/Sudan leading to conflict. In the next section, I provide a brief overview of Darfur’s geography and parties to the conflict. Table 1 below demonstrate the extent to which identity constitute an important conflict factor by showing numerous examples of conflicts construed as identity based when compared to international or political ones. This table not only shows that most of the conflicts occurred in Africa but that they are identity based conflicts. It is worth noting that practically, some of these conflicts are not easily defined, categorised or split along the simple categorisations. This is because some conflicts have multi-causal dimensions to them.

**Table 1: Armed Conflicts**

<b>International</b>	<b>Political</b>	<b>Ethnic</b>
Afghanistan/United States	Algeria	Burundi
Iraq/United States	Colombia	Indonesia
	Nepal	Israel
		Ivory Coast
		Democratic Republic of Congo
		India
		Myanmar(Burma)
		Nigeria
		Philippines
		Russia
		Somalia
		Sudan
		Uganda

**Source:** Minorities at Risk. <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/mar/definition.asp>.

## 1.5. Darfur: The Geography

Darfur is located in the western part of Sudan and lies in close proximity to the middle of the African continent. It is located between latitude 22°-22.8° North and longitude 23.15°-27.45° East. See the map in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**



Source: United Nations (2012) <http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/sudan.pdf>

It covers a vast region of the country called Sudan with an approximate total land area of 42000 square kilometers. It offers a unique geographical location characterised by both desert and semi-desert climates in the North and a rich savannah climate to the South. A unique mountainous area called Jebel Marra assumes a central location moving northward. It



is a source of both volcanic flow and a source of considerable water courses. Some of these water courses end up in gorges that serve as tributaries which feed water basins in Darfur, for example, the El-Baggara Basin and the Nuba Basin (Yahiya, 2009).

Darfur is historically bounded to the North by Egypt and Libya; Chad to the western hemisphere and the Central African Republic to the southern hemisphere. Its location and the borders it shares with several countries make it strategically important for regional political, economic and security issues (Yahiya, 2009). This is a result of: the inter-related Darfurian population with border tribes; the trade route it provides between countries; the proxy war environment it supports; the natural resources (uranium and crude-oil) underneath the ground (El-Suifi, 2004).

In the 1800s, the Fur sultanate was the most powerful state that existed within the borders of present-day Sudan. The Fur sultanate only agreed to join the larger Sudan in 1916, maintaining a unique national identity up till that point. The Fur sultans embraced Islam as the official religion of the State and invariably made Arabic the official language of the State. Darfurians, like other Africans, were not opposed to multiple identities; as a result, Darfur was seen as an African kingdom which embraced Arabs as equal citizens (De Waal, 2005). In light of this and the manner in which the conflict has been simplistically portrayed by the media and scholars as a conflict between the rigid identities of African and Arab, I looked at the dynamics of the ethnicities and their implication for marginalisation and development in Darfur. As Prunier (2007, p.73) puts it:

*'The present crisis has been presented in the media as consisting of a form of ethnic cleansing verging on the genocidal, as carried out at Khartoum's behest by 'Arab' tribes against 'African' ones. This is both true and false...'*

This dichotomy simplifies the notion of a divided society, which has led to the taking up of arms by different parties that feel violated through the evolving politics. This simplification is the result of a lack of or insufficient research on identity issues in Darfur, due to concentration on the North/South conflict. With the resolution of the North/South problem, there seems to be a gap in knowledge with regards to identity issues in peripheries like Darfur, which this study hopes to fill. With this in mind, I briefly highlight the parties to the Darfur conflict in line with Sandole's 'three pillar approach'<sup>2</sup> to conflict mapping, identifying the objectives and means of parties involved in conflict (Sandole, 2003).

## **1.6. Parties to the Conflict**

### **1.6.1. The Movements**

An essential element to the Darfur conflict are the rebel movements with the most influential being the *Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A)* and *Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)* with several splinter groups<sup>3</sup>. These two movements have different histories but similar manifestoes<sup>4</sup> in terms of addressing issues of marginalisation and development in Darfur. Their atypical similarity also lies in the fact that they both recognise a common enemy in the government of Sudan (GoS). They differ, however, in their views on the role of religion in the state. SLM prefers a secular approach where religion is separated from state affairs; JEM favours a strong relationship between religion and the state, thereby giving them a similarity with the Khartoum government. The ethnic make-up of the *SLM/A* is the

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<sup>2</sup> Sandole proposes his theory is applicable at all levels; interpersonal, intergroup, inter-organizational and inter-societal. For Sandole, application and intervention should be dependent on knowing about the conflict situation, its origins and any fundamental conditions of conflict that might not be so clear before intervening in any conflict. Another target for him was to bridge the gap between theory and practice, thus allowing for an effective and efficient intervention mechanism. Sandole (2003, p. 2) argued that 'unless we know what makes conflicts tick, good intentions to the contrary, only make matters worse'.

<sup>3</sup> Sudan Liberation Army and Movement; SLA-Abdel-Gasim Imam; SLA-Abdel Wahid, which subsequently split into the Front for Liberation and Rebirth, a.k.a. SLA-Free Will, and SLA- Peace Wing; SLA-Classic; SLA-Minnawi; G19; National Redemption Front, a coalition between non-signatories to the DPA; SLA-Unity; and SLA-Mainstream. G19, SLA-Peace Wing and SLA-Classic enjoyed friendly relations at one time. The National Redemption Front and SLA Classic attempted to unite to form the Non-Signatory Factions (NSF), (Tanner, 2007)

<sup>4</sup> They bore the vision of a 'New Sudan' where citizens had equal rights. Their manifesto abhorred political and economic marginalisation; self-determination and decentralisation were at the heart of their demands which SLM/A saw as the basis for 'viable' unity. SLM/A expressly separated the role of religion from the state saying 'religion belongs to the individual and the state belongs to all of us' (Flint & De Waal, 2005, p. 82). The five point manifesto called for a 'unified Sudan, justice and equality, constitutional reform observing regional rights, development, rotational presidency (Flint & De Waal, 2005, p. 93).

Fur and Zaghawa groups; by contrast, the *JEM* was mainly made up of the Zaghawa group, resulting in some regarding it as an organisation for the Zaghawa people meaning any action by this movement is often misinterpreted. Political and ideological leaders include intellectuals and experts, while combatants are drawn from different self-defence groups of the affiliated tribal groups. Some recruits were also obtained as a result of indiscriminate attacks on their villages and the extent of violence experienced in the hands of government forces (Tanner, 2005, Flint & De Waal, 2005). Given the need to fight a common enemy — in this case, the GoS on issues bordering on marginalisation, development and citizenship — both groups cooperate on several issues in the conflict area. On the other side of the divide is the government, whose objective is to stop the rebellion by these movements and therefore necessitated to adopt military options.

#### **1.6.2. The Government's Military Options**

The government in its quest to bring down the rebellion made use of several military options; hence, making the government a party to the conflict. Of particular note is the government's use of tribal militia called Janjaweed (men on horseback). These tended to be mainly ex-convicts, ex-soldiers and unemployed youths recruited mainly from supposedly Arab groups (Prunier, 2007). Some of these men were said to have been recruited from Niger, Nigeria, Mali, Chad and Central African Republic with very high remuneration (Tanner, 2005). Despite the level of remuneration given to the Janjaweed, looting and violence by this militia group against civilians was condoned (HRW, 2004). On the other side of the government divide are regular forces that were used in conjunction with the Janjaweed to perpetuate what Flint & De Waal (2005) and Prunier (2007) referred to as 'counter-insurgency on the cheap'. It is also known that the government, to a limited extent, through the use of its Armed Forces, especially the Air-Force offered some help to the Janjaweed (Flint & De Waal, 2005; Prunier, 2007). For example, a British journalist recorded the conversation between an army

commander on the ground in Darfur and an Air-Force Antonov pilot during a combat (Cox, 2004).

The use of paramilitary groups was also reported, as the mainly Darfur dominated army refused at some point to attack their own villages and people (Prunier, 2007). The paramilitary groups were groups of local mercenaries incorporated in to the chain of command of the army and usually isolated from any tribal affiliation. They were recruited from two main sources: the west of Sudan and other periphery areas; the youth rank of the ruling party, the *National Islamic Front (NIF)*. The former group provided the bulk of the fighting force; whilst the latter formed the ideological and political base of the paramilitary forces popularly known as the *Popular Defence Force (PDF)* (Salmon, 2007). In all, the objectives of these parties were instrumental in the perpetuation of some level of violence against government forces, rebels and civilians; therefore, strengthening the divide amongst all parties.

Beyond the highlights of the geography of Darfur and parties to the conflict, I will review existing literatures and paradigms on identity, marginalisation and development. Ultimately, the research hopes to contribute to current understanding of identities in Darfur and provide possible insight for stakeholders dealing with marginalisation and developmental issues in conflicts perceived to be identity struggles. The Sudanese conflict could be seen as a contemporary conflict: a clash between opposing identities, as opposed to a conquest war of the past. I am, therefore, searching for a framework within which the characteristics of the Darfur struggle as a contemporary conflict can be fully explored given the focus of this study: identity. The search for this takes me to my next section on the need for a theoretical framework.

## 1.7. Theoretical Overview

### 1.7.1. In Search of a Theoretical Framework

In this research project, I consider the 'New War' theory proposed by Mary Kaldor (1998, 2007). I use this theory to highlight the relevance of identity in Post-Cold War conflicts which are reminiscent of the situation in Darfur. Most of the conflicts in Africa and even other parts of the world have been predicated on issues of identity; although, it could be said there are other factors, such as economic marginalisation, political rancour, corruption and under-development. In the cases of Africa and Sudan in particular, all these other factors are usually related to the language of identity (Oyeniya, 2012). In my case study, the conflict does not pitch two states against each other; this is typical of older wars as portrayed by the Clausewitzian School<sup>5</sup> (Howard *et al.* 1989). Van Creveld (1991: p.40-41) also agreed with Clausewitz's idea that the state had monopoly of violence<sup>6</sup>. Clausewitz also saw war in absolute terms, operating at a tripartite level to guarantee victory (Morris & McCoubrey, 2002).<sup>7</sup>

Another characteristic of war, according to Clausewitz, is friction ranging from logistical problems, indiscipline, bad weather, difficult terrain; all of these factors negatively affect the execution of war by slowing it down (Howard *et al.*, 1989). The result of 'tensions

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<sup>5</sup> War was a violent activity used in making our opponents do our will. In the Clausewitzian sense, our opponents were seen as states. The state's ability to establish standing armies under the control of the state was an integral part of the legitimate violence monopolised by the state; therefore, state interest became a legitimate justification for war and it was seen as 'the continuation of politics by other means'. In the Clausewitzian sense, all types of war fare have rules as it is a socially sanctioned activity which has to be organised and justified and hence requires rules (Moran, in Baylis *et al.* 2002).

<sup>6</sup> 'To distinguish war from mere crime, it was defined as something waged by sovereign states and by them alone. Soldiers were defined as personnel licenced to engage in armed violence on behalf of the state. .... To obtain and maintain their license, soldiers had to be carefully registered, marked and controlled to the exclusion of privateering. They were supposed to fight only in uniform, carrying their arms 'openly' and obeying a commander who could be held responsible for their actions. They were not supposed to resort to 'dastardly' methods such as violating truces, taking up arms again after they had been taken prisoner, and the like. The civilian population was supposed to be left alone, 'military necessity' permitting' (Moran, in Baylis *et al.* 2002).

<sup>7</sup> Old wars, according to Clausewitz, are comprised of three levels: the state level or political leaders; the level of the army or generals; the level of the people. These three levels are known to operate successfully through reason, chance, strategy and emotion. With this tripod composition of war, Clausewitz came up with the concept of 'absolute war' which was best explained in Hegelian ideal concept. At the military level, the utmost aim was to disarm the opponents in order to achieve the state's political objective; otherwise the state risked the prospect of a counter attack. At the political level, the state will always meet resistance in achieving it aims and objectives; as a result, it has to press harder through military means. Finally, the strength of wills depends on strong emotional feelings and sentiments among the population which may lead to uncontrollable outcomes. As a result, the three levels of Clausewitzian war work in reciprocity and are never mutually exclusive of one another.

between practical and political constraints and the inner tendency for absolute war is what Kaldor (2007, p.24) referred to as 'real war'. Consequently, Clausewitzian war — otherwise known as the old war and absolute wars — is what most state armies are trained for. On the one hand, it is an act of extreme coercion, involving socially organised order, discipline, hierarchy and obedience. On the other hand, it requires loyalty, devotion and belief from each individual, exemplified in military establishments (Troxell, 2008). In the case of the Darfur conflict, loyalty, devotion and belief is needed from both the government side and the political movement's side to achieve a particular course. In that sense, the Clausewitzian doctrine remains relevant in the perpetuation of even contemporary conflicts like Darfur.

The war in Darfur/Sudan is considered one of the most outstanding conflicts of the post-cold war era due to its protracted nature and the parties in the conflict, leading to its referral as the 'worst humanitarian crisis of the 21<sup>st</sup> century' (UNDP, 2010). With the onset of the war, the international community was stuck in the dated ways of thinking about the characters of war and failed to look into the uniqueness of the Sudanese state. As the war progressed, given the level of violence and the manner in which it was perpetuated, some attitudes changed within the international community and thus ways of thinking about conflicts were fundamentally changed (Dobra, 2011). This war was characteristic of Kaldor's (1998, 2001, 2007) New War, as the conflicting parties positioned themselves into rigid identities and fought for different political reasons.

The political goals of New Wars fought along identity lines are mainly based on ethnic cleansing<sup>8</sup> and 'the forcible displacement of civilians as primary objective of violence' (Newman, 2007, p.100). It is carried out with the intention of producing ethnically homogenous territories and, in order to accomplish this, the perpetrators will normally use

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<sup>8</sup> This is defined by the United Nations as 'rendering an area ethnically homogeneous by using force or intimidation to remove from a given area persons from another ethnic or religious group.' (UNSCR, 780, 1994, p.10).

the language of self-determination and nationalism to justify their cause. This can be exercised in different ways from economic, political and legal discrimination to an unacceptable<sup>9</sup> level of violence against other groups (Bell-Fialkoff, 1993). This kind of discrimination is synonymous with Lesch's (1998) ethnic model, claiming economic, political and legal discrimination is exercised when particular groups tend to favour people of their own identity by offering jobs and access to other social benefits, even when they do not merit it. All of these features are reminiscent of the Darfur/Sudan political relationship and elucidate the core-periphery arguments.

The New War Theory has also been linked to the rise in ethnic nationalism, which contributes to the rise in identity conflicts. It is a linkage which gives credence to and corresponds with the primordial view on nationalism: an inherent and deep rooted entity in societies derived from organically developed 'ethnics' (Smith, 1971). An alternative stance on nationalism, which supports the politics of the New War, views nationalism as an entity that can be reconstructed for political purposes. This is in line with the instrumentalist notion on nationalism, which enables nationalist to reconstruct certain aspects of history and culture. This is then used for political mobilisation which, to some extent, serves as a way of coping with economic and social discontent; thereby, appealing to those perceived as the victims of this discontent (Anderson, 1983, Gellner *et al.* 2006). These kind of tendencies could encourage nationalists to adopt what Orwell (1945, p.4) referred to as an '*indifference to reality and objective truth*'<sup>10</sup>.

The relationship between Old Wars and New Wars is linked to the violent outcomes following periods of tension. Overall, for a conflict to be regarded as a New War, it needs to demonstrate a combined relationship either partially or wholly between governments' loss of

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<sup>9</sup> In my view, there is no acceptable level of violence against any civilian population or group.

<sup>10</sup> This is 'encouraged by sealing-off of one part of the world from another, which makes it harder and harder to discover what is actually happening. There can be often a genuine doubt about the most enormous events.' And 'all nationalists have the power of not seeing resemblances between similar set of facts' (Orwell 1945, p.4).

violence and legitimacy monopoly combined with economic, political and identity based problems. In the next section, I consider the main characteristics of the New War Theory (Kaldor, 1998, 2001) and explicate how this is the most relevant for this study.

#### **1.7.1.1. The New War**

According to Kaldor (1998), New Wars are structured around the ability to invoke a distinction between ‘Us and Them,’ which is explained in terms of specific causes. This dichotomy is exacerbated by the ability of elites to mobilise groups around the fear and hate of other groups; thus, creating a heightened sense of tension often leading to violent outcomes such as civil wars. New Wars are characterised by irregularity in military options, attack on civilians, war economics and globalisation — all of these are addressed below in no particular order of relevance.

The first feature mentioned above is the level of irregularity in military operations. Governments adopt a combination of both regular and irregular forces in their execution of New Wars. Irregular combatants sometimes include a combination of criminals, foreign mercenaries and volunteers (Kaldor 1998). This is a clear departure from Old Wars, which were limited to state forces. The rebels naturally constitute an irregular force and hence would seek combat forces in any manner. In the case of Darfur, irregularity was evidenced by the GoS’s use of the ‘Janjaweed’ (Men on Horse Back) and foreign mercenaries from Chad, Niger and Mali (HRW, 2005; De Waal, 2005). As highlighted earlier, of key importance to New Wars is the identity of the actors. The identity of those involved in this irregular warfare in Darfur was crucial to the GoS because they had to be seen as Arabised; thereby, fulfilling the identity criteria of the GoS and the postulation of Kaldor’s New War. The importance of this identity dynamic in Darfur was to displace people of opposite identity — in this case, African — which adheres to the political goals of New Wars. The irregularity



increases civilian casualties and also complicates conflict resolution, as there tend to be too many parties whose goals and interests conflict and change over time.

Another important element of New Wars is the extent to which it goes against all codified norms and conventions of Old Wars, as agreed by states in the Geneva Convention (1949) (ICRC, 2012). This agreement does not allow for attacks on civilians. In the case of New Wars, civilians are forcefully abducted and used as combatants thereby blurring the line between military professionalism and desperation. Over a period of time, this leads to an unprecedented level of civilian casualties, when compared to Old Wars which limited casualties mainly to armies (Echevarria, 2008). In Darfur, HRW (2005) reported evidences of attacks by both regular and irregular forces on civilians and humanitarian organisations, resulting in high civilian casualties.

In the case of any type of violent conflict just like New Wars, the local economy collapses, particularly in the most affected areas; this has a ripple effect on the general formal economy of the state. In extreme situations, the state is criminalised as it becomes an avenue to exploit resources and state funds. Competition, thereafter, becomes stiff among groups over the need for power to exploit; this further blurs the disconnectedness between private and public authority (Newman, 2004). The collapse is also attributed to physical destruction, losing access to productive inputs, and inability to access markets to sell commodities already produced (AFHDR, 2012). In the case of Sudan, however, the revenue from oil was also negatively affected, as its crude oil output dropped from the pre-conflict level (AFHDR, 2012). In this kind of war, civilians are reliant on humanitarian aid. According to the UN (2011), Sudan commands one of the highest levels of humanitarian relief projects since the inception of the United Nations. Civilians sometimes barter among themselves; whereas, those in the army or irregular forces rely on taxes forcibly collected from humanitarian aid agencies in areas they control, remittances from individuals or, in

extreme cases, loot or steal from ordinary civilians and/or humanitarian convoys (Duffield, 1994).

Finally, globalisation helps with the manner in which New Wars are planned and executed. These globalising influences include the prominence and proliferation of non-state actors, wider media coverage and advancement in communications technology. Non-state actors generate wide media attention to the atrocities being committed; for example, the evident presence of aid organisations, journalists from media establishments, the *Red Cross*, *Human Rights Watch*, *Amnesty International*, and *OXFAM*. In their own way, these non-state actors mainly give salience to the atrocities and also partially to maintain access to donations for their humanitarian endeavours (Curtis, 2001). It also heightens the involvement of humanitarian, human rights and peace groups; as well as civic institutions, such as religious organisations and higher education institutes. In the case of Darfur, the involvement of several religious and faith groups, such as the Save Darfur Movement, helped pressure the international community into declaring a humanitarian crisis in Darfur and labelling the conflict as genocide (Mamdani, 2009). Pertinent here are the advancements in communication technology, accessibility and technical know-how, which allows parties to communicate in more or less real time through e-mails, mobile phones, video conferencing, and social networking sites. These are products of globalisation which have affected the way in which conflicts depicted as New Wars are perpetuated (Kaldor, 2007).

Although my case study is not considered a typical example of an environment in which these technological advancements would be beneficial in the conduct of conflict; they do exist, however, and are used by elites, military commanders, and youths in the planning and execution of the conflict (Imran, 2009). As a result, the level of access and connectivity to these technological innovations does not impact my use of Kaldor's theory. All the elements discussed are reminiscent of the Darfur conflict, which informed my use of Kaldor's (1998, 2007) 'New War Theory'. Closely linked to globalisation factors affecting

New Wars is the issue of identity, which tends to be dichotomised within civilisations. This led Huntington (1993) to suggest new forms of any major conflict will be predicated on religious identity; this, he suggested, would lead to a 'clash of civilizations'. This supports Kaldor's idea that New Wars are identity based, setting the foundations for an 'us and them' dichotomy. This new form of identity struggle leads me to consider identity conflicts as 'New Wars' in the next section.

#### **1.7.1.1.2. Identity Conflicts as 'New Wars'**

By identity conflict, I follow Deng's position of these being struggles structured by religious, ethnic, tribal, and racial identities for the sole purpose of gaining access to some level of state power or resources (Deng, 1995). Different forms of identities are used as labels in order to have a clear picture of the identity category under consideration. The most important side of identity, however, is the manipulative element that plays out at different levels of politics; when this is utilised to the disadvantage of an opposing identity it results in conflict, possibly of an intense nature as witnessed in Darfur.

Whilst the politics of ideas appears to be concerned with 'the evolution of the human society and state; identity politics, by contrast, tend to be 'backward looking, fragmentative and exclusive' (Kaldor, 1998, p.81). Identity politics is usually employed by elites creating groups based on an exclusive identity and in reference to past heroics, historical memories of injustice, marginalisation, and real or imagined development (Anderson, 1983; Crawford, 1998). This politics is rooted in fear, insecurity and a sense of threat exacerbated by opposing identities; it also flourishes on the psychological discrimination of groups or labels identified to be different from one's group (Berry, 1999).

Taking this argument further, identity politics can be seen 'as a reaction to the growing impotence and declining legitimacy of the established political class' (Kaldor in Hammond, 2007, p.22). To clarify, it is the kind of political game fostered by the elite,

which draws upon and inculcates popular prejudice. 'It is a form of political mobilisation, a survival tactic, for politicians active in national politics either at the state level or at the level of nationally defined regions, as in the case of the republics of the former Yugoslavia or the former Soviet Union or in places such as Kashmir or Eritrea before independence' (Kaldor, 2007, p.82). Hypothetically, in situations where societies are seen to contain homogenised nationalities, identity becomes the main legitimate aegis for pursuing various forms of political, economic and cultural interests (Hayden, 1992). The economical factor of these kinds of politics is exemplified by an economics of shortage, which is deliberately perpetuated to eliminate competition. In theory, it does eliminate competition for markets, but it also creates another source of competition for resources. The result is a cycle in which shortages lead to the intensification of competition for resources, thereafter increasing the tendency for hoarding and autarchy among different government bodies; this hence leads to further shortages (Verdery, 1993). In these situations, ethnic/national identity becomes a tool, which can be used to further the competition for resources; thereby, exacerbating identity rivalries, leading to heightened tensions and eventual conflict.

In summary, Kaldor (2007, p.124) maintains that the 'new form of identity politics is often a throwback to the past, a return to pre-modern identities temporarily displaced or suppressed by modernising ideologies'. She also argued that this type of identity politics draws its strength based on memory and history, hence making some societies more susceptible to this new phenomenon. The main argument she advances is that the 'recent past and in particular, the impact of globalisation on the political survival of states' ties in strongly with the economic sustainability and the artificial conditions created in order to force scarcity (Kaldor, 2007, p.124). Overall, a combination of identity politics and the forces of globalisation increase the economic constraints on both individuals and groups. This state of affairs encourages elites to adopt an exclusivist approach in order to gain and maintain access to power and resources for their groups. This not only increases constraints

on other groups, but also leads to conflict with opposing groups wanting to correct perceived injustices. The conflict that erupts encompasses all or a combination of the New War features discussed earlier.

Kaldor's New War theory has been subject to criticism. A number of scholar (for instance, Newman, 2004; Henderson & Singer, 2002; Kalyvas, 2001; Lacina & Gledistch, 2006; Melander, 2006; Moore & Shellman, 2004; Schmeidl, 1997) have argued New War theorists provide insufficient and unclear analyses of the causes of conflict and security dilemmas. These critics also found some of New Wars explanation of the historical evidence regarding armed conflicts to be problematic. It was also maintained that the New War differentiation between Old and New Wars are overstated. Specifically, they questioned the degree to which New Wars differed from Old Wars in terms of the parties to the conflict, goals of the conflict, spatial context, the political economy, human impact and the social structure of the conflict. Furthermore, they argued New War scholars fundamentally ignore differences in the examples of conflicts they use to justify patterns in New Wars. In all, the critiques focused their criticisms on just four of the New War theory assumptions: increases in the number of civil wars (New Wars); the intensity of battle; the number of civilians displaced and killed in civil wars; and the ratio of civilians to military personnel killed in civil wars (Melander & Oberg, 2006).

To that extent, Gray (2005) notes that inter-communal strife has, historically, always been in existence and therefore should not be over exaggerated by the New War theorists. Similarly, Newman (2004) suggested that claims of genocide, high civilian casualties, rape and economic sabotage existed prior to the so-called New Wars. Evans (2008) also contended that while the continued evolution of wars is evident, the changes are not attributable to the fundamentals of war but rather to contextual factors: recent developments in communications technology; ease of access to financial instruments; the use of religiously

inspired suicide bombers, enabling groups like Al-Qaeda to inflict damage on their opponents in an unpredictable manner. He maintained this trend is not new, since it is only rational for an inferior side to adopt tactics which outplay the opponent's military strength. In a similar vein, Echevarria (2008) pointed out that, throughout history, militarily inferior actors have typically targeted the opponents' will to fight rather than the opponents' means. He further asserted that what is different now is the enhanced access to the opponents' will.

Despite the criticisms, most scholars tend to agree with Kaldor and her proponents that rapid globalisation and the advent of more sophisticated technologies have contributed immensely to the manner in which conflicts are mobilised, funded, conducted and eventually resolved. Also, on the issue of civilian casualties, in my view, the death of private citizens are unfortunate in any case. The argument of the New War theory is not that civilian casualties did not occur in old wars but the ease with which it now happens is a cause for concern. This situation arises because of the blurred lines between irregular combatants and the military establishment coupled with the irregularities in the conduct of war. Likewise, the source of recruitment for rebel movements makes it very difficult to distinguish between civilians and rebels. This situation is unlike the old wars that concentrate battles to military officials who are recruited by the state and are distinguishable by their uniforms with a standard code of conduct, hence limiting casualties to mainly soldiers and military installations. The criticism on the inability of the New War theory to adequately explain security dilemmas, I would argue does not apply to my case study. Sudan does not constitute a security threat to any of its regional neighbours like Libya, Chad and Egypt as is the case with India and Pakistan, hence, making that criticism irrelevant in the case of Darfur/Sudan. Also, New War theory proponents never claimed universality on their analogy of the causes of conflict but they provide another perspective through which conflict could be analysed especially given the level of identity related conflicts after the cold-war. They shifted the

analysis of conflict from an East-West and realist paradigm to provide an account through which we can analyse the civil wars that arose after the cold-war.

On the basis of the preceding discussion, I use Kaldor's (1998, 2001, 2007) 'New War' theory in my theoretical framework — whilst acknowledging the limitations of it — given the Darfur conflict shares most, if not all, of the properties of the New War theory in motive, goals and execution. Pertinent to this thesis is the subject of identity/identity politics, which the New War theory highlights as significant for any conflict to be considered a New War — Darfur fulfils the criteria. In this study identity/identity politics would be narrowed down to ethnic/ethnic politics as it is the main focus of the thesis. This will serve as the core of my arguments in subsequent chapters. I will now move on to outline how this research work is arranged in the thesis.

### **1.8. Structure of Thesis**

The thesis consists of seven chapters. This chapter sets a background for the thesis by briefly discussing the geography and parties to the conflict. It also explicated the concept of identity and its implication for politics, polity and conflict. This chapter set out the aims and objectives of the study and provided the research questions to be addressed. It also justified why Kaldors's (1998, 2001, 2007) New War theory is the theoretical framework best suited to this research, given that its features are reminiscent of the Darfur conflict and the importance of identity as a key concept.

The next chapter reviews literatures surrounding identity, marginalisation and development. The first part of this chapter examines issues surrounding identity, ethnicity, construction of antagonistic identities and ethnic violence; whilst the second looks at the specifics of ethnicity in Darfur, marginalisation and development. This chapter will also show the inter-relationship between all the factors discussed, elucidating complex linkages.

In order to build upon existing literature, a research design was formulated: this is the basis of discussion in chapter three. This chapter justifies the methods adopted and the different techniques used for data collection, highlighting the strength and weaknesses of the choices made. A brief overview of the respondents recruited for the study, analyses of results and data management methods adopted is provided. Within this chapter, I also discuss the ethical considerations of the research to avoid harm to both myself and respondents, as well as to encompass both the anonymity and confidentiality guarantees given to participants. Finally, I discuss how limitations of the methods adopted affected the study. In order to make sense of the data collected, I devote Chapters 4, 5 and 6 to its analysis and interpretation.

Chapter 4 discusses the main themes of identity and ethnicity. Quoting my respondents, I describe what identity and ethnicity meant to them in the context of Darfur/Sudan. In this Chapter, I show how ethnic identity is a major factor in the everyday existence of my respondents and how this is reflected in the polity and policy debates in Sudan. I also show how perceptual belief plays a major role in the construction of rigid identities and the instrumentality of such formed identities. A major implication of identity/ethnicity takes me to the next theme of marginalisation.

Chapter 5 explores the major theme of marginalisation, which is strongly related to the concept of ethnicity/identity. It further highlights the implications of ethnicity/identity, tracing how ethnicity/identity was played out in Darfur/Sudan during the colonial era. I then elucidate how the historical legacy of the state of affairs (un)knowingly contributes to what remains the norm today in terms of marginalisation. This chapter concludes that the level of marginalisation contributes to developmental problems and negatively skews prosperity, wealth, education, social development in favour of particular groups. This paves the way for the final data analysis chapter.



Chapter 6 discusses several developmental issues, using indices from the United Nations model and employing quantitative data to show how Sudan is still greatly lacking, when compared to other countries that are in the same developmental gap. To a large extent, these developmental gaps will be explained internally, with respect to issues of identity/ethnicity and marginalisation. The need for the mixed data used in this chapter is necessitated by the nature of issues discussed, which are substantiated with evidence from secondary data — this was corroborated by my participants. This chapter concludes that marginalisation caused by perceived identity differences have a significant impact on the developmental ability of regions. With the data analysis chapters completed, I then move on to summarise the findings.

Chapter 7 summarises the findings and highlights the contribution of this study, showing how the competing visions of identity shape the discourse on marginalisation and development in Darfur. It also draws upon policy frameworks which could assist in reaching sustainable peace and suggests areas of further research to develop this.

## **1.9. Conclusion**

This study aims to give a more nuanced explanation of the Darfur conflict, one which transcends its current understanding along a rigid identity dichotomy of Arabs and Africans. My study takes a different approach by considering how these Darfurian identities are constructed through perception as opposed to rigid concepts that most studies draw upon. This thesis also seeks to show how competing visions of identity among groups contribute to the problems of marginalisation and development in Darfur/Sudan. It will examine the point of view of my respondents' and consider some state and political decisions/actions contributing to the rather unhealthy competitive nature and solidification of these respective identities and its implications for marginalisation and development in Darfur. This introductory chapter has partially examined the several implications of identity/ethnicity. In

the next chapter, I take full consideration of the several dimensions of identity and its implications for conflict and peace, by reviewing relevant literature with regards to identity, ethnicity, marginalisation and development.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1. Identity, Ethnicity, Marginalisation and Development**

This chapter will review relevant studies and theories of identity, ethnicity and ethnic/identity based violence. Accordingly, issues of identity have become an ever increasing phenomenon in the politics of Africa. This chapter will particularly deal with the specifics of the ethnic identity crisis in Darfur/Sudan influenced by the geo-political nature of the country. This chapter will be categorised into two distinct sections: the first deals with identity, ethnicity and ethnic/identity violence; whilst the second examines the factors specific to Darfur/Sudan, including marginalisation and development. Some of the key terms discussed in this chapter include: essentialism, an ‘us/them’ dichotomy, power, conflict, fractionalisation, domination, polarisation and marginalisation. The purpose of this review chapter is to show the linkage between violence and identity politics; hence, highlighting a gap in current knowledge about identity discourse, its relationship to marginalisation and development in Darfur and how this leads to conflict.

In this research, I use identity as an umbrella term covering ethnicity, religion, tribe, race, and class; however, I will make clear distinctions of the identity label discussed in respective sections. Using identity issues as a starting point, it is important to state the relevance of identity as a defining factor has been the subject of numerous studies. To begin, the archetypal definition of identity has been widely criticised as being essentialist because it considers identity as a static and one-dimensional phenomenon, therefore oversimplifying the concept (Cerulo 1997). Essentialist identities are seen as confined constructs of race, religion and national identities (Lawry, n.d). Such views on identity have mainly created avenues for differences to be translated into conflict (Madibbo, 2012). On the contrary, this thesis suggests identity is a deep seated human cognitive, as well as a socially constructed

phenomenon predicated on emotions, beliefs and value systems. The purpose of this chapter overall is to critique various issues concerning the concept of identity.

It could be argued the issue of identity, as it relates to ethnicity, is more complex than previously thought. This is because individuals can cite varied levels of ethnic attachment as their value/belief system changes. It is, therefore, important to consider the workings of different agents, taking into consideration the meeting point between fluid and static viewpoints of identity, and with the intention to approach it as a moving phenomenon and ‘working subjectivity’ (Fairhurst, 2007, p.104). Recently, theories of social constructionism, social science and sociological studies in particular have evaluated the insufficiency of long held essentialist viewpoints and have begun to recognise identity is dynamic, fluid and ever changing for individuals and groups, as opposed to a permanently fixed category depicting Fairhurst’s (2007) ‘working subjectivity’.

Some scholars have implicated social environment in the formation of identity. To begin with, Tajfel (1982) argued that the social context an individual is located in determines their own concept of self through a personal learning process. Similarly, Turner (1982, p.17-18) asserted that social identification can be referred to as: ‘The process of locating oneself or another person, within a system of social categorisations or, as a noun, to any social categorisation used by a person to define him-or herself and others’. This led Charon (2001 cited in Noh *et al*, 2012) to conclude that, for individuals, interpersonal communications within their society, whether real and/or imagined, become highly imperative in their quest for an identity; it is through these communicative processes that their social identity is produced. This social identity, according to Jenkins (2008), is a product of classification and signification. Brubaker’s (2004) process of identification, synonymous to Jenkins’ (2008) assertion, where identity is not an ever-present given but something which must be produced and established through respective processes of identification and classification.

Brubaker (2004) further argued identity does not determine action; instead people justify their actions and behaviours using their constructed identity. In that sense, he argued for a continuous and fluid process of identification. Jenkins (2008, p.13) highlighted the importance of identification:

*'It is the basic cognitive mechanism that humans use to sort out themselves and their fellows, individually and collectively. This is a baseline sorting that is fundamental to the organisation of the human world: it is how we know who's who and what's what'.*

Ultimately, Jenkins' (2008) assertion shows that, for identity to exist, there has to be consciousness of the similarities and differences among individuals and groups; it is the only way one can tell 'who's who' and 'what's what' (see also Hall, 1996; Gilroy, 1997). According to Jenkins (2008), the assertion, defence, imposition and resistance of these collective similarities and differences are political in nature. With that in mind, he suggested that identities are developed and made functional within power relations. This makes it amenable to politics, which has the ability to divide groups as well as individuals (Jenkins, 2008). These classifications create different groups in a society, leading to multiple social relations across groups — all of which operate within some form of power dynamics. Given the classifications and significations attached to groups, divisions in society are created that operate within Jenkins' (2008) power relations argument. I will now examine ethnicity within a social identity and ascription framework, which fully explains inter-group relations within a social environment.

### **2.1.1. Ethnicity**

One way of understanding ethnicity has been through Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1982). Within this theoretical paradigm, 'the construct of ethnic identity' is widely defined as 'that aspect of an individual's self-concept that arises from the knowledge of membership of an ethnic group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership' (Tajfel, 1981, p.255 cited in Phinney, 1990). Moreover, ethnicity is referred to as a social group sharing a common origin, linguistic capability, physiology and cultural background, all of which provide a sense of identity (Smith *et al*, 1999; Edwards *et al*, 2001 and Lasch, 2002). Furthermore, Negy *et al*. (2003, p.2) referred to ethnic identity as 'a complex construct reflecting various aspects of identification with, and membership in an ethnic group'. Self-identification within a group is, therefore, one of the key elements of an ethnic identity. Also strongly linked to this sense of identification are 'attitudes and evaluations relative to one's group; attitudes about oneself as a group member; extent of ethnic knowledge and commitment; and ethnic behaviours and practices' (Phinney, 1991, p.194).

From a sociological standpoint, Newman (2000) defined ethnic identity as a cultural value shared by a category of people acquired through the process of learning. He also maintained ethnicity transcends any essentialist paradigm, where ethnic identity embodies the values and norms cherished by the group members, deriving partly from history, language and general ways of life. Additionally, Barth (1969, p.11) in his work 'Ethnic Groups and Boundaries' sees ethnic group as 'largely biologically self-perpetuating,' as it shares fundamental cultural values, realised in overt unity in cultural forms'. This statement provides a foundation for Newman's (2000) argument in terms of the biological aspect of ethnicity and is also in agreement about the cultural elements considered to be unique features of any ethnic group.

Barth (1969, p.11) goes further in his definition of ethnic groups, by considering them to make up a ‘field of communication and interaction [that] has a membership which identifies itself, and is identified by others, as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order’. He also stated that ethnic groups exist by maintaining boundaries, which serve as a basis for the ‘evaluation and judgement’ of group members. These boundaries are maintained by the:

*‘dichotomisation of others as strangers, as members of another ethnic group, [which] implies a recognition of limitations on shared understandings, differences in criteria for judgement of value and performance, and a restriction of interaction to sectors of assumed common understanding and mutual interest’* (Barth, 1969, p.11).

It may be inferred then that ethnic groups are only maintained as distinct units if they show significant difference in their cultural markers. Barth’s (1969) thoughts have parallels with the social constructionist paradigm, as he takes into consideration the impact of interaction and communication in his definition of ethnic groups and the maintenance of those ethnic boundaries. This is similar to social identity theory, recognising that boundaries are maintained through the discrimination and prejudice of other groups. Barth (1969, p.16) also maintained that ‘where people of different cultures interact, one would expect differences to be reduced, since interaction generates a congruence of codes and values — in other words, a similarity or community of culture’. Notably, the absence of this similarity or community of culture is what leads to the identification of differences by individuals and groups; thereby, creating a need for conflict to eradicate the differences. These differences, as will be evident in this study, are positioned by groups in an essentialist way which tends to position identity along fixed and restrictive boundaries.

Considering the reductionist and restrictive nature of essentialist views on identity, Nash (1989) talked about the restrictive nature of ethnicity that exists within individuals. The building blocks identified are language, history and origins, nationality and religion. He also corroborated Barth's idea of the existence of ethnic boundaries which he termed '*the trinity of boundary markers*': these markers must exist in order for ethnic differentiation to be present in any system. The markers he identified were: (1) kinship, predicated on distinctive biological traits; (2) commensality, close interpersonal relations; (3) a common cult, shared religious and/or spiritual beliefs. These markers are similar to Phinney's (1996) discovery that an individual's identity is closely influenced by shared experiences with the family, community and the society at large. These markers, just like Barth (1969), distinguish ethnic groups from all other social groups. Given the three markers mentioned, an ethnic group can only claim to exist if there are several kinships within a community sharing close interpersonal relationships and the same culturally oriented beliefs. In the case of Darfur, I say the groups under consideration share these three markers, thus there should be no reason for conflict among the constellation of groups in that region. The shift from the supposed norm of peaceful co-existence is what necessitates this study, which intends to find out what accounts for the differences (if any) between the groups under consideration.

Barth (1969) discussed poly-ethnic systems mostly in terms of differences. According to Barth, ethnic identity in these societies is usually seen as a status, often regarded superior to most other statuses. It allocates the statuses and/or social personalities an individual with that identity can assume. The status characteristic of ethnic identity in poly-ethnic societies accounts for what Horowitz (1985) described the development of 'superordinate' and 'subordinate' groups in multi-ethnic societies. For Horowitz, the creation of these status groups are linked to historical processes especially colonialism. With this in mind, this thesis considers how the supposed differences in my case study are supported by



historical factors (if any) such as colonialism and how this has been encouraged by successive governments after independence.

In contrast, Eriksen (2002) took a more simplistic view of ethnicity, defining it as groups of distinct members that maintain relationships. These relationships include movement, interaction and information sharing among the groups (Barth, 1969). Despite these relationships, it leaves the question of what accounts for the conflictual nature of ethnicities. Eriksen (2002) suggested the creation of ethnicity requires the formation of both 'us/them' distinctions and a collective ground of inter-ethnic discourse. The 'us/them' distinction is created by 'social processes of exclusion and incorporation, whereby discrete categories are maintained despite changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories' (Barth, 1969, p.10). Taking this into consideration, I look at what the resulting us-them identities means in terms of group relations and its implications for the peaceful coexistence of groups in a society. This leads me to my next section on the construction of antagonistic identities.

### **2.1.2. Construction of Antagonistic Ethnic Identity**

Primordial and essentialist arguments are more dominant in the discussion on the origins of ethnic identity and group membership. Van der Berghe (1981) argued that there is a genetic difference between groups and individuals which maintain strong kinship relationship in order to keep the genetic composition going. He further asserted that groups maintain a 'survival of the fittest' mind frame, encouraging competition for resources with other groups for the purpose of survival. This parallels the work of Hastings (1997) on 'the *Construction of Nationhood*'. Hastings (1997, p.3) argued that 'in practice nationalism is strong only in particularist terms, deriving from the belief that one's own ethnic or national tradition is especially valuable and needs to be defended at almost any cost through creation or extension of its own nation-state'. In that vein, it could be said that the primordial nature of ethnic groups needs to be preserved at all costs. This leads some groups to embrace conflict

in order to achieve the goal of nationhood. This primordial notion has been disputed by theorists, especially in the social sciences.

Wilmsen (1996) argued that current ethnic affiliations could be attributed to groupings of the past. For example, authors have written about how colonialists merged groups that were considered distinctive from one another (Horowitz, 1985; Flint & De Waal, 2005; Deng, 1991, 1998, 2005). Presumably, the distinctions by these authors were based on primordial assumptions, given none of them discussed the similarities of these groups in their works. It is, therefore, viable to conclude that primordial or essentialist understanding of ethnic groups still exist in writings about groups in current times. This study sets out to delineate these kinds of suggestions in the case of groups in the Darfur region of Sudan. It also intends to show the manner and circumstances in which people define their ethnicities in Darfur; hence, allowing me to negate these primordial notions. Berman *et al.* (2004) refute the idea of primordial African identities, arguing that African ethnicities are recent with no link to a tribal past and subject to an ever changing political, economic and cultural environment. They agreed with theorists like Deng, 1991 (also see Horowitz, 1985; De Waal, 2005) on the impact of colonialism, as a precursor to modernisation in Africa, which influenced the ethnic categorisation of the state.

In my view, colonialism has placed ethnic identity within a larger discourse on historical and social construction of identity, because it has been deemed responsible for the formation of new ethnicities, particularly in colonised states (Barongo and Oyovbaire, 1987). In the case of Darfur, the impact of colonialism in the creation of ethnicities is not clear cut. This study will, therefore, look at how colonialism impacts on the solidification of group dynamics in Darfur. Paralleling the theory of Berman *et al.* (2004), Eriksen (2002) posited that 'ethnic organization and identity, rather than being a 'primordial' phenomena radically opposed to modernity and the modern state, is frequently reactions to processes of modernization' (p.9). Berman *et al.* (2004) and Eriksen (2002), however, differed in their

thoughts on the creation of contemporary ethnicities. Berman *et al.* maintained that ethnicities are constructed from or reactions to colonialism; whilst Eriksen (2002, p.101) argued that 'plural societies usually designate colonially created states with culturally heterogeneous populations', with a typical example being Sudan. The plural society hypothesis is flawed to an extent in the sense, as it does not take into consideration issues of immigration and the impacts of globalisation in society. It does, however, serve as a good basis to allow the impact of colonialism and modernity to be discussed in relation to its impact on the creation of contemporary ethnicities. The relevance of ethnicity is not underestimated by the two authors in showing that ethnicity, whether historically or socially, is an artificial construct and an integral and pertinent part of an individual's identity and society.

Spinner (1994) defined ethnic groups as communities with a sense of common origin that share or are assumed to share some cultural attributes, like language, history and religion. For Spinner (1994), culture plays a very important role in people's identity formation, as individuals will share part of the dominant culture in their identity. The cultural element provokes Spinner (1994) to compare ethnicity with nationhood: the members of a nation must share certain elements with members of an ethnic group, such as language, history, and culture. Another commonality between ethnicity and nationhood is the idea of 'imagined communities' (Anderson 1991). In a similar vein, Spinner (1994) argued the nation is an imagined entity. These communities are imagined because most members of the nationhood will never come in contact with the other; however, in their minds, a community of related people does exist. Communities are, therefore, distinguished by the manner in which they are conceptualised rather than their falseness or validity (Anderson, 1991). This imagined feature of both ethnicity and nationhood correlates with the artificial nature of the ethnic construct, as argued by Berman *et al.* (2004) and Eriksen (2002), where ethnicities are created by historical and social factors as opposed to a primordial phenomenon. These views

legitimise ethnicity as a socially constructed identity. A more encompassing view of ethnic groups demonstrating the multiplicity of issues and power dynamics of ethnicity highlighted by social and historical constructivists was given by Karolina Hulterström (2007, p.7): ‘Ethnicity refers to a consciousness of a group identity built around an ascriptive category dissimilar to others in terms of objective criteria including language, customs, religion or any other category normally acquired at birth or through early socialisation’. In Hulterström’s (2007) view, the cultural attributes a group ascribes to itself and the socialisation process for knowledge acquisition are important factors. Moreover, it is stated ethnicity can be learned or acquired from birth through the process of socialisation. In that sense, ethnicity becomes an innate characteristic of an individual based in a cultural environment thereby making ethnicity inseparable from the individual and societal order. Overall, the processes of social construction, in which groups becomes the basis of identification, makes ethnic identity constitutive of the self and produces the ascriptive nature of the group (Eriksen, 2002).

Power has been flagged as an important element in the construction of identities; it has become even more relevant today in the political scene. In addition to the role of social construction in the creation of ethnic identities, scholars have also attributed the development of group identities to a competitive need for power and specific interests (economic, political, and social) (Gellner, 1983, Gurr, 1994, Brubaker, 1996, Tarimo, 2008). Cohen (1969), referring to his study in Africa, asserted that ‘ethnic groups coalesce as economically driven interest groups’ (cited in Coe, 2000, p.223). Cohen (1969) concluded:

*‘Contemporary ethnicity is the result of intense interaction between ethnic groups that operate not outside of the state’s framework but within the structure of the state; mobilisation of ethnic groups involves a dynamic realignment of relations and functions within the parameters of the new*

*state that preserved and secured the power of the privileged class'* (cited in Buendia, 2007, p.3).

This view shows the competitive nature of groups within a socio-political framework and also depicts the potential of the power dynamics within the state to be used to the advantage of different groups. With Cohen's instrumental views, ethnicity can only be feasible, created and sustained when it becomes malleable to utility by group members. This competitive nature of relations and power dynamics is why Wilmsen (1996, p.4) suggested 'ethnicity arises in the exercise of power [and] there must always be two, usually more, ethnicities to be defined against each other'.

Taking into account the power dynamics argument, ethnic group membership becomes a potent tool through which both groups and individuals compete for power and resources (Eriksen, 2002). The ethnic power dynamics in any society would normally create what is known as: dominant and minority groups or superordinate and subordinate groups; ranked and unranked groups; backward and advanced groups (Horowitz, 1985). The result of these kinds of relationships will be ethnic or identity politics, often characterised by marginalisation and relative weakness, where individuals and groups find themselves confronted with political and socio-economic threats (Wilmsen, 1996).

In a similar vein, Smith (2003) showed how identities are not primordial; rather, they are constructed and maintained through the exercise of power. He talked about a 'political people' derived from group members' assumption of a primary political membership or allegiance and how their existence is maintained and transformed through the exercise of power. He compared 'political people' to what Anderson (1991) referred to as 'imagined communities,' sharing a sense of political community and allegiance, despite not being able to come in contact with most members of the community. It was claimed these communities are political, due to the imagined binding responsibilities and duties it imposes on its members (Smith, 2003). The relationship between ethnicity, politics and competition for

power, economic and political resources, therefore, perhaps lead to much greater problems of marginalisation and inequality. This marginalisation and inequality account for discontent among the disadvantaged, which can subsequently lead to political violence. If this political violence is handled poorly by the state, it escalates into civil war (Nordas, 2008). In view of this, ethnic violence and its dynamics will be considered in the next section. Overall, this section has shown how colonisation, modernisation, power and politics are pertinent in the construction of antagonistic ethnic identity.

## **2.2. Ethnic Conflict**

Ethnicities, whether primordial or socially constructed, have implications for group and inter-group relations. Haberson & Rothchild (2000) said the largely mismanaged competition for power and resources as opposed to ethnic identities themselves provide the basis for conflict. In a similar vein, Alex de Waal (2009, p.140) asserted that ‘in times of fear and insecurity, people's ambit of trust and reciprocity contracts [and] identity markers that emphasize difference between warring groups are emphasized’. These arguments show that ethnic groups are not naturally conflictual; rather that the justification for conflict erupts from undue competition for power and wealth. Ethnic conflicts are the result of elites’ manipulation of people’s fear — often portrayed as a collective fear of the future — as opposed to actual differences among groups (Lake & Rothchild, 1996, 1998). Competition for resources and ethnic mobilisation for economic and political reasons becomes the major source of conflict, as opposed to actual and/or objective differences among groups. For the differences to be marshalled into conflictual identities, however, groups need to be divided along certain criteria serving to highlight and exacerbate their differences. To that extent, I consider the conditions which make ethnicity or ethnic identity prone to conflict in societies.

One of the prime limitations of Social Identity Theory is it promotes favouritism for group members and promotes competition among groups, as individuals tend to measure

themselves against others. This, therefore, results in them trying to attain and sustain superiority in comparison to the others: out-group members considered relevant and who serve a good basis for comparison (Tajfel 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). What serves as a catalyst for conflict is the rather negative and denigrating connotation of the ‘others,’ compared to the somewhat positive spin that is attached to the ‘us’ often characterised by symbols of common identity and solidarity (Gamson, 1992). From this angle, language becomes an important component for ethnic mobilisation. For instance, it could be espoused in nationalistic slogans to motivate group members. Marsh, (2007, pp.820-821) wrote: ‘Nationalistic language are used to mobilise the masses around conflicts as people endure hardship and carry out atrocities against neighbours’. The need for superiority over the out-group, however, creates avenues to mobilise group members for violence transcending normal inter-group relations. This kind of violent mobilisation is made possible as a result of the assumed essentialised boundaries that need to be protected by group members from the out-group (Hale, 2004). The question remains about which conditions make ethnicity, as opposed to other forms of identity, a potent force in the mobilisation of group members to collective and/or violent action. To clarify, when and how does ethnicity become a tool for politicking, leading competing identities to seek collective and/or perhaps armed action? A society’s internal dynamics of group composition (i.e. the extent to which groups are divided within a state) becomes a very important explanatory variable to be considered when dealing with ethnic mobilisation.

Scholars in conflict studies have focused on numeric characterisation of groups, espoused by the study of fractionalisation, domination and polarisation — to be considered in my next section. Researchers like Alesina *et al.* (2003), Reynal-Querol, (2002) and Horowitz, (1985) have shown how identity in various forms may evoke differing levels of relevance in different contexts, depending on symbolism and degree of exclusiveness associated with the groups’ definition of its membership. In that sense, the degree of

relationship among the different identities does, to a large extent, aid or constrain the 'us/them' dichotomy by creating certain intergroup interaction framework. Considering these dynamics, I examine the propensity of inter-ethnic violence through the framework of fractionalisation, domination and polarisation.

### **2.2.1. Ethnic Fractionalisation and conflict**

Vanhanen (1999, p.57) offered an 'ethnic nepotism' perspective, where 'the crucial characteristic of an ethnic group is that its members are genetically more closely related to each other than to the members of other groups'; following that members of the same ethnic group tend to support each other in conflict situations. It was further argued that biological relatedness increases the propensity of group members to favour in-group members compared to out-groups; this could be derived out of a need for the survival or continuity of genes (Vanhanen, 1999). Groups within a society fractionalised along multiple identities, such as ethnic/racial, cultural, religious, and/ or linguistic, may seek to maintain their survival in ways that generate violent confrontations (Sambanis, 2001). For example, in the Balkans, groups which had co-existed for centuries but were divided along religious, linguistic and ethnic lines resorted to full scale conflict to preserve what is considered paramount to each identity group. In the Sudan, the dynamics of the North and South conflict was mainly considered as pitching two ethnically and linguistically distinct groups against each other: the North being so-called Arabs, Arabic speaking and Muslims; with the South being Africans, Christians and traditionalists and mainly English speaking.

Another angle to fractionalisation studied by researchers has been its implications for socio-political co-ordination, co-operation and integration. It is theorised that the existence of conflicting and somewhat incompatible identities could threaten the cohesion and survival of a state. This would be especially true in situations where groups with nationalist ambitions refuse to acknowledge the plural character of the state; thereby,



attempting to force their own agenda on other groups and, ultimately, denying those groups the benefits of citizenship (Idris, 2005, Suliman, 2011, Linz & Stepan, 1996). For example, in the Sudan, the polity is dominated by mainly Arab nationalists who believe that the entire country be defined and seen as Arab-Islamic, without acknowledgement or outright denial of the existence of other identities. This has implications for marginalisation expressed through politics of exclusion and also denies citizens of groups defined as outcasts the full benefits and rights of citizenship (Deng, 1995; Suliman, 2011; JEM, 2002). These states of affairs force groups to take up arms questioning the legitimacy of the State and the State's power to serve as a unifying mechanism (Dahl, 1989, Horowitz, 1985).

At the crux of this issue among the groups is competition for resources, property rights, jobs, educational admission, language rights, government contracts and developmental allocations which confer benefits on individuals and groups (Lake & Rothchild, 1996). In a pluralistic society, strategic interests of groups might hinder the existence of efficient and functional political and socio-economic institutions. This both rises from and creates distrust across fragmented groups. The results of this are communication barriers and an unwillingness to make and commit to agreements reached; there are hence no foundations to build the cooperative solutions necessary for peaceful co-existence (Lake & Rothchild, 1996). As a result, a society becomes politically and socially unstable (Dahl, 1989). Studies by Easterly & Levine (1997); La Porta *et al.* (1998); Mauro, (1995) suggest that fractionalisation accounts for bad governance and institutional failure reflected in the formulation and execution of poor socio-economic policies and the disenchantment of citizens with participation in social and civic activities. All these have been shown to have significant negative effects on the level of economic growth and poverty levels. Dieckhoff (2003) also argued that democratic politics in multinational or multicultural societies makes it more difficult to reach agreements. This is particularly true in attempting to formulate a workable power sharing structure. For example, in the case of Sudan, several rebel factions

refused to sign the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) because they could not get the government to agree to a power sharing formula that would have seen the government of Sudan (GoS) appoint another vice-president from Darfur, alongside the one from the South. This led to the continuation of hostilities from groups that did not sign the agreement, as well as the splintering of existing rebel groups, some of whom thought that the government had given enough concession and should have signed the DPA (Sudan Tribune, 2007).

The other side of the argument is the outcome of ethnic relations in a fractionalised society is not necessarily disadvantageous. Studies have shown that fractionalisation does not explain the outbreaks of civil wars (Colliers & Hoeffler, 2004; Fearon & Laitin, 2003). To take this argument further, Elbadawi & Sambanis (2000) found a parabolic correlation between fractionalisation and the prevalence of civil wars. Montalvo & Reynal-Querol (2005) also suggested ethnic polarity, as opposed to fractionalisation, account for outbreaks of civil wars. Relating the fractionalisation paradigm to the work of Blau *et al.* on '*Heterogeneity and Inequality*', Montalvo & Reynal-Querol (2005, p.620) argued that:

*'Heterogeneity promotes inter-group relations' and 'that the structural constraints in heterogeneous communities counteract the in-group tendencies even of salient parameters such as ethnicity' ...conditions that increase the probability of social contact increase the likelihood of overt interpersonal conflict as well as that of harmonious social associations, since both depend on opportunities for social contact'.*

Blau's (1977) theory suggests that, with interaction among individuals of different groups, differences become less obvious and the plural society becomes more inclusive in a multicultural sense; thus, breaking down the communication barriers talked about by Lake &

Rothchild (1996). This provides grounds for cooperation on policy matters that would engender peaceful coexistence among different identity groups. In terms of the outbreak of war from the side of the rebels, budget constraints and the economic cost of rebellion are very important factors to be considered, meaning cost-benefit analyses are required (Collier, 2001).

In a highly fragmented society, the risk of civil war outbreak could be reduced by engaging different groups militarily: the cost of this could outweigh the benefits which come after the rebellion (Bates, 1999; Collier 2001; Collier & Hoeffler 1998). Successful recruitment and sustained commitment across ethnic boundaries is difficult to maintain in a highly fragmented society. This limits the rebels' ability to have steady source of military staffing and finance, thereby, controlling their ability for combat (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004). With this in mind, fractionalisation could serve as a deterring factor in the outbreak of violent conflicts, due to cost implication and the inability of rebels to garner support from across the varied and supposedly distinct identity groups.

Considering the arguments in this section, plural identities have been shown to be amenable to conflicts. On the other hand, cost-benefit analysis has shown that fractionalisation could reduce the outbreak of violent conflict by limiting access to recruits and finance. Other studies (Collier & Hoeffler 1998, Elbadawi & Sambanis, 2000) have also shown fractionalisation has a negative effect on conflict duration and conflict incidence. Despite this, Alesina *et al.* (2003) found a positive relationship between religion, governance and social conditions. Their conclusions correlated with the work of Blau (1977) that the presence of varied identities could contribute to inclusiveness and tolerance in the society. This, to a large extent, would lead to stable polities allowing for good policy decisions with a positive spin on human development. In view of this, fractionalisation becomes an effective tool in reducing tensions. Not all pluralistic societies, however, are highly fragmented and within these there seems to be other dynamics to ethnic relations and conflict. For example, a

domineering attitude among some groups, probably as a result of their size and sometimes through positions they occupy in the polity. This is often exercised through imposition of itself on other group, taking me to my next point on the domination of identity groups.

### **2.2.2. Ethnic Domination and Conflict**

The effect of ethnic domination on conflict processes has received little attention in comparison to fragmentation. The most popular thesis for domination arises in the realm of politics, where it is theorised states with politically dominant ethnic groups are more prone to political instability and conflict (Bates, 1999; Gurr, 1993a). According to Carment (1993), dominance in this case is an eighty percent threshold of the total population. Auvinnen (1997) argued states with largely dominant groups are prone to violence if they exclude minority groups from the sphere of politics and socio-economic decisions in a society. It is suggested that the practice of concentrating posts in public office and the military in the hands of dominant groups — hence disadvantaging minority groups — is more likely to breed ethnic tensions. Auvinnen further argued the built up frustration and aggression arising from such state of affairs, claimed to lead minority group leaders to embrace violence for self-defence and preservation.

Furthermore, as Collier *et al.* (2001) suggest, the powerful dominant groups may have the capability and motivation to exercise their advantaged position to repress other groups. Such a view is similar to what Tocqueville (1954) referred to as the ‘tyranny of the majority’: this does not arise out of a lack of coordination or cooperation among groups, but the need to exercise their superior position over other groups in the society. Sidanius & Pratto (2001) also suggested that human beings are predisposed to form hierarchical group relations in which dominant groups seek to oppress minority groups. These views are somewhat similar to Lesch (1998, pp.8-9) control model:

*'Where one ethnic group assumes the right to rule and to craft the country in its own image'..... Leaders of the dominant groups assume that they have a civilising mission in relation to the smaller and [in their view] history-less people in their midst. The latter should welcome assimilation into the national culture and identity. In the control model, the state tries to undermine and even destroy other ethnic national groups that exist within its boundaries, whether by assimilation or repression'. This has been shown to result in 'structural inequality of marginalised peoples, which can also be seen as a form of internal colonialism'.*

Taking this into consideration, dominant groups have the wherewithal to employ the state apparatus to its advantage and the exclusion of others. The result of this is to deny other groups the full rights of citizenship and also serves a psychological function of provoking the minority group's belief in historical ethnic grievances, hatred and violence between themselves and the dominant groups (Gurr 1993, Sambanis, 2001).

At the other end of the spectrum are research outcomes suggesting that ethnic dominance could serve as a deterrent to conflict outbreaks. For instance, Ellingsen (2000) suggest that the assumption we have is a society close to hundred percent in homogeneity, thus renders the minority to a very microscopic element of the population. As a result, this reduces the ability of minority groups to gain strong solidarity, mobilise and raise a formidable challenge against the State; thus, reducing the risk of conflict onset. This could also be seen in relation to the cost-benefit analysis argument made earlier. For instance, if minority groups believe the cost of engaging in a rebellion against the dominant group outweighs the benefits, then they are likely not to engage in such a futile, if not impossible,

endeavour; thereby, reducing conflict outbreak in an ethnic dominant society. Most of the works on dominance have concentrated on ethnic dominance, without looking at how other identity elements could serve as a dominating and politicised factor in society. Overall, studies have questioned how much of a dominant force a particular group can be in a society. In that sense, alternative explanations have been sought in understanding conflict dynamics in a heterogeneous society. One of such explanation is the level of polarity amongst coexisting ethnic groups.

### **2.2.3. Ethnic Polarisation and Conflict**

Pertinent in this field are the contributions of Collier (2001) and Collier and Hoeffler (1998, 2004, and 2005) on ethnic dominance and the onset and duration of conflict. When talking about rent seeking and rebel financial capacity, Collier *et al.* (2005, p.8) asserted ‘the incentive to exploit the minority increases the larger is the minority, since there is more to extract [and that] a minority may be most vulnerable if the largest ethnic group constitute a small majority’. In an ethnically dominant society, it is highly unlikely that any minority would be able to confront the state and its army. Collier & Hoeffler’s (1998, 2004) assertion seems more likely to a polarised environment, where groups could be seen to have relatively equal sizes at both the conceptual and numerical continuums. Theorists like Horowitz (1985) and Jenkins & Kposowa (1992) have argued polarisation potentially aids domestic conflict or coup d’état; in that sense, violence is more likely when major ethnic groups have relatively equal sizes (see also Ellingsen, 2000). This can be explained in light of the ‘*rational choice theory*,’ where both groups see the prospect of winning any conflict as a result of their relatively equal size and numerical strength (Hechter & Kanazawa, 1997).

With a demographic structure relatively equal in terms of resources, the two groups see each other as arch rivals and, at the same time, see a realistic chance of making tangible gains or victory over the other group (Ellingsen, 2000; Kposowa and Jenkins 1992;

Montalvo and Reynal-Querol 2002). Moreover, in a polarised state, following Blau (1977), attachment to a group's identity becomes more prominent, as the existence of few but large, similar and close groups reduces the chance of inter-group interaction and has the effect of solidifying in-group cohesion. In light of this, Horowitz (1985) posited this state of affairs could lead to the 'fear of extinction' from all sides; thereby, creating a need for groups to see their respective demands as mutually exclusive with a prospect for permanent defeat; at the same time, making the prospect of permanent victory real. In this regard, polarised societies, when compared to dominant or fractionalised states, are prone to intense identity based conflict (Reynal-Querol 2002).

With respect to this project, polarisation is especially relevant, given the way the Darfur conflict has been facilitated by the relatively similar and proximal identities along a rigid Arab versus African dichotomy. The way the conflict has been perpetuated further solidifies this belief, especially amongst so-called African groups, in which they see a need to stand up militarily against the so-called Arab population for fear of extinction. This psychological fear, to a large extent, makes these separate groups see their respective identity demands as mutually exclusive; therefore, solidifying the need for violent conflict to either permanently defeat the other group or repress them. With respect to polarisation studies, the limitation exposed is that polarisation helps to explain conflict incidence but does not increase the risk of conflict onset (Schneider & Wiesehomeier, 2006). On the other hand, Collier & Hoeffler's (2004) work on dominance better explains conflict onset (Esteban and Ray, 2008), if the dominance threshold was set at between 45-80 percent as opposed to 45-90 percent set out by Collier and Hoeffler (2004).

Overall, the theories of fractionalisation, domination and polarisation demonstrates the extent to which ethnic identity could be implicated in identity conflict incidences which Kaldor (1998) referred to as 'New Wars'. In order to fully appreciate the discussion in the above section and its relationship to Kaldor's 'New War' theory, it will be worthwhile to

examine ethnic dynamics in the context of Darfur and its relationship to marginalisation and development issues arising. This will elucidate how little is known about the ethnic dynamics in Darfur and how these contribute to the conflict. This takes me to the final section of this review, which considers certain specifics on Darfur.

### **2.3. Implicating Ethnicity in Darfur**

The current understanding of the Darfur conflict, as portrayed by the media, commentators and academics, is that the Arab dominated government in Khartoum is engaged in the practice of cleansing the African groups in Darfur. This understanding is justifiable, to some extent, considering the socio-political environment tending to favour the Arabised groups; thus, any action by the government is construed as undermining the opposite identity group (HRW, 2004). This highlights the very ethnic nature of the polity; thereby, generating a need to see how conflict erupts and its implication for marginalisation and development. De Waal (2005), Prunier (2007), Harir (1994) and Idris (2005) have all provided detailed analyses and critiques about the process of ethnicity becoming ingrained in the conflict. Overall, their arguments are mainly based on primordial assumptions and categorisations of the groups in Darfur —this study intends to negate these.

In the case of De Waal (2005), he suggested the current dichotomous nature of ethnicity in Darfur derives from what he termed '*Arab Supremacy Ideology*' originating in the Western frontiers and less inclination from Khartoum. He traced the advent of this ideology back to the Mahdi Movement of the late 1800s in Sudan<sup>11</sup>. This same ideology was later revisited by then Libyan Leader Gadhafi in the 1970s and the 1980s during his strong

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<sup>11</sup> The Mahdi was seen as the reincarnated Prophet Mohammed who led the revolt against the Turko-Egyptian rule in Sudan. In his time, Darfur was used as a transit point for slave raiding and trading operations and the population stood as a recruitment pool for Madhi's soldiers. The Mahdi's successor pursued a policy of forced migration, which heightened the power struggle between ruling elite divided into the commoners, forced migrants from Darfur and riverine or northern Sudanese ethnic groups to which the Mahdi belonged. Darfur maintained its independence from the Madhist state which claimed an Arab ancestry. Darfur's allegiance to the Madhi's rule was divided, with the Fur being anti-Madhi and the Baggara t claiming Arab ancestry being followers of the Madhi; thus, creating an ethnic distinction in that period. Coming into the present day, the great-grandson of the Mahdi, Sadiq al-Mahdi, who went ahead to become the Prime Minister of Sudan gave priorities to the Baggara Arab group as they were seen to be loyalists and were part of the preferred identity group (Salih, 2005).



intervention in Chad. De Waal's (2005) theory is mainly based on the calculations of Gadhafi's incipient and the ever insistent need and spread of Pan-Arabism<sup>12</sup> in the region.

This in part could be termed as racism with regards to the Darfurian context, as Arab groups considered themselves superior to anyone else that do not share the same kind of ideology or identity. To that extent, Arab groups in Darfur felt a need to defend the very essence of their Arabness, even if it meant resorting to violence in order to achieve that end; thus, creating a clear cut dichotomy among the Darfur groups of Africans and Arabs based on this Pan-Arab ideology. This ideological stance influences the identity of the Arab groups in terms of the way they view themselves. It also has implications for the identity of African groups that consider themselves indigenous and their relationship with other co-existing supposedly opposite identity groups.

Furthermore, Prunier (2007) took a historical approach in considering the socio-political perspective of ethnic relations, especially as it pertains to the role of Islam in the State. He also considered ethnic relations at the level of party politics, especially the Umma party which had its roots in the Mahdist movement of the 1800s. The leadership of the party were keenly contested by Sadiq al-Mahdi and his uncle Imam al-Hadi. The ethnic element came into force, as Sadiq was able to secure the support of the Fur group as his base within the party and, at the same time, represent a majority from that region. On the other hand, his uncle was left with no other choice than to turn to the Arab constituency for support. In the process, both men successfully created exclusivist tendencies along ethnic lines in the Darfur region to keep their support base intact. For Sadiq, he emphasised differences between Fur and the ruling Arab elites in Khartoum, whereas, Imam al-Hadi emphasised the so-called similarities between the Darfur Arabs and the ruling Arab elites in Khartoum (Prunier, 2007,

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<sup>12</sup> Pan-Arabism is a 'term for the ideological and political project Arabs refer to as Arab nationalism. This project's central premise is that all those who speak Arabic, from Iraq in the east to Morocco in the west, share a common history, heritage, and culture, and are therefore members of a single nation whose destiny it is to overcome the artificial boundaries imposed by colonialism and achieve independence and unity' (Social Sciences n.d.<http://what-when-how.com/social-sciences/pan-arabism-social-science/>).

Jenkins, 2008). To that end, it is safe to suggest the foundation of ethnic politics was built; thereby, resulting in artificial identities for groups that otherwise lived in harmony devoid of any separatist tendencies.

The other dimension through which Prunier (2007) looked at the issue of ethnicity in Darfur was evidenced in politics at the regional level. The Chad republic was dealing with its own ethnic politics between a ruling Southern African leader and Northern Muslims struggling for access to power. Under those circumstances, Sudan under Sadiq al-Mahdi, (given his Islamic orientation), lent their support to the Muslim North by allowing them a military offensive launch base from Darfur. Moreover, just to the North of the Darfur border was the incessant desire for an Arab belt by Libyan Gadhafi. As a result of the need for an Arab belt, Gadhafi, similar to Sadiq al-Mahdi, lent both military and financial support to the Muslim North; thus, providing racial and ethnic dimensions to the Chad conflict. This was important in the Darfur context because there were cross-border groups (i.e. the Zaghawa ethnic group) constituting a majority in Chad. As a result, groups are encouraged to take sides with their ethnic compatriots in Chad and are open to violent conflicts with their counterparts in Darfur (Giroux *et al.*, 2009). This situation exacerbated the ethnic divide in Darfur and also fuelled the divide along racial lines, given the Pan-Arabist stand of people like Gadhafi who gave support to any group that would help foster this agenda. To that end, Prunier (2007) attributes the emergence and sustenance of ethnic identity dichotomy and its implication for conflict on the factors/dimensions discussed.

Flint & De Waal (2008) believed that racism in Darfur is a derivative of personal relations among Darfurians. Prunier (2007), on the other hand, suggested the racial elements of ethnic relations in the Darfur region are created out of external influence but encouraged by the Sudanese political elites for political, military and personal reasons. Prunier (2007) rejects the idea of an ethnically divided society in Darfur prior to the events discussed

earlier. In his view, it is important to see ethnic divisions as the product of some external influence, as opposed to some personal belief in ethnic division by Darfurians themselves.

The issue of temporality was considered by Tanner (2005), who argued the conflict in Darfur is mainly political and the influence of ethnicity has only become so prevalent in the last three and a half decades. He assumed that the prevalence of ethnicity in Darfur played well into the hands of politicians in Khartoum, as it was used in garnering support for the establishment and expansion of the Arab Belt championed by the Libyan leader Gadhafi. This behaviour was established as a pattern because the state of affairs was witnessed under different governments with various leadership styles. For example, the establishment of an Arab Belt was a plan executed under the al-Mahdi's regime, to Nimeiri and to the current government of Omar al-Bashir, with the exception of the leadership style (Tanner 2005).

Presumably, the steadfast approach the different governments chose to execute the Arab Belt project with supported Tanner's assertion that conflict in Darfur is mainly political, given its strategic location and the resulting constructed identities. Although he does not rule out the relevance of ethnicity, the Arab Belt project itself, as discussed earlier, has an ethnic/racial supremacy tone to it. This, therefore, keeps the political ideology of the different governments in place. In essence, Tanner (2005), to an extent, agrees with Prunier (2007) that conflict in Darfur is not necessarily or solely linked to personal racial/ethnic beliefs, as argued by Flint & De Waal (2008); but a result of decisions made by actors outside of the person (tribal or state leaders), sometimes based on political imperatives as shown by Tanner (2005).

Furthermore, Prunier does not distinguish between ethnicities in Darfur prior to the events discussed; rather, he talks about an all-encompassing ethnic identity for Darfurians. On the other hand, Flint & De Waal emphasis the distinguishing elements of ethnic groups in Darfur by concentrating on the racial attitudes of Arab groups in Darfur and how, in contrast, the African groups do not hold such attitudes. In all, their studies on identities in Darfur

concentrate on very simplistic, rigid categorisations of groups along Arab/African divides. In this study, I suggest that regardless of the type of ethnic identity dimension/relations talked about and the factors surrounding their emergence, ethnic identity does play an important role in intergroup relations; thus, having implications for individuals and society at large. A need arises, therefore, for a study that comprehensively looks at those extraneous contributing to the notion of a divided ethnic identity and how it has helped to cement perceived identity difference over time. Moreover, its implications for intergroup relations, especially as it relate to marginalisation and development is where this study fits in. Some of the several implications arising out of Darfur/Sudan's identity politics are the economic and political dimensions closely related to the neglect of groups not considered part of the identity framework. Neglect in this case will be seen as marginalisation and how this contributes to conflict.

### **2.3.1. Darfur's Economic and Political Marginalisation**

The anonymous publication of the first edition of *'The Black Book'* (2000) highlighted the extent to which the peripheries of Sudan are marginalised both economically and politically. The significance of the *Black Book* lies in the fact that the book being the first of its kind to voice what people already knew and had been too afraid to express. It was alleged in the *Black Book* that monies meant for developmental purposes in the whole of the country were diverted and restricted for use in the Northern region (El-Tom, 2004).

Considering the size and population of the Northern states when this publication was written, it was estimated the population of the Northern states was around 1.3 million, accounting for just 5.4 percent of the entire population of the country. Despite a relatively small percentage of population, it was alleged that the vast majority of top public post were held by Northerners. They accounted for about 59.4 percent of the work force during the period of 1989 to 1999; this percentage also increased to an estimated 60.1 percent in 1999. The *Black Book* also highlighted the origins of the Presidents/Heads of State which have

ruled in Sudan. It was established that all Presidents from independence had come from the Northern region and coup attempts (1977, 1980 and 1991) by non-Northerners had always failed (El-Tom, 2004).

In addition, Prunier (2007) pointed out all Presidents in Sudan since independence have come from just three Northern Arab ethnic groups: the Shaygia, Jaalieen and the Danagla. Sadiq al-Mahdi was credited for increasing the representation of other regions during his time; this could be partially attributed to the support he garnered from places like Darfur during the leadership contest between himself and his uncle, Imam al-Mahdi. Despite this, there were still huge differences in the representation accorded to the different regions when compared to the Northern region. Even in non-Northern states, when it came to the government appointing representatives, the government would either send someone from the North or appoint someone in those states but with Northern origins (Prunier, 2007). It was concluded that appointments were made mainly to satisfy strong members of political families and their respective ethnic groups (Hassan & Ray, 2009). This kind of appeasement is synonymous to what Adebani & Obadare (2013) described as ‘prebendalism<sup>13</sup>’.

The *Black Book* also had a look at the judiciary: although it praised the Sudanese legal profession, it criticised the level of representation in the Ministry of Justice and the appointment of Attorney Generals. The book implicated nepotism and discrimination by the executive in appointing the Ministers for Justice and the Attorney General (*JEM*, 2002). Since the independence of Sudan, the *Black Book* showed that 67 percent of the Attorney Generals have been from the Northern region while the Central region accounts for the remaining 33 percent. This legal system is devised in such a way that inadvertently protects the corruption charges the *Black Book* alleges. Since the judicial powers are in the hands of the few Northern elites appointed by the same government, they do not really have a choice

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<sup>13</sup> This is a situation where politicians or top ranking state officials utilise state offices as a tool for acquiring material benefits to themselves and members of their constituency.

about whether to do the bidding of the ruling inner circle which appointed them (*JEM*, 2002). In view of this, El-Tom (2004) asserted the state Sharia Laws are formulated and interpreted to punish crimes committed by ordinary citizens, but, at the same time, protects elites who steal from public. This is made possible by the governments' appointment of elites into key financial posts and the judicial system.

These kinds of appointments show the extent to which the majority are subjected to impoverishment and punishment; while the privileged few in government enrich and protect themselves with state resources. This imbalance hence results in a negatively skewed political and legal representation in the country. The impoverishment arising stems from another issue: the economic imbalance. The extent to which peripheral regions like Darfur are economically deprived and marginalised is shown by disparities in the distribution of wealth across the country in the respective economic sectors. Immediately after independence, Sudan embarked on a Ten Year Strategic Development Programme spending billions of United States Dollars to create a viable economy for its citizens. Mismanagement and ill-planning, however, marred the progress of the programme; thus, yielding minor benefits compared to the investments made. Overall, the sustenance of the programme came at a cost to the national economy at the expense of all Sudanese, except for Central and Northern Regions where most of the projects were located (El-Tom, 2004).

I now want to concentrate on the economic developmental plans of the current regime put in place for 1999-2002: the Three Year Economic Development Plan. Considering the agricultural sector, this accounts for eighty percent of occupations for the peripheral and rural population, which is mainly driven by rain fed agriculture. Agriculture in Sudan is divided into two sectors: irrigated and rain fed. The rain fed sector is the main driver for export revenue, given international sale of crops like peanuts, sesame and Arabic gum; it also serves as the main producer of Sudanese staple foods like sorghum, millet and maize. Despite the contribution of this sector, little investment has been allocated for its development. In

doing so, this leaves periphery regions like Darfur in relative depravity in terms of getting fair prices for their products and even mechanising their production to increase yield per annum (Suliman, 2011).

On the other hand, the irrigated sector, which is mainly located in the Northern and Central regions, has attracted much investment. Despite the level of investment, the benefits derived are quite small in comparison to investment —this has mainly benefited Arabised elites located in Khartoum. In all, the entire irrigated scheme benefits the ruling minority and political elites of the Northern and Central regions to the detriment of the mainly rural rain fed sector proving to be more beneficial to the general economy (El-Tom, 2004, Suliman, 2011). As new dams were being built — regardless of the cost of production in the North — to force the production of certain products, some irrigation schemes meant to cater for the rural rain fed agriculture were liquidated. One could, therefore, conclude that plans and outcomes relating to economic development are a preserve of the Arabised North, since the locations of these schemes were not in the interest of the Northern oligarch (El-Tom, 2004).

Moreover, leading up to the conflict, Darfur was never in a position where any developmental scheme located there was able to generate revenues that any local government could survive on for at least three months. In addition to the liquidation of assets or schemes considered invaluable to the Northern elites, the government underwent a privatisation scheme for public goods that effectively concentrated the most profitable economic resources in the hands of very few individuals (CIJ, 2006). For example, the sale of the Abu Naama Jute Factory for 800 million US dollars to a cabinet minister, Hashim Haju, was under-valued, given the landed assets and heavy machineries which were part of the deal (El-Tom, 2004). On the other hand, a Westerner, Mohamed Jar Alnabi, who tried to acquire the refinery, had all his efforts frustrated; however, he was spared the ridicule of being forced into exile like Ibrahim Draig, a former governor from Darfur (Hassan, 2005). In my view, these examples demonstrate that the lucrative economy of Sudan is run by groups of individuals representing

certain areas of the country. This shows how elites from other parts of the country are not permitted such economic privileges, which possibly could trickle-down for other citizens in those areas.

The industrial sector does not differ from any of the other ones discussed above. Industrial development in any country serves as a good indicator of labour. In the case of Sudan, however, the few industries present are located in the Northern regions and are under the control of the Northern elites. This led to the mass migration of labour from the rural areas that are often exploited. Ironically, most of these Northern industries actually make use of natural resources, such as iron, crude-oil, gas, and gold, exploited from the rural areas; therefore, exploiting both the human and natural resources of peripheral areas like Darfur. Furthermore, all the public owned industries, such as the military industry, the currency coinage, the refinery, printing press, sugar industries and electricity, are also centrally located; thus, leaving little or nothing to allow peripheries like Darfur to employ its citizens (El-Tom, 2004).

The financial sector was also riddled with ethnic nepotism with the appointment of people from the Northern origin in charge of both public and private financial institutions controlling credit for entrepreneurs as well as the planning/implementation of developmental plans. The one and only time a non-Northerner was appointed as the director of an integration fund, there was much opposition and obstacles put into place to ensure his failure. Subsequently, the fund was liquidated and revived when a Northerner thought to be qualified for the post was found (Hassan, 2005).

In all, it could be said that resources are not equitably distributed amongst the different regions. This ultimately ensures some groups — as a result of their privileged political position — receive a better share of the resources; thus, improving their economic wellbeing to the detriment of other regions. This situation also elucidates the identity dynamics of the polity,



where people that perceive themselves to be of Arab origin tend to make decisions which favour their own group and are to the disadvantage of groups which do not match their definition of Arabness. A possible reason for these states of affairs is the assumption that northern Sudan is a homogenous entity with no identity issues. As a result, the focus has always been on the North/South divide; thereby, shifting attention away from identity and marginalisation issues in northern Sudan. This study explores the identity dynamics in northern Sudan, especially relating to Darfur. The continuation of these situations without any meaningful improvement partially contributed to the full blown conflict which resulted.

Economic marginalisation has been suggested by some scholars as the primary source of conflict in Darfur. Flint & De Waal (2005) hinted at this in their work *'Darfur: A Short History of a Long War,'* also from the perspective of the *'Black Book'*. On the contrary, Suliman (2011) suggested the economic problems of Darfur arose out of the combined complexities of geographical location (environment) and institutional failure in Sudan. This argument is in partial agreement with Prunier's (2007) suggestion that Darfur's economic scenario is a product of its regional dynamics and should not be linked to internal identity issues. He further asserted that the politicisation of issues by external forces, combined with the level of poverty in the region, accounted for the ease with which the population of the region could be mobilised for conflict.

Furthermore, Tanner (2005) also attributed the dire economic situation in Darfur to the politics imposed from outside the region; in this case, Khartoum. He described the situation as years of neglect suffered by the region from several Sudanese governments; he claimed this was made worse by the level of political marginalisation inflicted on Darfur. For example, he cited the division of a state into several constituencies and picking just 'so-called' Arabs to head most of the new constituencies. This strategy was adopted to reduce and split the support for political parties, which had their main electoral support and membership base in Darfur, like the 'Umma Party' and 'Democratic Unionist Party' (DUP) (Prunier, 2007).

Tanner (2005) posited that economic marginalisation and under-development of the Darfur region are factors which contributed to the Darfur conflict. He attributed that situation to the ethnic nepotism of the Central government, limiting the allocation and disbursement of investment and development resources to regions like Darfur. When natural incidences like famine and drought occur, it therefore becomes almost impossible for Darfurians to cope and the government does little or nothing to help. In that sense, some consider environmental issues to be the main cause of the Darfur problem — I will discuss the environment in line with the identity dynamics in the next section.

### **2.3.2. The Environment**

In addition to the economic, ethnic, political and institutional factors which have been attributed to the Darfur conflict, the environment has also been cited as an important element. As Ahmed (2009, p.2) puts it:

*‘The Sudan had witnessed a growing awareness and common concern of land and natural resources issues, which are the main factors behind the exacerbation of social violence, consolidation of causes of poverty, destitution and creation of social tensions and disruption as was the case in other parts in Sub-Saharan Africa’.*

Ahmed (2009) considered the relationship between land resources and social peace within an economic, social, cultural and political framework. Suliman (2011) identified droughts and desertification as important causal factors for slow growth and under-development in Sudan. These severe environmental outcomes have created a migratory pattern for pastoralists in northern Darfur who are forced to move South in search of better grasslands and water for their animals. In turn, conflicts erupt as migrating pastoralists encroach on farming lands, with some even trying to settle on those lands; Suliman (2011) partially attributed this to

institutional failure and poor governance. Identity dynamics are espoused, as pastoralists are mainly seen as Arab groups; while the sedentary farmers are perceived to be Africans.

*UNEP* (2007) argued that a particularly disturbing matter exacerbating the environmental issues in Sudan is dwindling resources due to degradation and desertification, combined with an increased environmental resource demand from a rising population. The 'Darfur Joint Assessment Mission' (2006) also found an unusual level of logging in central Darfur during both conflict and peace times. The beneficiaries of this could not be determined, so they concluded any meaningful solution to the Darfur conflict needed long-term policies to address the sustainability of land and natural resources in Darfur. In his investigation into the causes of conflict in Darfur, Mamdani (2009) identified thirty different incidences where conflict erupted among ethnics over grazing and water rights. The problem, he suggested, was the lack of agricultural institutions in Darfur; these were more readily available in the North, where there is a high concentration of mechanised farming. On a similar note, the kind of mechanised farming practiced in Sudan has contributed to the overall problem of degradation, by over-exploitation of the land through uncontrolled expansion. As Suliman (2011, p.95) explained:

*'Disorganized mechanized agriculture, on such a large scale, behaves more like strip-mining of the land, exploiting it to exhaustion. Irresponsible entrepreneurial behaviour of the Khartoum elites rapidly expanded mechanized farmers at the expense of small farming and grazing pastures, contributing significantly to the deterioration of the productivity and the onset of the existing conflict in Darfur'.*

Suliman argued that, in addition to the poverty which is rife in Darfur, the main exacerbating factor for environmental conflict is the ever increasing population and the level of under-development in Darfur.

Flint & De Waal (2005) also emphasised the environmental constraints which led to the drought and famine of the 1980s. In terms of the environmental element, they placed the current crisis into context by looking at past conflicts over competition for environmental resources. This in itself casts doubt on the environment being a primary cause of the current conflict. If the environment contributed so greatly to the onset of the conflict, then it should have continued from the 1980s given there was a continuous increase in population without a corresponding increase in available environmental resources, combined with institutional failure and poor governance (Suliman 2011). Since the politics centred on occupations (pastoralism or sedentary, peasant or mechanised farming), the identities in this conflict area had, to an extent, been cemented.

#### **2.3.2.1. The Complex Web**

A discussion of political, economic and environmental elements demonstrates a level of interconnectedness between the three factors. In the case of Darfur/Sudan, the majority of people living in the rural areas will be the most affected by any environmental issue, as they are closer to nature and more dependent on the land for economic reasons. Given the level of under-development in the country — most people in Darfur live under \$1 a day (*UNDP*, 2012) — it could be argued that this level of economic depravity would, to a large extent, exacerbate the pressures put on the environment for survival. It has been recommended that dealing with the economic issues through investment and development will, in turn, reduce environmental constraints imposed on citizens and, consequently, the competitive conflicts which arise out of these imposed constraints (Abusharif, 2010).

If all the causal elements discussed are viewed within the very rigid dichotomy of Arab/African divide — the current understanding — the state of affairs easily becomes highly ethnicised or racialised. This, in essence, solidifies the ethnic argument regarding the conflict, as discussed earlier; thereby, confounding the ethnic, economic and environmental

factors as contributory variables to the conflict. Even in the current explanation of events, there appears to be a singular element which some people have tried to implicate in the conflict but with little or no success as there is little or no basis to sustain or justify the argument. This final factor of religion is considered below.

### **2.3.2.2. Religion**

Another element considered to be a contributing factor to the Darfur conflict is religion. Although it is difficult to find any supporting evidence to justify this element, it is widely known that both the government and the Darfur people share the same religion of Islam. An article published in the *Washington Post* (2006) argued that ‘*Nearly Everyone is Muslim*’ in Darfur, maintaining that the war was not about religion at all. The North-South conflict did have some religious undertone to it: Northern Muslim Arabs fighting Southern Christian Animist over oil and political power. Since most Darfurians are devout Muslims, however, religion cannot be implicated as a cause of conflict. Since the Khartoum government is supposedly Arabised and Islamic at the same time, it becomes unconceivable for the Darfur population to be attacked on the basis of religion; this further solidifies the ethnic argument discussed earlier as the only plausible explanation for the perceived identity divide. Consequently, it is only on this basis that religion as an explanation for the conflict is most suited.

## **2.4. Conclusion**

A review of the literature showed that there are several serious political, economic, marginalisation and developmental issues in Darfur; but, at the same time, rejects the suggestion that the problem is attributable to these factors. A commonality in the literature, regardless of the dimension examined, is that ethnicity, in its rigid forms either at the micro or macro level, is implicated in the conflict. Despite this, most of the studies on identity in Sudan have concentrated on a North/South dichotomy. The handful of works on Darfurian

identities reviewed in this Chapter have concentrated on a very rigid, essentialised African and Arab ethnic divide — this thesis hopes to negate it. The lack of research works in this area can be mainly attributed to the concentration of scholars on the North/South conflict, with there being very little or no focus on identity issues in the North of Sudan which Darfur is a part of. This accounts for my review of the literature on Darfur to be carried out in the context of larger Sudan. Furthermore, Assal (2009) asserted that identity discourses in the now Sudan have concentrated primarily on elites and politics at the national level, resulting in little or no recognition for the dynamics of identities in places like Darfur. The few studies on identity in northern Sudan mainly concentrated on tracing the historical roots of those identities and try to cement them on that basis. As a consequence, they fail to take into account factors which could mean those identities are rather imagined than real and how those same factors, in turn, create the perceived identities cementing the ethnic divide in Darfur.

There is one study by Madibbo (2012) which tries to separate the northern Sudanese identities from rigid and essentialised explanations, by exploring the various meanings of Arab and African identities in the Sudanese context. Nonetheless, it should be noted that this study failed to clarify what distinguishes these rigid groups and the factors responsible for this perceived dichotomy. Her study also did not document the differences in how Darfurians like to see themselves; therefore, assuming that northern Sudanese identities are defined along an Arab/African dichotomy. This thesis hopes to fill such a gap by exploring whether the Darfur identities are a result of belief in groups' perception of the other as opposed to rigid Arab/African identities. Additionally, my study interrogates the factors accounting for the solidification of this perception and whether perceptual differences contributed to the discourse on marginalisation and development of Darfur in the context of the larger Sudan.

On this note, I conclude there is a gap in literature on the (mis)perception of Darfurian identities and how it contributes to the discourse on marginalisation and

development. My study departs from the existing conceptualisation of essentialised/primordial ethnicity in the literature, viewing ethnicity as rigid dichotomies between Arabs and Africans. This thesis, by contrast, looks at ethnicity in Darfur and its relationship in Sudan as emanating from a belief in perceived differences as opposed to rigid ethnic dichotomies. This study also hopes to show the perceived differences are the result of several interwoven factors (un)intentionally imagined, planned and executed by the ruling class; which, therefore, has little or nothing to do directly with the imaginations of Darfurians themselves. My thesis will argue that perceived differences, as opposed to actual differences in ethnic identity, is a fundamental cause of conflict with implications for marginalisation and development in Darfur. In order to fill the current gap in literature, I conducted my own ethnographic study. In the next Chapter, I justify the qualitative research methods adopted for this research and discuss their limitations. I also explain how my data was gathered, my target population, the ethical considerations of the research and the data management techniques adopted.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methods and Research Design**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

To answer the questions raised earlier and fill the gap in the literature reviewed, I needed a research strategy enabling me gather and analyse information. Hakim (2000) said a research design transforms issues raised in a study into programmes which can be executed. Given the context of my study and the nature of the research questions asked, I selected the most suitable research design. Data was collected using two principal qualitative methods: namely, documentary and archival sources; semi-structured interviews, focusing on a particular case study of the westernmost region of Sudan (Darfur). In this Chapter, I will describe the methods adopted for this study. My discussion is divided into three sections. I begin by justifying the use of qualitative method in this research. This is followed by a discussion of the interviews conducted method and the documentary sources assessed, explaining their appropriateness for the project. Finally, I will discuss how I analysed the data gathered and the ethical considerations of this research project.

#### **3.2. Qualitative Research**

In a research project using a case study approach, data can be gathered from different sources. I used two methods which are documentary/archival resources and interviewees. I will consider their strengths which served as a justification for my use of the qualitative approach. The case study adopted is representative of the constructivist approach, given that the phenomenon under study (identity) is subjective and value laden, hence, open to different interpretations, meanings and expectations. The method (interview) adopted in this study allowed respondents to give meaning to their own identity and construct it in the manner they desire. Inherent in Yin's (2009) analysis of case study approach is that there is a reality that can be accessed through the study of multiple participants in interviews which gives



respondents the opportunity to describe and construct reality as they see it— placing it under the constructivist approach. Stake (1995, 2006) unequivocally places case study within the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm. He asserted case studies seek out multiple perspectives of respondents with the aim of gathering shared and diverse notions of a reality. For Stake (1995, 2006), the assumption is that reality is local and specifically constructed. This assumption allowed me to study the ethnicities in Darfur from a local and specific reality constructed by my respondents. This strongly follows Yin's (2003) typology that: case studies are most helpful when investigating a particular phenomenon(identity) within a specific context (Darfur) and adopting the interview method allows the respondents to describe and give meaning to their own identities within that context. Therefore leading to the construction of their own realities— placing this case study under the constructivist approach. Yin (2003, 2009) further argued that the adoption of this approach does not require control of behavioural events and it focuses on contemporary events— these are typical of the Darfur case. He also said that case studies are most useful when the research questions asked and answered are centred around “how and why”. In this study, my research questions focused on how identities in Darfur are formed, shaped and cemented and it looked at why the identities are defined the way they are now, hence, fulfilling the question criteria.

Taking this argument further, my use of qualitative research was strongly influenced by the social constructivist approach or interpretivists, approach, which, in agreement with Gall *et al.* (1996, p.19), maintained that individuals gradually build their own understanding of the world through ‘experience and maturation’ and that scientific enquiries must focus on the study of ‘multiple social realities’. A core belief of this theoretical paradigm is that known reality is a product of socially constructed ideas (Gall *et al.*, 1996, p.19). As a researcher, I, therefore, only had access to the social reality which was constructed ‘through interaction, development of shared meanings and communication’ (Neumann 1997, cited in Willis, 2007, p.192). This stance validates interpretivism as an ‘inside-out approach to social science, that

is, reality is dynamic and responsive to the fluctuations in human interaction, perception and creation of meaning' (Neumann 1997, cited in Willis, 2007, 192-3). Furthermore, Atkinson *et al.* (2001) saw qualitative research as an endeavour helping people to interpret and make sense of their environment; typical of the constructivist approach. In the following section, I justify my use of the qualitative approach.

### **3.2.1. Justification for Qualitative Approach**

In this section, I explain why I chose to use the qualitative approach. Firstly, a qualitative approach allows for flexibility, given it does not operate within strict technical guidelines; 'Qualitative methods are not based on pre-specified methods and detailed hypothesis that will rigidly guide the researcher throughout the study' (Willis, 2007, p.54). Consequently, I was able to change direction as I became further acquainted with the research context. This change, according to Willis (2007), could occur at any time in the research process: when choosing the data collection methods; changing the interview wordings or questions to suit different kinds of respondents; switching interview environments to suit respondents.

This flexibility allowed for design decisions to be made throughout the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). I had to make changes which arose with: unexpected challenges at research sites; unanticipated reactions to interview questions; difficulty in recruiting participants, especially former IDPs/refugees as security operatives were allowed to arrest and detain these categories of people if they were seen speaking to researchers and/or journalists.

As a result of this flexibility, I was able to change the wordings of my interview questions to suit the respondents' different styles and environment, whilst still adhering to the ideas that the questions were meant to elicit. To make changes, I considered the type of organisations/respondents and the sensitivity of the questions being asked. The original plan was to ask all respondents the same set of questions regardless of what category they fell

under. Whilst conducting interviews, however, I discovered that asking all the questions (which some interviewees considered irrelevant to them) actually made participants give less information on those issues that were actually relevant to them, possibly because they seemed tired and just wanted to finish the interview. As a result, I separated the interview questions into three different schedules, based on the following considerations: the category of people I was speaking to; the organisation they represented; their positions in such organisations (if they belonged to any) and within the society. Also, when the interviews took place, I explained and stressed the essence of each question to my interviewees.

Another instance of changing my research design occurred when I had problems accessing IDPs. The alternative strategy adopted to get the information needed was to instead interview people that were ex-residents of camps but had now integrated into main stream of the society, occupying positions like drivers, teachers, doctors, and so on. This change of strategy was necessitated mainly by the bureaucratic labour involved in gaining access to IDP camps. This involved a long wait for approval from the *Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs*: I was concerned this might never come, given this is a highly politicised issue and authorities are quite sceptical about the way information gained from these categories of people is presented to the world. Of particular note is the idea that whenever there is a major change in qualitative design, the ethical aspect should be revisited, especially if it relates to the research participants. In this instance, the changes made did not have any ethical implications for the study. It certainly seems such flexibility is useful in allowing researchers to gain what Deetz (2001) called ‘insightful knowledge’.

Furthermore, qualitative research allows for reflection from the beginning to the end of a study. As a result, it allows the researcher to become accustomed to the phenomenon under study, including to ‘comprehend’, ‘interpret’ and ‘draw’ conclusions about a social phenomenon (Watt, 2007). Schon (1987, p.301) viewed reflection as ‘a recursive process in which effort to solve a problem that has not yielded to routine solutions is a trial that presents

a reflective opportunity'. It, therefore, allows for innovative thinking rather than the more rigid application of technical requirements in quantitative approach. I kept a separate journal in this case (i.e. diary entries on various contextual issues surrounding my main fieldwork different from the data collected through my interviews), a practice recommended by Lee (1997). Writing a separate journal allows the researcher to gather their thoughts and focus on issues which might initially have been considered irrelevant; thus, adding to the volume and value of data to be used (Lee 1997). Returning from fieldwork, listening to the interviews and reading through the notes in the journal allowed me to reflect on the conflict situation and highlighted some of the misinformation and misperceptions I had as an outsider. For example, my initial preconception that there was a strict dividing line amongst the different identity groups was challenged during the visit to Sudan. From the new things learnt, I was able to pursue fresh lines of enquiry as part of this research.

Qualitative research also rejects the notion that a researcher can be completely neutral and objective (Willis, 2007). It is instead maintained that a researcher has a preconceived idea of what the results and conclusions of a proposed study might be, given the researcher had a prior interest in the issue before deciding to study it; to an extent, therefore, the study is subjective (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). Qualitative methods using the interpretivist approach allow for biases and values to be recognised and acknowledged (Willis, 2007). In this work, I have strived for some degree of objectivity by recognising my biases and acknowledging them: this does not mean I have a preconceived idea of what my results or conclusions would be, but because such confounding variables cannot be totally eliminated from any study.

Some bias was evident during the course of conducting interviews. I found that I tended to be more empathetic towards the narratives of the interviewees, especially those who were victims. I think this was partially attributable to my personal experience: as someone from a conflict region, I witnessed the atrocities they described, which were often

committed with impunity. This experience allowed me to empathise with their position. This bias was absent when I interviewed other parties to the conflict, such as government officials, Non-Governmental Organizations, UN staff, academics and victims; hence, giving me a more informed attitude in my approach.

I believe the cross-sectional approach of the interview process helped to reduce bias that would have otherwise been more prevalent had the interview sample been limited to just the victims. In order to establish a representative view, I interviewed a total of twenty-two respondents, containing different categories of people linked to the conflict process. I will provide a brief overview of all my respondents in the section on ‘defining and accessing respondents’. Interviewing people across the spectrum, allowed for a broader representation of behaviours, attitudes and beliefs with regards to the conflict.

Taking this argument further, my ability to describe respondents’ behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs from the data gathered yields what Runciman (1983) called ‘tertiary understanding’. Data gathered during fieldwork enabled the study to go further than hearsays, preconceived ideas or knowledge and journalistic reports (Walker, 1985). The tertiary understanding of issues was facilitated by my adoption of semi-structured interviews, allowing respondents to express, elaborate and describe their concerns and opinions in more detail than would have been possible using quantitative method like questionnaires. Moreover, the qualitative method used also provided an avenue for the less privileged and the vulnerable (in this case, refugees and IDPs respondents) to voice their opinions in a situation where they could feel safe and comfortable. The qualitative research method also allowed me to describe or explain the questions if they appeared incomprehensible to the interviewees or if the interviewees wanted me to explain the reason for the question.

Additionally, qualitative research allowed me to understand that because of the multiple sources I used, both the data collection techniques and the views of participants will

influence the meaning and understanding developed by my study. The different views and accounts my participants gave on the issue under consideration, including their hopes and expectations, my write-up also allowed me to present diverse perspectives on the issue. My choice of qualitative approach was strongly based on the preceding factors discussed and the impracticalities of obtaining quantitative data also solidified the adoption of the qualitative approach— these factors are now highlighted. Given the validity (1month) of my entry visa for Sudan, it would have been impossible to carry out a pilot study required in the case of quantitative approach before embarking on the main study within that time frame. This would be especially problematic, if not impossible, with the very difficult terrain to be manoeuvred in order to gain access to the respondents which were not readily available. In addition, because the categories of people required for the study was well defined— given the time constraint— it would be almost impossible to gather enough respondents for the study in order to get a representative sample which quantitative approach requires for a universal generalisation of results.

In light of these constraints, I would either have left with no data or non-representative data required by quantitative approach, hence, my adoption of the qualitative approach which allows for the use of few respondents and whose aim is not universal generalisation of findings. Moreover, given the kind of environment and respondents under consideration, the choice of a quantitative approach would have limited my ability to be flexible in the field— especially in areas discussed earlier. With quantitative approach, I would have had to stick to rigid technicalities in dealing with all my respondents without due consideration for individual circumstances— the qualitative approach gives me this flexibility. In all, given the limited time in Sudan, adoption of the quantitative approach would have been hampered by limited access to sufficient respondents required for an acceptable level of quantitative research needed to generate universal generalisations, hence, reducing the practicality of that approach. It would not have adequately addressed the

nuances of the theoretical concepts (identity) under consideration by narrowing it down to numbers, thereby taking away the construction of meaning from the individuals. In addition, the target population are hard to reach in the case of Sudan— this makes the option of conducting a survey limited— hence, the choice of small sample used in this study. Closely related to the practicalities of conducting quantitative research in my case study are issues surrounding undertaking fieldwork in conflict areas. Some of the issues identified by Cohen and Arieli (2011, p.425-426) are:

*‘Lack of contact information (e.g. whom to interview), a lack of system information (e.g. organizational ignorance), cultural differences (e.g. language barriers), legal, political, and ideological constraints (contact with foreigners), technical accessibility (e.g. mobility limitations) and, most important, an atmosphere of fear and distrust’.*

These findings are also synonymous to the findings of Jacobsen and Landau (2003) where they identified methodological problems which include: denial of access, mistrust, unfamiliarity with contexts, safety and confidentiality issues. In light of my case study, I highlight some of these issues encountered in the field. The official bureaucracy was witnessed before embarking on the journey to Sudan. It was impossible to apply for an entry visa at the Sudanese embassy in London— as I am based in the United Kingdom—which is normal practice for most countries. The application was made through an NGO in Sudan that served as my sponsor. After a successful application in Sudan, I was sent the visa code that was taken to the embassy in London to obtain the entry permit which was only valid for one month from the day of entry into Sudan. The reason for this bureaucracy is the idea that the Sudanese government had to run background checks to ensure I was not working for a foreign intelligence agency who wanted to come to Sudan under the guise of being a researcher. As highlighted earlier, my initial plan was to gain access to the IDP and refugee

camps for interviews but this was hampered by the very limited time on my entry permit and the bureaucracy involved in obtaining a special permit for access. On arrival in Sudan, I had to register with the Ministry of Aliens within seventy-two hours of arrival—this was an official confirmation that I was now allowed to move freely and legally in the country.

With this assumption, I believed my access to the camps should have been unhampered and smooth with approval from the relevant authorities (Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs). However, I was told by the NGO that helped secure my entry visa and the Ministry that the approval could take a minimum of three months; at that point my entry visa would have expired with no guarantee of the access permit being approved. On that note, I opted for the alternative strategy as explained earlier. Implicit in the delayed processing time by the Ministry of Humanitarian affairs is the fact that they know researchers have only one month on their entry visa and it takes on average three months to get a feedback; at which point the researcher either becomes an illegal visitor or would have left the country, hence, systematically denying researchers access to this category of people. The denial could be attributed to the government's scepticism and mistrust for journalists and researchers with regards to what end information obtained from IDP's and refugees might be used.

Another issue identified by Cohen and Arieli (2011) are cultural differences. In this instance, the main cultural barrier was the language barrier which was demonstrated by my inability to speak Arabic but this was overcome by the process discussed later under the section on identifying and accessing government respondents. Overall, all of these issues were the problems encountered during my fieldwork to Sudan. Once again, these would have impacted on the practicality of adopting the quantitative approach since access to a representative sample was implicitly denied through delayed processing times and official/political bureaucracy, hence the decision to adopt the qualitative approach. The multiple data sources of interviews, documents and archival resources and ethnographic



research journal studied gave me the data needed in this research. In order to explain all the vital sources and information gained from those sources, it is now appropriate for me to acknowledge my samples and how they were defined and accessed.

### **3.3. Identifying and Accessing My Respondents**

An important rule exists when it comes to the validity of an overall research design: it stresses the sample should be in almost perfect coherence with other parts of the study (Willis, 2007). It has been said that ‘there must be an internal consistency and a coherent logic across the study’s components, including its sampling. The sampling plan and parameters should be in line with the overall research purpose and questions’ (Punch, 1998, p.188). The kind of sampling strategy utilised in this study was purposive: I chose the sample population with a specific purpose in mind. To clarify, I had some predefined groups (victims, NGO workers, UN staff, government officials and rebel movements) in mind for my data collection, because they were all directly or indirectly connected to the conflict environment.

Purposive sampling is of particular relevance on occasions, where respondents need to participate in the research promptly and where proportionality is not a major concern for the study (Punch 1998). In this case, however, I had to carefully consider proportionality in order not to over-represent the opinions of one particular group to the disadvantage of others. Proportionality was met by having a relatively similar size of respondents from across the predefined groups. Using a purposive sample, I obtained the opinions of my target population (supposed victims and victors of the conflict and other supposedly neutral parties) on the area (Darfur) and issues under consideration.

It could be said that a primary disadvantage of purposive sampling is a researcher could overweigh subgroups in a target population because they are easily accessible. My choice of a sample with purpose was necessary because I was unable to interview the whole

population. In this case, I decided on the most important people to interview: victims, various movements, government officials and officials of the international organisations. For this study, I adopted the interview technique in line with acceptable standards of qualitative research. Interviewing a total of twenty-three respondents was sufficient using the paradigm of theoretical saturation; this stipulates a sample becomes sufficient when data received from new samples fails to generate new line(s) of enquiry; thus, adding little or no value to the outcome of the study. The purpose of this paradigm is to determine sample sufficiency and the validity of the analysis done (Maxwell, 1994).

The category of people in the first phase of my fieldwork were: field staff of the *United Nations* branch based in New York, who were working on the Darfur crisis; staff from the *United States Agency for International Development* based in Washington D.C; a researcher at the *United States Institute of Peace* in Washington D.C; an academic from the *New York University (NYU)* based in New York. This phase was carried out between February and April in 2011. The questions I asked centred on what was being done to ameliorate the crisis in Darfur and interviewees' thoughts were on the cause(s) of conflict in Darfur — the topic guide is attached in Appendix 1.

During this period, I conducted research visits to the *United Nations* Headquarters in New York, where I interviewed **Ben**, **Coret** and **Maput**<sup>14</sup>. I also interviewed **Beth** of the *United States Institute of Peace (USIP/USAID)* in Washington D.C. Another interviewee in America was **Julia** at *New York University*, New York; whilst, I also visited the *UN* depository library in New York. The challenges faced accessing this group of people are discussed in the following section. Although I made some contacts with interviewees before leaving for the field, when I arrived some of them were either out of the country or had

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<sup>14</sup> These are pseudonyms. All respondents in this study have been anonymised to protect their identity in line with the anonymity and confidentiality agreement I had with them. Moreover, given the status, official position, organisation of respondents, political affiliation and vulnerability of some respondents, I thought it would be best to anonymise all my respondents in order to limit any harm to them and to keep their responses confidential.

changed their contact details. As a result, I had to look for alternative interviewees. Additionally, with the limited time I had to carry out my work, some of my prospective respondents could not fix a meeting time within the period I was available; this also meant I had to seek alternative participants.

On a positive note, the few contacts I eventually got also gave me access to alternative research participants, most of whom were easily accessible through emails and sometimes phone calls. What I learned from this experience is that it is helpful to book specific dates and times with interviewees before leaving for the field. In my case, I had to apply for an entry permit and it was beyond my control to determine when and whether it would be granted. As a result, I could not book specific dates and times with all my initial contacts, which was why I lost touch with some on my arrival. Developments in communications technology allowed me to build up new contacts, even at short notice when I finally got to New York. Another challenge while in America was navigating my way around the cities for scheduled interviews. This was mitigated by checking directions before leaving home and allowing enough journey time to avoid lateness. I departed from New York in April 2011 and embarked on the second phase of my fieldwork several months later in August 2011.

The second phase of my field work took me to Khartoum, where I interviewed government officials, former IDPs/refugees, and members of major political parties and movements in Darfur/Sudan — an overview of the sample interviewed is given below. These interviews allowed me to gain first-hand insight into the conflict situation in Darfur, especially from the perspectives of former IDPs/refugees, government officials and other parties. The questions asked in Khartoum centred on how identity, marginalisation and development issues can be implicated in the conflict process — the questions are attached as Appendices 2 and 3.

At the Sudanese government level, I interviewed **Ayele**, **Sango** and **Jato**: these respondents had mixed affiliations but were essentially Darfurians. The questions asked to this set of respondents are attached as Appendix 3. The next category of people I interviewed were mainly those who are considered to be Arabs from Darfur with mixed affiliations but preferred to be seen as neutrals in this conflict. In this category were the research participants: **Jorin**, **Juju**, **Gbenga**, **Alhaji**, **Timbi**, **Kura**, and **Bukky** — see Appendix 2 for questions relating to this set of respondents). The last category of people I interviewed were also of mixed affiliations: Darfurians considered to be Black Africans belonging to one movement or the other, some of which were Christians. The people in this category have been displaced or refuged at one point since the onset of the conflict. Research participants were **Arin**, **Mada**, **Irawo**, **Sidika**, **Omogo**, **Ekole**, **Samba**, and **Owuro**. The questions asked were similar to those of the third group — questions asked are attached in Appendix 2. Similar to the first phase of my fieldwork, the second phase did not go without challenges as discussed below. Furthermore, all names used are pseudonyms in order to protect the identity of the respondents.

Firstly, my initial plan of going into the camps did not come to fruition because of the strict bureaucratic and time constraints involved in getting the appropriate government authorisation for access to the camps. The original plan was to go into the *IDP* and refugee camps to conduct interviews. For this to happen, I contacted two local NGOs in Sudan to assist with gaining access to potential respondents. The two NGOs agreed to my request but, like any of their staff, I had to go through the same vetting process to get a work permit. The application for this permit was made on my behalf when I arrived in Khartoum, given I could not apply until I was in the country. One of the eligibility requirements was that I had to be registered with the *Ministry of Aliens* in Khartoum within seventy-two hours of arrival in Sudan. I had hoped the application process would take a few days or a week at the most; however, I was later advised that it could take up to three months before the outcome of the

application is known. The long wait was attributed to the bureaucratic processes involved in the application-vetting process, which arises out of official distrust for researchers and journalists.

Another constraint was the limited amount of time I had on my entry visa. My entry visa was valid for one month, leaving not much scope for waiting. In light of these developments, the initial plan to gain access to camps could not be achieved. As a result, I adopted the alternative strategy of interviewing former IDPs and refugees who have now been integrated into the mainstream of Sudanese society. This new approach was aided by the two local NGOs, as they had contacts within the Darfurian community, some of whom they worked with in the camps as IDPs and refugees. This alternative strategy had already been detailed in my application for ethical approval, so there was no need for another round of ethical approval.

Another major problem encountered was the language barrier, given that the official language of Sudan is Arabic. As a result, I could not get around easily even by public transport; instead, I had to use taxis, which were expensive. The owner of the guest house I was lodged in helped explain my destinations to the taxi drivers. As a result, they took me directly and promptly to my destination, saving me the hassle of asking for directions and struggling with the language barrier. Given the cost and the slow pace of gaining access to respondents, I turned my language barrier into a positive force by choosing not to speak a word of Arabic whenever I visited organisations, especially government establishments. My adoption of this approach was based on the assumption that if I greeted and exchanged pleasantries in Arabic on arrival, I would give the impression that I was an Arabic speaker choosing not to speak the language; thereby, reducing the likelihood of being helped. This could be construed in some quarters as an insult to their person and even the State. Choosing not to speak Arabic meant the gatekeepers, not knowing who I was, had little or no alternative than to get someone who could communicate in English; these tended to be the

people I needed to access and interview, including **Ayele, Sango, Juju, Gbenga** and **Jato**. This approach was exceptionally useful in accessing government officials that had otherwise proved difficult to contact.

I have now provided an overview of my sample, the categories of people included in it and challenges encountered. In order to gather the information needed, I conducted semi-structured interviews—I will now discuss these.

### **3.4. Data Collection**

#### **3.4.1. Interviews**

This method allowed my respondents express their feelings and opinions freely and honestly (Sprague & Zimmerman, 2004). Almost all the interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewees and a full list of the venues and the length of interviews are attached in Appendix 4. Interviews may be highly structured, semi-structured or open in nature. Structured interviews ask participants to choose answers from a variety of closed options presented. This idea is based on the notion that enough effort has already been put in place writing the interview questions to elicit the reality of the situation under study. Compared to survey research, interviewing respondents allows for subjective discourses to be seen as highly contextualised and for the exploration of suppressed constraints. In essence, interviews allow for descriptive analysis of how people socially construct their identities, which is usually not possible with the use of quantitative methods. The complexity and multiplicity of issues involved in the social construction of identity issues like ethnicity, identity, racism and topics of an implicit nature, carrying underlying emotional elements may often be disregarded by quantitative methods such as surveys and experimental designs (Pyke, 2004).

Interviews offer researchers an excellent platform for understanding others by accessing and analysing people's views, meanings, and definitions of situations and

constructions of reality (Daymon & Holloway, 2011). In dealing with human behaviours, the use of observation has its limitations as it cannot reveal what is in the mind. This limitation is especially true when investigating events considered traumatic, which usually requires the subjects under study recalling behaviours/events in certain times and spaces that might already have been repressed to the individuals' sub-conscious minds. In-depth data could instead be gathered about subjects using interviews to elicit phenomenon which is unobservable (Patton, 2002). With the interviews conducted, I was able to empathise with people and gained an insight into their subdued thoughts and feelings, which are part of the identities under consideration.

Yin (1994) asserted interviews are about human affairs which need to be described and understood through the eyes of the subject, hence providing useful insights into a situation. Interviews can also be used to gain access to the history of a particular topic and help to identify other sources of relevant evidence (Yin, 1994). The latter feature was particularly evident in the phases of my fieldwork, where my initial contacts gave me other vital contacts and resources to consult or interview (i.e. snowballing). During the second phase of my fieldwork in Sudan, given the problem I encountered in accessing former IDPs, refugees, and government officials, my first few alternative respondents were used to gain access to others in a similar situation. This was facilitated by the fact that this category of people often knew each other; as a result, once they made a phone call to the other person, they were usually very willing to participate.

Yin (2003) further asserted that interviews are oral reports subject to memory lag, prejudice, and inaccurate articulation. Denzin & Lincoln (1994) also emphasised the interviewer's personal characteristics of race, class, ethnicity, gender could influence the interview process. With this in mind, I have corroborated my interview data with information from other secondary sources. It is believed a successful interview should be anticipatory, analytic, non-directive, probing and aware of differences in the statuses of interviewees

(Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Using a fit for purpose interview technique contributes to the richness of data gained and hence also to the validity, reliability and objectivity of the entire research itself — this takes me to my next discussion.

#### **3.4.1.1. Validity, Reliability, Objectivity**

In this section, I discuss why validity, reliability and objectivity are important factors to be considered in the design, analysis and overall evaluation of a study (Patton 2002). Validity is ‘not a single, fixed or universal concept, but rather a contingent construct, inescapably grounded in the processes and intentions of particular research methodologies and projects’ (Winter, 2000, cited in Golafshani, 2003, p.601). There seems to be a growing consensus among some qualitative researchers, however, that the term validity should not be applicable to qualitative research, although there should be some eligibility checks. A researcher’s perception of validity has an effect on it within a particular study and the theoretical paradigm assumed by the researcher (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The validity of data from my interviews adhered to the factors highlighted by Hutchinson and Wilson (1992) as carefully controlled by the researcher: interview questions, place and timing of interviews, cultural differences — the next section addresses these issues.

##### **3.4.1.1.1. Interview Questions**

Relating to validity, my interview questions were neither judgemental nor value-laden in nature to avoid portraying the interviewee as a victim or vulnerable. For instance, I tried not to ask biased, leading questions which might have elicited closed and inadequate answers or disingenuous responses from my participants. Furthermore, I did not ask my respondents to describe any violence they had witnessed or suffered from. I also refrained from sharing my own personal opinions about issues under consideration; this was helped by my knowledge of the cultures of the different categories of people I was interviewing.



#### **3.4.1.1.2. Culture**

In order to conduct a successful research in an unfamiliar cultural setting, Kapborg and Berterö (2002) advised that researchers should acquaint themselves with important aspects of the local culture and acknowledge them during the whole course of the research. They also claimed that understanding the culture of respondents makes relations with the subjects easier. Quite useful was my knowledge of the local culture in the research site, which mainly adopted an Arab-Islamic way of life. As a person with a partly Muslim background and from a country with over fifty percent Muslim population, I was already somewhat accustomed to that way of life. Consequently, I was aware of the religious and cultural elements which needed to be adhered to in the field. This, to a large extent, helped in my timing of interviews because I was aware of prayer times and how fervent my respondents could be with their prayers. The only aspect of the culture which initially did not really work in my favour was the language barrier explained earlier.

#### **3.4.1.1.3. Place and Timing**

Another vital consideration in conducting interviews is the place and timing of it. Finding a suitable location and appropriate time for an interview determines whether it will go smoothly. Furthermore, it is claimed that a researcher's ability to understand the significance of the interview site plays a crucial role in the overall research process (Punch, 2005). As a result, I conducted the interviews in my respondents' places of residence or offices and at convenient times chosen by the interviewees. This allowed me to interview my respondents in an environment where they felt safe, relaxed and able to express themselves freely without fear of being watched or intimidated by passersby.

Given the factors above and the overall need for a valid research, I complemented the data gathered from my interviews with the maintenance of a personal diary where I wrote my thoughts and reflections after each day in the field. This helped me gather information

which I reflected on during the study period and, to some extent, opened insights into new developments, which were then corroborated with the interviews and/or documentary evidence. The combination of my interviews and personal diary entries accounted for a ‘multiplicity of primary sources of information’ used in the analysis stage of the study. This, to a large extent, corresponded with Sapsford and Jupp’s (2006) recommendation that the overall validity of a study is strengthened by a combination of ‘reflexivity and triangulation’ techniques. Reflexivity, as pointed out earlier, refers to the continual monitoring of and reflection on the research process. Sapsford and Jupp (2006, p.89) also claimed reflecting enables the researcher to evaluate their role in the production of data and how the social context affects the data collected — this process was facilitated by my diary entries.

Triangulation, on the other hand, directly verifies the validity of a study by cross-checking them with other data sources. Patton (1987) talked about four types of triangulation: data triangulation (using different sources of data); investigator triangulation (using different evaluators); theory triangulation (theory perspective on the same data set); methodological triangulation (using different methods). For this study, I adopted two triangulating techniques: data triangulation, where my research work was comprised of data sets from the two different sources i.e. interviews/diary entries from the field and documentary sources; method triangulation, which used two different qualitative methods of data collection: interviews and archival sources. The key advantage of using triangulation is ‘converging lines of enquiry which tends to give any finding or conclusion in a study a more convincing viewpoint since its results will be based on diverse sources of information following a process of corroborating facts’ (Yin, 1994, p.94).

On the other hand, reliability, according to Stenbacka (2001) is used to assess quality. In quantitative research, reliability aims to aid explanation; while it seeks to generate understanding in qualitative research. These differences led Stenbacka (2001) to conclude that the concept of reliability has no place in qualitative research. In place of the concept of

reliability, a number of scholars (Clont, 1992; Hoepfl, 1997; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Seale, 1999) agreed on the term 'dependability' should be used. They also advocated 'inquiry audit' as a means to test for dependability: this is synonymous with the concept of reliability in quantitative research.

To ensure reliability in this study, I followed Lincoln and Guba's (1985, cited in Golafshani, 2003 P.601-2) argument, stating that 'since there can be no validity without reliability, a demonstration of the former [validity] is sufficient to establish the latter [reliability]'. Furthermore, Patton (2002) suggested the validity of a study determines its reliability. Following this line of argument, my study's reliability is based on the strengths of the tests conducted for validity, which were explained earlier. To conclude on the sources of data collection, I will now document the sources which served as part of the data analysed and were used in the write up.

### **3.4.2. Document Collection**

Historical and contemporary documents are very influential sources of data for social science studies. These may be collected alongside other types of data, such as interviews and observation, in a particular study, serving as an important element in triangulation: a variety of methods and data types being used in a single study (Patton, 2002). These classifications are not clear-cut, for certain documents may fall outside artificial divides; however, for the sake of clarity, these were used in this study, with some caution about the rigidity of categories retrieved. Sociologists point out documentary evidence can consist of words alongside multimedia evidence (Punch, 2005). In using documentary evidence, Jupp (1996) stresses four important elements to be considered: authenticity (whether it is original and genuine); credibility (whether it is accurate); representativeness (whether it represents the issue under study); meaning (what it is intended to say). Given all these four qualities are difficult to ascertain during the course of any research, Macdonald & Tipton (1996)

recommended Denzin's (1970) triangulation framework, which ensures the data is checked from more than one source to ascertain its validity.

Documentary and archival sources may be placed in three main categories: 'primary', 'secondary' and 'tertiary'. Primary sources 'consist only of evidence that was actually part of or produced by the event in question' (Lichtman and French, 1978, p.18), 'which were intended for restricted circulation only' (Burnham *et al.*, 2004, p.165). Primary sources form the original material for providing the researchers with raw evidence. Secondary sources consist of other evidence relating to, and produced soon after the event, 'circulated at the time or soon after and which was available to the public at the time of the event in question' (Burnham *et al.*, 2004, p.165). Secondary sources copy, interpret and make judgements about the materials found in primary sources. Finally, tertiary sources 'consist of material written afterward to reconstruct the event' (Lichtman and French, 1978, p.18).

Scott (1990) further classified documents based on: 'authorship divided into 'personal, official-private and official-state'; 'access' categorised by 'closed, restricted, open archival and open published'. The documents I used could fall under the classifications of Lichtman *et al* (1978) or Scott (1990). Documents in social research could range from diaries, letters, personal notes, biographies, autobiographies, essays, and institutional memoranda and reports, to government pronouncements and proceedings (Jupp, 1996).

In order to have a diverse collection of data, I retrieved as much documentary evidence, given the space of time available. The documents gathered included historical records on different conflicts, government documents on developmental plans, institutional figures on the social and physical infrastructures, and archives on the history of Sudan. Most of the documents accessed were open- restricted, meaning only particular officials working in the Ministries or organisations had access to them. This restricted access was especially

true for the Ministries I visited in Sudan. In addition, I had access to open-published documentations at the *United Nations* Depository library in New York. The classification of these documents and the organisations or individuals which provided them is attached in Appendix 8.

Analysing documents can provide paths for new enquiries which ordinarily would only be possible through observation and interviewing (Patton, 2002). Documents served a dual purpose at my interview stage. Firstly, they gave me an extra insight into the kind of questions to ask, which otherwise might have been missed. It also allowed me to probe further for clarification on issues I came across during my documentary search. In other words, I was able to use the knowledge gained during the document search to probe for possible new lines of enquiry and issues which were not covered in my original interview questions. Overall, the document search aided the interview process and eventual write-up of this thesis.

### **3.5. Ethical issues**

In any social research, there is a need to look at the relationship of researchers to research subjects and their individual interests. Given this study involved dealing with human contacts, the ethical implications of the research were: my contact with respondents; how the information gathered will be used; and the implications of using information for research participants. All these issues were addressed in my application for ethical approval from the Departmental Ethics Committee before embarking on the field work. In this section, I consider a summary of the main ethical issues in this research project. Punch (1994) gave a list of recommendations: research should not cause harm to the participant; there should be informed and voluntary consent; no deception; privacy and confidentiality should be a priority at all times. I followed each of these guidelines to help eliminate any ethical concerns in this study.

The first point made by Punch (1994) was no harm should come to the participants. This was addressed in my study by not asking sensitive, embarrassing and judgemental questions, which may have made my respondents feel traumatised, uncomfortable and also less inclined to respond to questions. This was achieved by refraining from asking my respondents to relive violent situations in their lives, which could make them delve into issues that might have already been repressed into their subconscious. Harm could also become an issue when a participant becomes psychologically unbalanced or depressed as a direct result of participation in the interview process. In order to mitigate/eliminate these concerns, I informed my respondents before the start of interviews that they could opt out at any time, without giving me any reason for termination. This was also clearly highlighted in the University Participation and Consent Forms my respondents filled out (copies are attached in Appendices 5 and 6 respectively).

Punch's (1994) second recommendation on informed and voluntary consent was addressed by giving a copy of the consent and participant information sheets to all participants in this study. These documents detailed: the purpose of the study, what the participants were to expect and how the information gathered will be used and disseminated. These forms also gave participants the right to terminate their participation at any time without consequences. All forms were duly completed and signed by participants. The consent and participant information sheets were approved by the Departmental Ethics Committee, following the application process for ethical approval for this study — the electronic copy of ethical approval is attached in Appendix 7. The practice of getting voluntary and informed consent can limit the number of responses a researcher receives. This can be avoided, however, by the use of multiple contacts in order to get a high response rate without compromising the quality of information gathered, a practice recommended by Dillman (2000).

The third ethical issue I considered was eradicating deception. In this study, I did not use any unobtrusive method to gain information; thereby, preventing any act of deception on my part as the researcher. I engaged in direct face-to-face conversations with my respondents and conducted the interviews in an environment where they felt most comfortable (their homes, restaurants or offices). Deception could also be construed as secrecy about the purpose of the research. This was dealt with by informed consent, which involves distributing the consent and participant information sheets highlighting the purpose of the research. Furthermore, on the issue of deception, I informed my participants they could request a copy of the interview transcript if desired. As a result, I gave my contact details to respondents who requested them in order to mitigate any doubts they may have about how I would use the information gathered. As it transpired, I did not receive any correspondence from my respondents requesting a copy of their transcripts.

Finally, the issue of privacy and confidentiality protects respondents' identities. Confidentiality is a promise from the researcher to the subject that they will not be identified or presented in a way which is identifiable. Furthermore, anonymity is a guarantee that even the researcher will not be able to trace any response to a particular respondent (Sapsford & Abbott, 1996). This was accomplished by assigning pseudonyms to all respondents, thus keeping their identity anonymous and keeping all information gathered from them under a cloud of confidentiality in line with the *British Sociological Association's* (2002) standards on confidentiality. In reality, there is no confidential research, as all data and research conducted needs to be reported. What is achievable instead is the best practice to limit harm to research participants (Clark, 2006) (see *NCRM* working paper of 2006, for full details of confidentiality and anonymity).

In addition, I transcribed my interviews and information obtained was kept secure from people who should not have access to it. Overall, I was able to address the ethical issues, which could have made the study unfit for purpose since I was dealing with human

subjects. Closely linked to confidentiality is the issue of how data gathered will be stored in order to limit any unwarranted access which could potentially put research participants at risk. This is discussed alongside issues of organisation and analysis in the next section.

### **3.6. Data Storage, Organisation and Analysis**

The raw data obtained was from transcripts of the interviews conducted and documentary evidences gathered. As detailed in my ethical approval form, all information, including contact information, diary entries, notes and recordings, were stored away in a separate and secured cabinet. All my interviews were recorded on a voice-recorder; although I gave respondents the option to opt out of this. After ensuring the confidentiality and security of data obtained, I moved to the next stage of analysing the findings.

Data analysis consists of several activities, such as categorising, tabulating, and recombining facts to answer research objectives. In qualitative analysis, there are various techniques available due to the multitude of questions being addressed and the different aspects of social reality which can be explored (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Miles & Huberman (1994, p.9) referred to the different techniques as ‘irreconcilable couples,’ as they are ‘often interconnected, overlapping and sometimes mutually exclusive’. Despite this, there are several features appearing in all the different techniques. Consequently, Miles & Huberman (1994, p.4) came up with a framework which is common to most techniques called ‘transcendental realism’. This framework argues that ‘social phenomena exist not only in the mind but also in the objective world and that some lawful and reasonably stable relationships are to be found among them’. I pursued Miles & Huberman’s (1994) framework of data analysis which contains the core elements of the grounded theory approach discussed earlier. This framework includes: (1) data reduction, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing/verifying. These three stages are explained and pursued with the intention of analysing the data. In both quantitative and qualitative analyses, the purpose of



data reduction is to condense the data in such a way that does not amount to information loss. Data reduction continues throughout the process as something which is part of the analysis. For qualitative research, reality is a socially constructed phenomenon; one important component of not losing information is to avoid stripping the data from its context (Punch, 2005).

Immediately after my return from fieldwork, I transcribed all the interviews and then transferred the transcripts into Nvivo9 qualitative software application. Doing this created a platform where I could edit, segment and summarise the data gathered. My coding pattern involved the use of direct quotes from the interviews, and connecting patterns and themes.

Furthermore, as adhering to Miles & Huberman's (1994) recommendation, I started building themes around the information available. Coding is an essential part of analysis at different stages. This enabled me to label portions of data, thereby attaching meaning to them which also served a dual function of storage and retrieval. The initial stage of coding 'permits more advanced coding, which enables the summarising of data by pulling together themes, and by identifying patterns'; to clarify, it prepares the ground for initial and subsequent analysis) (Punch, 2005, p.199). At the initial stage, I started the process of open coding by reading all the transcribed interviews in order to get an initial idea of: predominant themes, conceptual categories implicit or explicit in the data, and theoretical possibilities the data carry. This basic coding thereafter allowed me to use the data in creating more categories and concepts, which was helpful in provoking some questions and temporary answers.

After a process of correlation, the themes generated at this stage were categorised into major themes and subthemes. The major themes were an umbrella under which the subthemes were categorised and discussed and also served as the starting point for my data chapters. The main aim of this stage was to open up an inquiry; therefore, all my interpretations at this stage were tentative. Moreover, I memoed every idea that came up

whilst carrying out the initial coding, a practice suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) to elicit new ‘patterns and threads’ within the data used.

Glaser (1978, p.4) stated that ‘axial coding is about interrelating the substantive categories which open coding have developed’. The latter aspect of my data reduction took me to axial coding process of interconnecting the major categories which emerged from the initial coding aided by the ideas generated in my memos. This resulted in cumulative knowledge about the relationships between my main themes and subthemes — these are fully discussed in subsequent chapters.

The Nvivo9 software in a way afforded me the opportunity to store large chunks of data that was easily accessible and could be analysed systematically without the loss of information that could have resulted with the use of manual coding. The *Nvivo9* platform also allowed me to store the project and materials as a single portable and accessible file. It also gave me the opportunity to see all the information available on a particular theme or category and the respondents’ summaries. Using this software, I am able to display my findings visually with the option of presenting them in graphs and charts if necessary. To back up my coding, I was able to export the results and the transcripts into word documents using Nvivo’s export feature.

The use of the Nvivo9 platform did not come without its own flaws. The software crashed at one point and took about two weeks for a support staff to get in touch about a resolution. Although the problem was eventually fixed, the length of time it took actually put a new perspective on the use of software applications for data analysis. Another possible limitation encountered could have been the cost of getting the software; however, this was mitigated by the University’s subscription for this software allowing me to use it for free. Also provided were quality online tutorials and classroom based workshops, which aided my learning and use of the software.

### **3.7. Limitations of Study**

The method adopted for this study has an effect on the entire study and its limitations. A limitation of this study is its inability to open up more enquiries and suggestions. This would have been possible had more time and financial resources been available to pursue this study comprehensively across different groups over an extended period of time. Moreover, the findings of this study cannot be generalised and therefore used in explaining other Darfur-like experiences in Sudan, especially similar happenings in peripheries like eastern Sudan, the Beja region and the Nuba Mountains. The inability to generalise is attributable to the limited scope of this study. The scope was subject to the amount of human and financial resources that would be required to engage a large section of the Sudanese population.

Finally, a transfer of knowledge about the Darfur conflict situation will not necessarily be applicable to other peripheral areas. As a result, I recommend separate research works, especially comparative studies of different regions to be carried out in order to highlight the dynamics of these different groups and their relationship with the State. By doing so, a more holistic picture could be gathered and further help to resolve the general Sudanese problem.

### **3.8. Conclusion**

This chapter described the methods used to generate answers to the research objectives of this study. In addition, I detailed my choice and justification for the use of qualitative approach, which informed the data gathering methods used in this study. Also included in the chapter were a general overview of my research participants and the limitations of this study.

Moreover, I clarified the ethical implications of the study relating to the research participants and explained how these were mitigated. Furthermore, I documented how the data gathered was coded and analysed and the use of *NVivo9* to aid these exercises. This was

done in line with the same qualitative principles linked to methods used in gathering data. In the following three chapters, I will discuss the findings of my research data, which was based on the methods discussed in this chapter.

## Chapter Four

### 4.1. Identity and Ethnicity

As outlined in my review of the literature in chapter two, identity in its multifaceted forms can be implicated in a myriad of issues, thus leading to conflict. This is usually the result of a 'real or perceived injustice' based on racial, ethnic or religious differences; hence, it takes the form of a 'zero sum' conflict leading up to genocidal actions (Deng, 2008, p.xi). Identity is typically seen in a subjective form, based on how people recognise themselves and thus largely prescribes who they are. Identity is formed through a process of identification — whether these assumptions are right or wrong (Deng, 2008) — thus leading to a 'paradoxical combination of sameness and difference' (Lawler, 2008, p.2). These senses of 'sameness and difference' result in people and groups viewing themselves as unique from others. This belief might be conflicted, however, when it comes in contact with what Deng (2008, p.33) referred to as the 'objective facts or criteria' of 'established standards'; thus, generating personal or intergroup conflict(s).

In this Chapter, I will discuss the themes generated from the results of my data. A major theme emerging from my data is identity: I discuss how this is implicated in the conflict process by my respondents. In some cases, my interviewees used the concept identity interchangeably with ethnicity. The term ethnicity is conceived as an 'idea of common provenance, recruitment primarily through kinship, and a notion of distinctiveness whether or not this consists of a unique inventory of cultural traits' (Horowitz, 2000, p. 53). Horowitz (1985) adds more criteria to differentiate ethnicity from casual interactions among kinship. It was claimed that ethnic groups should embrace differences along the lines of skin colour, language and religion. He defined ethnicity as covering 'tribes, races, nationalities and castes'. Following this particular outlook on ethnicity, I consider the two groups under investigation, African and Arab, as ethnic groups rather than races, given they are being discussed within the context of Darfur. The reason is simply that these distinctions are not as

clear along racial lines as they would be in distinguishing between Black and White as racial labels. Religion was also implicated as an identity factor by my respondents contributing to the conflict situation; however, I will not be considering this in my analysis as a primary cause of conflict for reasons explained later in the chapter.

In this Chapter, I will deliberate whether: the identity distinctions in Darfur are rigid and fixed, as claimed by several writers; they are a result of (mis)perception by the groups under consideration, making the differences imagined. I also sought to discover the factor(s) responsible for this perception of difference and its implication(s) for the Darfurian identity. This discussion is seen from a broader level of dichotomy between the two main groups in the conflict region. The reason for using this broad categorisation is that between the two categorisations, there are different tribal/ethnic configurations which have been classified under the two affiliations shown below. These groups contain a diverse set of people, many of whom lack distinct boundaries and change nomenclature overtime (Lesch, 1998). For instance, the sedentary Fur farmers who are considered African move for economic reasons into areas of the Baghara groups who are, in turn, considered Arab, although after living there for a period of time are then considered Baghara (De Waal, 2005).

**Table 2: Ethnic Classification into Arab and Non-Arab Groups**

Arab Groups	Non-Arab (African) Groups
Eriegat	Fur- Keira, Kunjara, Others
Misiriya	Zaghawa- Tuer, Galla, Kabja, Bedeyat, others
Habbaniya	Masalit
Baghara	Berti
Salamat	Daju
Beni Halba	Tama
Rizeigat- Mahamid, Mahriya	Borgu
Ta'aisha	Gimir
Ma'aliya	Beigo
Beni Hussein- Baggara	Erenga
	Fellata
	Fertit-Hausa, Fulani, Um Bororo, Kara, Binga

*Source: Alex De Waal, African Affairs (2005, p.186).*

This classification is not exhaustive but a list of the most prominent groups showing how they are regarded; this elucidates the diversity in Darfur. As El-Tom (2006, p.6) stated: 'It must be noted that division between one group and another is fluid, ideological and subject to continuous change'. Moreover, the time and resources available necessitated the merger of the groups into two broad categories. This decision put into consideration the amount of tribal affiliations to deal with, given the limited resources available. The broad categories discussed here are Arabs and Africans: this dichotomy has been made simple and rigid by the current crisis, especially on an ideological basis to forge an alliance amongst various ethnic groups (El-Tom, 2006). These two broad categories were also defined by my respondents in the way they perceive themselves when compared to others: this correlates

with Lesch's (1998) results in *'The Sudan- Contested National identities'*. What constitutes either an Arab identity or African identity depends on individual interpretations. It became evident among my respondents that there was no clear cut definition of Arab or African.

I will offer my critique based on the narratives of my respondents and the findings of existing literature. With this in mind, I will discuss emerging sub themes on Arab and African typifying features. One of the main sub themes on identity evident in the data gathered is that of 'perception'. On the basic issue of what constitutes an Arab and an African in Darfur, my respondents did not see any differences between the groups under consideration. Some of the expressions used by my respondents made them feel there was a difference between the groups; while, at the same time, acknowledging there is no difference between an Arab and an African. Below is a discussion of their non-distinctiveness as it pertains to essentialist thought.

One of my respondents whom I interviewed in Khartoum, **Juju**, talked about how a community (Darfur) has been divided into two sub-communities. He does not believe the perceived differences exist in reality:

*"What I would like to emphasise here is that the Darfur war has divided one community into two sub-communities, with one being an African-Arab with a larger African blood component, and the other is an Arab-African as well but with a larger Arab blood component".* (Director: Research Institute, Sudan).

Extrapolating from this quote, **Juju** sees Darfur as one community and emphasises the co-existence of both groups. He claims the African-Arab dynamic is not clear cut, alluding to the difference in terms of the biological composition of the individual. That is, whether the African or Arab gene is more dominant; although, he falls short of making a clear assertion on the existence of objective bloodlines relating to Africans or Arabs. In my view, **Juju**



made an argument supporting the essentialist view of attaching identity to blood lines and genealogy, by simply trying to relegate the identity dynamics in Darfur to blood line arguments. This stance represents narrow conceptualisations of identity and tends to shape the thinking of dominant groups (Lawry, n.d). In Darfur, groups which see themselves as Arabs tend to trace their ancestry and blood line to Arabia and the Prophet Mohammed. These linkages are usually reflected in their names, such as the Al-Mahdi of Sudan and any of his family members are still believed to be the descendants of Prophet Mohammed (Deng, 1995, Cunnison, 1966, Haaland, 1969, Beshir, n.d). On the other hand, the African components are usually seen to come from different sources, such as the racial connotations of being a slave. Africanism also stems from tracing bloodlines to the geography of Sudan (De Waal, 2005). These distinctions will be considered in the context of Darfur using the essentialist paradigm and the thoughts of **Juju** about why the war has divided the community. I believe the conflict arose when the supposed minority group — in this instance, the African groups — objected to the imposition of narrowly defined identities.

In the Darfur scenario, the essentialist paradigm of identity is ‘grounded in the perceived socio-cultural differences that have resulted in the identity dichotomy’ between Arabs and Africans (Madibbo, 2012, p.304). The narrative of my respondent does negate this essentialist view, however, as he does not agree there is an absolute distinction between Arab and African groups due to his belief that blood components are hybrid in nature; as a result, this way of thinking does not allow the narrow definition of groups based on blood lines, as suggested by the essentialist school. In ‘*War of Visions*,’ Deng (1995) asserted that Northerners who defined themselves as Arabs regarded Southerners and Africans as Black, slaves and with origins from Africa. Deng (1995) further said all Sudanese have proof of African roots in their skin colour, which can be assumed to have some genetic heritage from a slave origin. In addition, O’Fahey and Tubiana (n.d, p.6) in their article ‘*Darfur- Historical and Contemporary Aspects*’ said:

*'Regard the genealogies that are in circulation today as originating in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and as having little historical or evidential value. In anthropological terms they are 'genealogical charters' designed to link present-day groups in wider groupings by reference to a remote and largely fictitious past'.*

This assertion largely negates any essentialist definition of the Darfurian identity and supports the narrative of **Juju**, by showing the groups within Darfur who see themselves as different actually have things in common and that such differences cannot be streamlined to any fictitious blood line.

The notion of undifferentiated identity was further highlighted in statements by other respondents, where they showed no clear distinction between the groups under consideration and further claimed that one is near impossible to achieve. For instance, **Ayele** said:

*"I don't think that in Darfur there is any belief of ethnicity. Tribes have intermingled and you will find that some people who consider themselves Arabs marry from Africans and some who consider themselves Africans marry from Arabs".*

(Officer: Ministry of Information, Sudan)

The national expert (**Sango**), similarly, said:

*"No differentiation in Darfur between Arabs and non-Arabs, and it's a known fact that all Sudanese are Africans. We have movements from North of the country, Algeria, Morocco. So the so called Arab is brought about by the intermarriage between these migrants and the Africans, which caused the advent of Arab looking nature of the Sudanese. If you go to the South, you can find that many of*

*the equatorian tribes in the South are lighter than those in the North. You can say there is a race movement which [has] resulted in the mixture of races, even in America where you have the Negroes who were taken from Africa then mixed bred with Americans".*(Humanitarian Affairs: Sudan)

The statements demonstrate there is no basis for differentiation among the groups under consideration. They further negate the essentialist view of identity through a distinctive blood line as highlighted earlier. A cursory glance at the narrative of **Sango** could be said to contain a strain of essentialism: “*all Sudanese are African*”; however, looking at the preceding comments “*No differentiation in Sudan between Arabs and non-Arabs*”, I inferred what he meant was since Sudan is geographically located in Africa it makes every Sudanese ‘African’ by location. The geographical location could then account for differences in the culture of the people, which **Sango** does not specify. Geographically, Sudan serves as a bridge and an intermediary between two worlds (i.e. Africa and the Middle East). Due to the location, ‘the evolution of the various groups that make up the population has been largely affected by the physical environment’ (Beshir, n.d, p.3).

Furthermore, the narratives of **Ayele** and **Sango** both agreed on the influence of intermarriage: the angle of intra-marriages amongst groups in Darfur expressed by **Ayele**; the inter-marriages between groups across state lines stated by **Sango**. This agreement, to a large extent, removes any idea there could still be a typically Arab or African identity, given centuries of inter-mixing. Historically, these groups have intermarried. A prominent example of this kind of union was Khalifa Abdullahi, the Mahdi’s successor who considered himself a pure Arab of the Baggara group. He married an indigenous black African, which group members believed left the Baggara group with a colour which betrayed their claims as true Arabs today (El-Tom, 2006).

These views acknowledge it is difficult to differentiate among groups in Darfur using essentialist thoughts; they also highlight the influence of a social factor (intermarriage) in contributing to the non-distinction. Intermarriages go a long way to strengthen the argument that it is impossible for any bloodline to have remained intact with the level of cross-cultural marriages. The geographic location which supposedly encouraged migration and intermarriage amongst groups also strengthens the argument made by Kenny (2004) that group identities change overtime, influenced both by location and the social structures which surround them.

At this point, I wish to illustrate that the non-distinctiveness within bloodlines and the marriages of assumed identities do not allow for a clear cut and rigid dichotomy of the groups under consideration. I will show this by examining **Juju**'s perception on the Arab-African dynamics and the non-distinctiveness between these groups in the context of Darfur using the views of **Ayele** and **Sango**. Although there is a biological disposition, as highlighted by **Juju**, since humans all have blood; however, he fell short of declaring a clear distinction between the groups on a strict blood lineage. What he suggested instead was an Afro-Arab identity which is a hybrid form of the groups under consideration. This parallels the statements of **Ayele** and **Sango**, who also disagree there is any difference among the groups under consideration. The reason they gave for the absence of an absolute dichotomy between the two groups is that they intermarry, as a result, there can be no clear cut distinction between who is an Arab and who is African. This goes a long way to corroborate **Juju**'s idea of a hybrid Afro-Arab identity based on the assumption that there once existed an Arab identity which currently still traces its genealogy to Arabia and the Prophet Mohammed. This marriage of identities gives rise to a situation where there can be no clear cut identity lines between the two groups under investigation. Overall, the non-distinctiveness along blood lines and the marriage between assumed identities makes it impossible for there to be a clear cut, rigid dichotomy among the groups under consideration.

On the one hand, one could assume that Sudan belongs to Africans when considering the statements of **Sango** and **Kura** (Development Officer interviewed in Khartoum):

**Sango:** *“It’s a known fact that all Sudanese are Africans”*

and

**Kura:** *“The existence of Arabs is recent as far as history is concerned”.*

From these two statements, the location of Sudan in Africa makes all Sudanese ‘Africans’ by geography. More specifically to Sudan, however, the history of the country contains evidence that Sudan’s name is derived from the Arabic phrase ‘*Bilad al-Sudan*’ with the literal meaning of ‘*land of the Blacks*’. It was known as a settlement of the Black African population, where some groups retained their dialects but adopted Arabic as their official language (El-Tom, 2006). On the other hand, the indigenous groups in Sudan ‘intermarried with incoming Arab traders, over centuries, dating back to time immemorial [and] heightened by the advent of Islam in the Seventh Century, produced a genetically mixed African-Arab racial and cultural hybrid’ (Deng, 1995 p.2). Given these historical antecedents, the recentness of Arabs history, as far as my respondent was concerned, is something which is more psychological than factual. This psychological state is what Alex De Waal (1989) referred to as ‘*moral geography*,’ which has essentially led one community of people to believe they are different from others and further reinforces the belief of perceived difference. As far as my respondents were concerned, the original settlers (the Black groups) should be in charge of things rather than being on the side lines — this will be discussed later. So, this neglect in itself breeds contempt between the groups under consideration.

An important point to be noted is the impact of immigration, which is an uncontrollable phenomenon even in the world we live in today. The impact of immigration

in Sudan should not be ruled out, with Sudan being a country bordered by many Arab countries and the fact it was a former colony of Egypt, which tried to Arabise the whole nation (Salih, 2005). My point here is the biological composition argument of **Juju** can further be explained as a macro level phenomenon, resulting from intermarriage and intermingling between groups. This, to an extent, limits arguments to be made for clear dichotomies amongst groups in Sudan. The intermarriage or mingling could be traced farther back to historical migratory process and trade route patterns (i.e. pre-colonial (Turko-Egyptian conquest, Mahdi's conquest), colonial rule (Anglo-Egyptian rule) and the post-colonial era. This migratory movement came mainly from the West and East, due to the easy landscape to be crossed. The North contained desert, which discouraged movement and the South, with all its resources had too much rain; as a result, migration was discouraged from those parts. In this sense, the ease of passage for migrants in the West facilitated them intermarrying with the locals; thus, limiting any argument for a pure African or Arab identity in that region (Salih, 2005, Nielsen, 2008).

Still considering the biological argument, **Sango** also claimed:

*“The intermarriage between these migrants and the Africans caused the advent of Arab looking nature of the Sudanese”.* (National Expert: Humanitarian Affairs, Sudan).

He concurred with **Juju** in making reference to the biological make-up of these people, although from a less essentialist viewpoint this time. In this case, he talked more about symbolic traits like the way they look, as opposed to the blood composition drawn upon by **Juju**. The symbolic trait argument was also echoed by another respondent, **Jato**:

*“However, it is difficult in Darfur to differentiate between Arab and non-Arab because they have almost [the] same features. Many of these affiliations are just allegations. Ethnically, they are Arabs. When we say an Arab [we*

*mean] not only the person that speaks Arabic but with some features like the skin colour, black hair not like ours and the eyes and they speak Arabic". (Diplomat, Sudan).*

Both **Sango** and **Jato** talked about the Arab looking features of groups which see themselves as Arabs, which also portrays the identity of this group in an essentialist primordial form. Given the impact of migration and intermarriage, however, that strict dichotomy is mitigated; thereby, negating the primordial view of identity in Darfur. It has been said intermingling and intermarriage has led to:

*'the resulting racial characteristics look very similar to those of all African groups cutting across the continent below the Sahara, from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Somalia in the East, Chad in the North and Mali in the centre, and Mauritania and Senegal to the West' (Deng, 1995, p.2).*

My respondent (**Jato**) further advanced the features to look for if there was any difference at all between these groups of people. Some of the distinguishing features he talked about — which **Sango** did not define in his statement — are: skin colour (usually light brown), very soft black hair and black eyes. In terms of these, the people I spoke with did not match them; therefore, showing the falseness of an identity adopted by a particular group. Further, **Jato** also emphasised the importance of language (i.e. Arabs must speak Arabic).

This narrative also clearly shows the danger in adopting a scientific/racial system of supposed classification (Deng 1995). Even people considered to be Arabs fell short of such criteria, as they tend to have dark brown/black skin with typically tough hair. The checklist presented by my respondent has wider implications in the case of the larger Sudan. If one is judged to be too light-skinned, they were considered a foreigner (Middle- Eastern Arab, European, Ha-labi (a term used for Gypsy-type racial group who are considered of the lowest

class in the light-skinned races) (Voll, 1990). On the other hand, if someone is deemed to be too black, they were considered to be of slave origin (Deng, 1995).

My observation was supported by Prunier's (2007, p.5) book *Darfur- the Ambiguous Genocide*, where he noted:

*'In terms of skin colour everybody is black. But the various forms of Sudanese cultural racism distinguish Zuruq (Black Africans) from Arab even if the skin has the same colour. Usually the difference has to do with facial features, although, this is all to do with perception'.*

The point I am making here is that although my respondent tried to define who constitutes an Arab in order to distinguish them from Africans, his classification did not correlate with the evidence and my observations in the field. Consequently, the failure to make a distinction between an African and an Arab means the difference lies in the acceptance of the believed perceptions around difference, which are more imagined than real. This perception of difference made Prunier (1995, p.58) conclude the conflict in Darfur is being fought by 'two largely imagined and constructed communities'. Aside from the symbolic traits mentioned by SU, language was also implicated as a requisite to be considered an Arab — this is considered below.

#### **4.2. Language**

In terms of language, most of the people speak Arabic; although some of those considered Arabs do not even speak Arabic, which is a necessary requirement to being considered one (Deng, 1995, 2008; De Waal, 2005; Lesch, 1998; Prunier, 2007). In this section, I will look at the issue of language and its implication for identity construction in Darfur. Language has been implicated in the way our social lives are conducted. Kramsch (1998) suggested when it becomes a constitutive of communication then it binds with culture in several and complex ways and expresses a social reality from the words people utter everyday to express facts and



ideas, to reflecting the authors' attitude and beliefs. Language is a 'system of signs that is seen as having itself a cultural value. Speakers identify themselves and others through their use of language; they view their language as a symbol of their social identity. The prohibition of its use is often perceived by its speakers as a rejection of their social group and their culture' (Kramsch, 1998). Following the statement of my respondent, **Jato**, despite the other features which might qualify anyone to be an Arab, the defining feature is being able to communicate in Arabic. Proficiency in Arabic language, therefore, becomes a paramount necessity in being accepted as a member of that identity group. The issue of language as one of the most important features to being considered an Arab was also echoed by **Ekole**:

*"We have to agree that in the North there are tribes that are not Arabs, like the Nuba, Nahagla, they are calling themselves Arabs, that's because the Arab culture is dominant and that's why we say this Arabisation is having an impact on the culture of the people; but I don't think that in Sudan there is demarcation because of the language".*

(Lecturer: Sudan).

In this case, he talked about groups which are not even Arabs but because of acculturation and their ability to speak Arabic now self-ascribe to being Arabs because they speak the Arabic language. Notably, these are groups which supposedly should not be categorised as Arabs because of their origins. Their origins are linked to Christian groups whose ancestors immigrated from provinces of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century (Lesch, 1998). For self-ascription to occur, there has to be a belief in the properties being ascribed to the conscious subject and by the conscious subject themselves (Feit, 2000). In this case, the conscious subjects are the Nahagla and Nuba people mentioned by my respondent and the property (either true or false) they ascribe to themselves is being Arab. Their self-ascription is reinforced by their deduction that because they speak Arabic, they

consider themselves to be Arabs. This once again shows how the issue of identity in Darfur cannot be separated from the macro-level, as there are groups in the country with a false consideration of who they are, due to their language capability.

By implication, the inability of these groups to speak the Arabic language would have meant they could not ascribe to being Arabs to themselves and therefore would not be recognised as such by the Arab dominating polity. This argument further suggests that speaking Arabic serves a much larger purpose, as purported by some of my respondents. Moreover, it indicates that the mastery of Arabic is a requisite to being accepted as an Arab. Hypothetically, even if a person had all the physical attributes talked about earlier but could not speak the Arabic language, then they would not be considered an Arab. This assumption parallels the findings of Barbour (1961 cited in Prunier, 2007, p.5) that ‘a very Negroid Rizeyqat’ [a so-called Arab ethnic group] will remain an ‘Arab’ because he speaks Arabic while ‘a pale and thin featured Zaghawa will be African’ even though he speaks Arabic.

Furthermore, my respondent, **Ekole**, did not see language as an inherited feature, but as the result of the geography of these people — being located in the North of Sudan — leaving them open to interaction with Muslim and supposedly Arab groups. These groups, due to their geography and religion, could be regarded as Africans; thereby, embracing an African identity but speaking Arabic. This formation allows for further deconstruction of the stereotypical claims in which the African and Arab identity dichotomies are grounded. From this angle, Arabic is not a distinguishing indicator of an Arab identity but can also be a signifier of an allegiance to the African identity. Overall, it emphasises how the construction of identity is impacted by our social environment (Madibbo, 2012). In addition, one of the reasons some of the people speak Arabic is due to the impact of immigration and intermarriage discussed earlier. Madibbo’s (2012, p. 309) findings also concluded that ‘intermarriages and cultural connections fostered among groups have become a source that reinforces their identity’. Consequently, the language capabilities of these groups challenge

the assumption that there could be any division between the groups based on the language criterion.

Going back to my argument, most of the people I interviewed did not have the distinguishing symbolic features and language capabilities which could lead one to conclude that there is a clear distinction between an Arab and an African. As a result, in terms of the indistinctive dichotomy in physical features and language capabilities amongst these people, I argue at this point that the differences being identified by these respondents are just perceptions held by one group of people about another, as opposed to clear differences in their physical features, culture and language. **Juju** claimed this ‘has *divided one community into two sub-communities*’.

Taking this argument further, one of my respondents, **Kura**, mentioned biology again but from a more instrumental viewpoint:

*“There is what we call blood value, i.e. if someone kills someone else, there is blood value in that. We now understand that the blood value of an African is less than the blood value of an Arab, so it’s quite clear that we are not equal”.* (Development Officer: Sudan)

He also tried to create a clear distinction between both groups; although I am aware this kind of distinction from my observation and interviews with other respondents does not exist. It could be said that the most important reference in his statement was to ‘*blood value*’. This could serve as a basis and incentive for one person who perceives him/herself an Arab to kill another community member who is considered an African. In this sense, ‘*blood value*’ resonates with feelings of superiority and inequality among the identities who perceive themselves differently. Such feelings have led to some of the most gruesome atrocities in human history, such as the ethnic cleansing and genocidal acts witnessed in Rwanda, Bosnia and in Nazi Germany. In my view, the ‘*blood value*’ discourse has the potential to be

employed by elites to mobilise violence for their political ambitions. I want to now consider the symbolic approach to identity:

*'the development of discursive formations can set one group in opposition to another or predispose them to see the other as a threat or natural for violence, independent of and more material basis for hostility'* (Fearon *et al.*, 2000, p.851).

Moreover, discursive logics are conceived of as cultural 'scripts' in which people unreflectively play their 'roles' (Fearon *et al.*, 2000, p.852). In this case, '*blood value*' could be regarded as a discourse with the potential to be used to garner momentum or carry out the actual perpetuation of violence by one group against another group perceived to be different to them. As a discourse, '*blood value*' could be invoked as a means and by-product by elites' to retain or acquire power<sup>15</sup>. In the case of Darfur, the '*blood value*' of an Arab appeared to be of higher value, as they receive support from the government; this is to the detriment of the African groups who believe their '*blood value*' is low. Consequently, all the groups (Arab, African and the government) understand this and act on it to fit with their strategic interests. If left unchecked, this unequal situation could have the adverse effect of creating more antagonistic identities, encouraging an atmosphere for more violence.

Furthermore, by using this rhetoric to spread feelings of superiority amongst group members who consider the other group to be inferior leads to conflict between groups on the basis of these perceived identity differences. This adheres to Tajfel's' (1982, p.854) social identity theory:

*'If people have an innate desire for self-esteem, then they may be irrationally reluctant to believe that members of*

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<sup>15</sup> For example, the governments support for Arab groups in 2003 when the non-Arab groups attacked military bases. The government enlisted the support of the brutal Janjaweed militia, many of whom were known criminals, murderers, racial extremist and purposely released from jail to carry out what is now popularly known as the 'scorched earth campaign'. This campaign was to ensure the annihilation of anything that was considered non-Arab (people, property, farms, and villages) with substantial Sudanese military support. After the campaign they were enlisted in to the Sudanese armed forces in order to keep the support of those groups and left the non-Arab groups as victims (Flint and De Waal, 2005; Young, et al, 2005).

*their own group, and especially their leadership, could be responsible for reprehensible acts’.*

This also resonates with the thoughts of Orwell (1945) in his essay ‘*Notes on Nationalism,*’ where he highlighted that nationalists are highly likely to discount reprehensible acts committed by their own groups as long as it serves their cause. He termed this their ‘*indifference to reality*’ (Orwell, 1945, p.4). Reprehensible acts, in this case, which lead to conflict is the invocation of the ‘*blood value*’ discourse. The argument on ‘*blood value*’ found in this case study delimits any essentialist arguments for claims to blood lines and also supports the instrumental uses to which beliefs in any such discourse could be manipulated and utilised.

Finally, **Maput** sums up where the ideas of perceived difference — which do not actually exist in reality — emanate from. He discusses the idea of perception, which all respondents discussed here from different angles. **Maput** said:

*“Likewise in Sudan, in the North, some who consider themselves Arabs don’t look [that] much different from other African, but it’s the self-perception that creates that”.*(Darfurian Expatriate: New York).

With this statement, **Maput** does not agree there is a clear distinction between people who consider themselves to be Arabs or Africans, as they all look alike and the problem relates to perception rather than any actual difference among the people. This corroborates the work of Sawant (1998, p.345) in ‘*Ethnic Conflict in Sudan in Historical Perspective*’:

*‘Contrary to general projection, none of the Sudanese can definitely be considered Arab or Negroid. Arab in the Sudanese context cannot be used in terms of racial character. The term can only be used merely in the historical sense to refer to people who emigrated from*

*Arabia to Sudan. The fact remains that the so-called Arabs have Negroid features and the so-called Negroids have non-Negroid features'.*

In this sense, the differences talked about relating to the groups under consideration are a matter of perception, as **Maput** put it. Other respondents also supported **Maput** in their narratives using phrases conveying that the differences can only be measured in perceptual terms. Examples of these phrases include: *'consider themselves', 'so called Arabs', 'allegations', and 'calling themselves'*. All the phrases and words used by my respondents does not depict any clear cut difference, so, to a large extent, it could be suggested that perceived/imagined rather than real/actual differences account for the problem in Darfur. It is not just the perceived difference which is the problem in this case but the actual belief, which thus enacts those differences (De Waal, 1989, Horowitz, 1985, 2000). This pattern of identity perception has been suggested to have local and international ramifications. This takes me to my next set of findings relating to how the perception of identity leads people to believe they are different from one another from a local and globalised dimension.

#### **4.3. Local/International Engagement of Identity**

In this section, I examine how the perception of identity contributed to the conflict process at the local and international levels and how the level of international engagement is divided by the perception of identity. On the issue of perception, most of my respondents talked about how people viewed themselves in light of having a perceived common social identity with a particular group, as opposed to who they really are or what others assess them to be. For instance, **Maput** said:

*"I would say that identity is critical in the Sudanese context. At the same time, dichotomising between myth and reality is there. If you go to Darfur, it might be hard to distinguish between who is an Arab or who is an African because there*

*is a lot of similarity, but 'self-perceptions' have become entrenched and very divisive". (Darfurian Expatriate: New York).*

The entrenchment of self-perception is consistent with the findings of Smith and Henry's (1996) social identity theory experiment, which discovered that the salience of a particular identity makes individuals assume they have features which are representative of that social category. Moreover, '*Optimal Distinctiveness Theory*' purports that 'attributes that people share with the in-group and that differentiate the in-group from the out-group become particularly salient as part of the self' (Smith and Henry, 1996, p.637). In this case, self-perceptions of the groups under consideration group are what constitute the problem; thus, resulting in divisiveness amongst people who share similarities in all aspects. These two theories emerge, where the groups would base their distinction on insignificant differences created by each group, even when these differences are 'not given in nature but [they] need to be made' (Lawler, 2008, p.4). Once these differences are created, individuals would tend to align with groups they believe to share the most salient characteristics with; thereby, differentiating them from the out-groups. It is henceforth upon these differences that the group dichotomy is founded and built upon.

The creation of insignificant differences was documented by Lawler (2008) in '*Identity: Sociological Perspectives*'. She employed the Freud term '*the narcissism of small differences*':

*'In wanting to see ourselves as unique, we magnify small differences until they become defining characteristics. What is shared is played down, what is different is played up, until identities come to seem opposites. This is clearly the case with ethnic or racial differences; since there is no real, objective difference between the different groups'* (Lawler,

2008, p.4).

In this case, it should be seen that divisions between the groups does not refer to any essentialist categorisations or ‘an objective fact of nature’ but to differences created and sustained within the groups, which creates a situation where group members can now perceive themselves differently.

According to Lawler (2008, p.4), what counts as differences are anything the ethnic groups highlight as variations. In the case of Darfur, my respondents have tried to distinguish between an Arab and African along essentialist and linguistic criteria similar to other authors in this area, but none of them have been able to comprehensively do so. What they have all shown so far is the differences are based on perception not objective differences. Furthermore, the usage of phrases and words like ‘so called Arabs’, ‘consider themselves’ to justify the distinction between the two groups does not show any clear dichotomy between the groups. As a result, it is safe to suggest the differences amongst the groups are only a question of perceived differences created by the groups themselves as opposed to any objective criteria. This perception of difference takes me to my next point, where some of my respondents think that because some groups in other parts of the country not considered Arabic get leverage — when compared to Darfur — because they see themselves as Arabs. This leverage shows the instrumentality and engagement of identity on a geographical basis.

#### **4.3.1. Geographical Identity**

The identity of the people referred to as non-Arabs in the North of the country who, by contrast, see themselves as Arabs could historically be traced to the early Arabisation of the people in those areas. The Arabisation of these people led to a change in the way they now perceive their identity: this is a result of historical migratory process which allowed migrants to settle among the local people and intermarry; thereby, adopting part of their culture. Since these migrants traced their origins to Arabia and the Prophet Mohammed, they considered themselves as Arabs. These groups of migrants were wealthy, influential and powerful



traders. As a result of the intermarriage and conquest of even Christian Kingdoms like the Nuba, they inherited lands and properties of their spouses, as Sudan allows matrilineal inheritance. The inheritance mode created more wealth for these migrants and their families, invariably spreading wealth across the geographical location in question (Hasan, 2003). Some of the groups which allowed the migrants to settle now trace their roots to the Prophet's Uncle (Abbas) (Holt & Daly, 1989).

As Deng (1995, p.40) argued: 'The autonomous nature of Arabisation in Sudan implies that conversion was to a significant degree a matter of choice within a framework of restrained intimidation'. Within this framework, he suggested it is easy to see why groups, who were exposed to 'Arab power and domination, were quick to embrace Arabisation since doing so elevated them to a privileged status' (Deng, 1995, p.40). In light of these social factors and their subsequent privileged statuses, at present some groups in certain geographical locations have 'created new histories and genealogies to suit their new identities'. For example, the Arabised Nubians acquired an Arab and Muslim lineage (Lesch, 1998).

In sum, from my perspective, geographical identity emanates from a combined force of historical processes and social factors (migration and intermarriage) culminating in the formation of a new identity for particular groups in specific locations. These processes opened up these groups to privileged statuses, compared to other groups that were either restrictive or not subject to those historical and social influences. Furthermore, the same groups still occupy positions of influence, power and wealth in today's polity; therefore, creating a belt of people who get more leverage because they are seen to fit into the definition of being Arab. This definition is created and maintained by elites who occupy positions of authority and privilege in the decision making apparatus; thereby, excluding those not considered to be within that framework.

On the issue of geographical identity, **Samba**, talked about it in the sense that he

referred to people in certain parts of the country who are not Arabs but perceive themselves to be. He also alluded to the fact that due to the perceived Arab identity of the area, the populace of those areas are gaining social, economic and political advantages, compared to areas not considered to be Arabs. He said:

*'I would like to say that some of my brothers who don't even have anything to do with Arab ancestry in the North are getting better leverage because they are seen to be and consider themselves Arabs. Well, I can say maybe this Arab culture that is predominant makes them think so'.*

(Engineer, Sudan).

This narrative resonates with the point of **Ekole** on language and how the ability to speak Arabic makes people in the North consider themselves to be Arabs. The ability to speak the language was linked to the predominance of the Arab culture in that area, despite it being linked to Christianity. In this case, however, the leverage **Samba** is talking about ranges from daily issues to matters of security in the sense that people who are Arabic and/or live in areas which are Arab-inclined tend to receive more attention, compared to others groups and/or areas. In terms of my observation in Khartoum, I noticed that most areas occupied by people under this Arab categorisation were more secured, which were measured by the level of police patrols. Moreover, the areas had more streetlights and smooth flow of traffic in comparison to the outskirts, which were mainly occupied by people who did not fall under the definition of being Arabs. Even from the developmental plan and expenditure for the country — which will be considered in later Chapters — it is shown that areas/regions which did not fall under the definition of Arabs prescribed by the elites received less attention.

A similar situation was reflected in the words of **Kura** when he said:

*"Even in the public sector and [when] you want employment, you are told to fill in your tribe, so if your tribe*

*is not pro-Arab, then that category will be disqualified. But if you speak fluent Arabic, even if you are not Sudanese and your complexion is not as dark like the African or if you believe in the Arab culture, that means you will take a lead in the country. This is something that is well known and practised and undeniable by the President himself”.*

(Development Officer: Sudan).

This narrative revives the argument on the instrumental use of ethnicity alluded to previously and it also reinforces the argument on the use of Arabic language as a communication medium, which, in this case, accords privilege to those who speak it. From a geographical perspective, most of the people in the northern part of Sudan are Arabic speaking; as a result, they are accorded the right of being Arabs. This leads to the question why most Darfurians, who are Arabic speaking, are not accorded the same privileges. This highlights the notion of perception: although the Darfurians saw themselves as fulfilling the criteria of being treated as equals; they are not defined as such by the outside community — which they believe they are a part of — in the larger Sudan.

This kind of treatment could be partly accounted for by the fact that, historically, Darfur considered itself to be different, because it maintained its own Sultanate until 1916 when it was merged with the rest of Sudan and was seen that way by the ruling elites, even during the colonial era (O’Fahey & Tubiana, n.d). Darfur also resisted several occupations limiting the effects of early Arabisation and Islamisation of the region; therefore, it was always considered a problematic region. This was ruled by sultans who considered themselves Arabs but looked more like Africans and they resisted conquest and colonisation at the onset. In present day Sudan, there are groups which are resisting aggressive and rather forceful Arabisation and Islamisation policies of the Central government (Deng, 1995). Considering these factors, it might be safe to suggest the reason why Darfur is not getting the

same privileges/leverages as other Arab groups in the North of the country relates to its assumption that it was already part of group, because its leadership assumed they were Arabs. With the definition already placed on who is an Arab by groups who have always considered Darfur a problematic region and seen Darfurians as a different group of people — Darfurians see themselves in a similar way. It becomes difficult for the elites defining this term to allot the same privilege that accrues to people they consider as part of the definitional framework to Darfurians at the same time.

This, to a large extent, confirms the hypothesis that differences amongst Darfurians is a matter of perception, as outsiders do not see Darfurians as different from one another (i.e. they are considered as one group). So, the differences espoused between the groups under consideration in Darfur are something which is generated within the groups themselves and the belief in those differences. The correctness of this particular narrative can be seen in relation to Horowitz's (2000) concept of 'advanced and backward groups'<sup>16</sup>.

The advantages **Kura** talked about, which those considering themselves to be Africans appear not to get includes favouritism during competition for work<sup>17</sup> (Blench, 2003). This is particularly true when you have groups that are considered by Horowitz (2000) as 'advanced and backward': Sudan is a very typical example, with Arab groups seeing themselves as advanced whilst considering other groups to be backward and primitive (De Waal, 2005; Deng, 1995; Prunier, 2005; O'Fahey, 1996).

In the case of Sudan, the groups which consider themselves advanced are virtually in charge of the most lucrative businesses and government posts. As a result, it becomes

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<sup>16</sup> Advanced groups are typified by being disproportionately learned and over-represented in the civil service and other professional bodies. Also, their advancement may emanate from being disproportionately affluent and well represented in the business sector. On the other hand, backward groups are characterised by being disproportionately rural or subsistence and also unequal in terms of education. Advancement is usually tied to interest in education and opportunities in the money economy whereas backwardness is correlated with struggling to catch up with opportunities and struggling to be a part of the modern economy (Horowitz, 2000).

<sup>17</sup> It is quite common in many African societies, although I am circumspect about generalising with regards to Nigeria, during the recruitment process, people at the helms of affairs would request to know what tribe an applicant is from; unfortunately, to an extent, this might determine one's employability, most especially if they come from a different tribe or state or have not attended the same University as the recruitment officer.

characteristic of them to recruit members of their own group, which they believe is central to the group's worth. This state of affairs is not new and could be linked to the colonial administrations' legacy, where some groups/regions like Darfur were left educationally, economically and socially disadvantaged to the benefit of other groups (Horowitz, 2000). This led O'Fahey and Tubiana (n.d, p.12-13) to conclude that 'no part of the Sudan was left in such a "time warp" by the British as was Darfur' [because] 'there was virtually no development in Darfur'. In effect, they were left unprepared for the emerging state (Tubiana, n.d.). The groups which benefitted mainly from that state of affairs are groups now perceived to be Arabs, geographically located in the north and centre of the country — who now occupy the polity — and had always considered themselves advanced; however, they became more advanced by the neglect inflicted on other regions — this situation will be discussed in detail in a later chapter.

The difference in the level of discrimination along identity lines in Nigeria and Sudan is explained by the variations between the countries. In Nigeria, identity lines are clearly drawn, so distinct identities are easily identifiable through the language, vernaculars, dialects and sometimes the physical features of the person (Buhayar, 2007). Whilst in Sudan, identities are not clear cut and thus only emerge from perception, mainly brought about by the process of '*Arabisation and Islamisation*' (Abd Al-Rahim, 2006) — this will be discussed in more detail in later sections.

The idea of Arabisation leading to progress for areas who consider themselves Arabs was also evident in what **Maput** described:

*“What happened is that even in the historical context, you have a situation where when you became Muslim you were Arabic speaking, culturally Arabised, you could trace or imagine your ancestry to Arabia, you were elevated, you passed as more or less as an Arab, therefore [received]*

*higher status. But if you were Black, you were a legitimate target for slavery”.* (Darfurian Expatriate: New York).

This narrative reverberates with the historical antecedent of the Sudanese state, where the invasion of Sudan by the Turkish was driven mainly by the need for slaves. The culture of the Arab slave traders who worked in Sudan in the Fourteenth and Nineteenth centuries exempted Arabised people from slavery and made black Sudanese their target for slavery which has continued since then. Despite this, the Black people could take refuge in the darker shade of their skin, which, to them, was a symbol of pride and belonging to the land. Ultimately, it marked a clear distinction between them and the Arabised groups. It is also agreed the correlation of blackness with slavery in the psychology of Arabs dates back further (El-Tom, 2006). In addition, Hill (1963, p.102) in *‘Egypt in the Sudan’* observed that slavery for the Arabs is a:

*‘Legitimate and honourable source of profit, and all efforts at its suppression are viewed as an unjust and unreasonable interference with a custom sanctioned by the Koran, and with a time honoured privilege’.*

During the Turkish era, taxes collected were a burden to the Northern traders who were mainly Arabised groups, which henceforth made them move to other parts of the country. While in those regions they continued to function as channels to direct wealth into the same clans of northern Sudan thereby having a monopoly of both trade and State agencies for their development (Beck, 1997). Islam was spread by people who embedded the Arab culture; therefore, it is not insurmountable to separate Islam from the Arab culture, which is something even observable all over the world even today (El-Tom, 2006). The current state of affairs, where groups seen as culturally Arabised-Muslims are associated with higher status, could be traced back to the recent history of colonialism.

The colonialists saw themselves as carrying the mantle of modernity characterised

by being superior, sensible, logical, ordered and disciplined. On the other hand, the colonial subjects (Sudanese) were considered backward, tribalistic, uncontrollable and primitive (Bernal, 1997). With the attainment of independence, members of the Northern Arabised groups which consider themselves advanced — given their level of education, involvement in trade and their fictitious ancestral claims to Arabia — filled the void left by the colonialist. They assumed all characteristics of the colonial powers, by considering themselves to be civilised, scientific, rational and orderly. At the other end, they considered people like the Darfurians, who have always been historically considered backward, as tribalistic and superstitious: these were characteristics once shared by the whole of Sudan under the colonialists (El-Tom, 1998b, 2006). It was not, however, just the claim to an Arab ancestry or being a Muslim or being Arabised that elevated the northern Sudanese; rather, it was the fact that these Arabised groups took advantage and monopoly of the void left by the colonialists, who did not do enough in other regions like Darfur before the declaration of independence in 1956. Even in the current dispensation, other groups such as those considering themselves to be Arabised-Muslims in Darfur and who tend to lay claim to an Arab ancestry, are even classified by the Northern Arabised groups as ‘backwards and at odds with modernity’ (El-Tom, 2006).

The preceding explanations resonates with Horowitz’s (2000) concept of ‘advanced and backward groups’ and also corresponds with the instrumental use of group identity in the advancement of an in-group’s status. Most importantly, it supports the argument that Darfurians were historically seen as one group with an identity of their own: this has been shown to be neither Arab nor African, as they have dispositions to both, either historically or geographically. Historically, they have been seen as Blacks making them a legitimate target for slavery, with the consequential effect of marginalisation; this is still the case in the present day, leading up to the full scale conflict in 2003. For groups within Darfur to now see themselves differently from how others perceive them highlights the issue of perception.

As argued thus far, differences in the identities of the groups under consideration are not supported by any objective fact. Those differences are only a matter of perceived variations conceptualised by the groups and strengthened by their belief in such differences. Moreover, the seeing of Darfurians as one group strengthens the argument that group dichotomy in Darfur is a matter of perceived differences. The other angle to the issue is even groups who consider themselves Arabs in Darfur are not even seen as such when it comes to the macro level (Northern Arabised); however, as mentioned earlier, they get a bit of leverage.

The leverage **Samba** was talking about was also highlighted by points made by other respondents in terms of identifiable disparities in the socio-political and economic statuses of people considered Arabs by the virtue of positions they held in society. For example, dating back to the colonial era, investments and administrative resources were concentrated in Khartoum and Blue Nile areas, which furthered the advancement of the Arabised groups to the detriment of distant areas like Darfur. Furthermore, in terms of health facilities, Sudan had eighteen maternity clinics, with eight located in Khartoum; while there were none in Darfur. This unequal distribution is linked to the level of education and status ascribed to the Arab group (De Waal, 2005). The status element was demonstrated in **Maput**'s statement: *"You were elevated, you passed as more or less as an Arab, therefore [received] higher status"*.

**Maput**'s statement also reflected the ease with which people perceived to be Arabs are more socially, politically and economically mobile to a higher status, compared to other groups like Darfurians perceived to be different from them; this, as explained earlier, is linked to historical and colonial factors. Social and economic mobility, in this sense, does not, however, create a class structure, as described by one of my respondents, **Irawo**:

*"I don't want you to fall into the European classification,  
what class does Omar al-Bashir have? Or the deputies, they*



*are nobodies, if you look at the socio-political map of Sudan before 1989, they were non-existent and today they are existing on the map but don't have the weight, so class does not apply, only figuratively". (Director, NGO: Sudan).*

This narrative examines the class-ethnicity nexus in Sudan, by downplaying the relevance of class in the polity. The view that class is not to be implicated or neglected in the problem of Sudan is synonymous to the findings of Kevane and Gray (1995, p.271) where they suggested that:

*'Most analyses of political processes in Sudan, however, tend to ignore the centrality of these gender, ethnic and class representations. The problem of maintaining national unity in northern Sudan, for instance, is seen as a problem of political sectarianism, elite action and foreign intervention'.*

None of my respondents actually talked about the issue of class as a cause of the problem. What they instead highlighted was discrimination among identity groups. It would, however, be difficult to try to argue for a discriminatory class structure in this research, given most of my respondents affected by the conflict belong to middle or working class groups across the categories of identities under consideration. As a result, one would not be able to sustain an argument for a class struggle, showing how Arabised elites or upper class discriminate against lower or higher class Africans within Darfur. This is because with the current state of affairs, all group identities created by this false perception of difference are being affected.

The argument for class struggle could still be made, considering Horowitz's (1985) concept of '*ranked and unranked groups*,' synonymous to Max Weber's '*caste structure*' and '*ethnic coexistence*' concepts respectively. These concepts attempt to show a

relationship between ethnicity and class, which has been so misunderstood. In the case of Sudan, one could argue there is a mixture of both ranked and unranked ethnic systems under consideration. Using one of Horowitz's characteristics of ranked systems, the origin of class and its link to ethnic conflict in Sudan can be considered. Horowitz (1985) asserted that ranked systems emanate from '*conquest and capture*'; thus, leading to the creation of an upper and lower class, and a philosophy of inferiority for the subordinate groups. The history of Sudan has witnessed the conquest of northern Sudan by Turkey and Egypt (1821-1885) and the Mahdi's conquest of Sudan (1885-1898), which saw the end of the Turko-Egyptian rule. The first conquest saw the arrival of Arab slave traders, who, by way of Islamic religion, spread the Arab culture; thus, dominating the indigenous people of Sudan (Lesch, 1998).

As a result of these conquests, some groups were Arabised through the spread of the Islamic religion, which could not be separated from the Arab culture; thus, giving them an edge over other groups in terms of their socio-economic and political status (El-Tom, 2006). The Mahdi's conquest also reinforced the spread of Islam and the Arab culture, as he was often seen as the descendant of the Prophet Mohammed. Anyone who was not part of the Islamic-Arabised core was therefore considered to be an apostate. This situation created what Horowitz (1985) referred to as superordinate and subordinate groups represented by the Arabised North and the mostly non-Arabised periphery respectively — this has been maintained until the present time (Salih, 2005).

In terms of class struggle in the ranked system, Horowitz (1985, p.32) claimed that 'ethnic and class conflict coincide when ethnicity and class coincide'. In the case of larger Sudan, both would coincide when Northern Arabised elites view Darfurians as different and backward, even when most Darfurians are Muslims. This relegates Darfurians to a lower class when compared to themselves. I would be wrong to assume all groups in the Arabised population are more fortunate than the supposed subordinate groups of the periphery, which

is why I limit my representation of the North to the elites: this is based on the assumption that they are legitimate representatives of the Arabised-Islamic North.

On the other hand, to argue for class in Darfur, I consider Horowitz's (1985) unranked group system. It was argued that unranked groups are produced by invasion, which is less than a conquest but more of migration, especially of economic migrants. This was the case in Darfur, given the historical migratory process. In addition, there was colonial impact, when dissimilar groups were bound together for easy logistical and administrative purposes; thereby, creating an unranked group system with no superordinate or subordinate groups (Horowitz, 1985). So, in terms of this conflict, one could argue class struggle becomes of little or no relevance, as all identity groups in Darfur are affected by the conflict and they would rather adopt a united front to confront the problem at hand. This is in line with Horowitz's (1985, p.32) argument:

*'a strong tendency to reject class conflict, for it would require either inter-ethnic class-based alliances or intra-ethnic class antagonisms, either of which would detract from the ethnic solidarity'.*

Going back to the issue of leverage earned by membership of a particular group, this does not come or accrue due to any class structure considered non-existent by my respondents, rather by the misperceptions around the different identities under consideration in this study. The self-perception of people who consider themselves Arabs in Darfur is actually in conflict with what others perceive them to be. Also, the associated gains or leverage garnered from identifying oneself as Arab has, to a large extent, strengthened the dichotomy between the sets of identities (i.e. Arabs and Africans); thus, the resolve of people who perceive themselves as victims is cemented for them to attempt to address such injustices.

At this point, I unpack what leverage could mean to either side of the conflict. Historically, the heightened sense of conflict between the groups could be traced to a de-facto alliance, which emerged between the government of Sudan pre-post 1989 with the Arab nomads. The government provided arms and ammunitions to the Arab nomads to protect themselves from any kind of attack from the rebellion of the South. The drought, however, led to the scramble for resources, which made the Arab nomads turn their weapons against Africans who were mostly agriculturalists attempting to claim their land. This situation led the African groups to perceive the Khartoum government as racially biased and hostile to their own groups (O'Fahey, 1996). As will be shown in subsequent Chapters, it is alleged by my respondents that the Arab groups tend to have more developmental projects in areas where they are concentrated, compared to groups considered black Africans. Leverage could be seen for the Arab groups as the advantages attached to claiming to be Arabs, with the consequence of getting support in terms of arms and developmental projects from the government of Sudan.

On the other hand, leverage as an advantage gained by the Arab group serves as a disadvantage to the African groups; thus, a resultant conflict outcome. This is not to say the conflict arises primarily out of a need for resources but it could be implicated. To clarify, since these groups now perceive themselves differently, any issue over land or water is magnified; thereby, strengthening beliefs in the already perceived differences between the groups. It has also been shown by several writers that there have always been disputes over resources between the groups in this conflict, but those issues were resolved with a well-developed native administrative system and those groups co-existed in harmony (Deng, 1995, Prunier, 2007).

An issue arising out of the above explanation — with regards to support by the government for the perceived Arab groups — is whether, since I have argued against any essentialist criteria of defining Arabs or Africans in Darfur, support could then be given to a

particular group in Sudan on the grounds of race. Since the Arabised Northern elites in government cannot even claim original Arab ancestry, it is plausible to say that Arabness in Sudan is cultural rather than racial. This notion is supported by the work of Sawant (1998, p.345) ‘Arab in the Sudanese context cannot be used in terms of racial character. The term can only be used in merely historical sense to refer to people who emigrated from Arabia to Sudan’.

Going back to the focus on identity in this chapter, it may be argued that there is a distorted view on the identities of the various groups both at the national, macro level and micro level (Darfur). This distortion makes certain groups believe they are identical to the national identity framework and, as a result, get support from people who think they originate from Arabia. This, consequently, creates a situation where groups at the micro level (Darfur) (mis)perceive every action by the other group as a move to undermine its group identity; thus, strengthening the belief in their perceived differences. This local and national distortion of identity has a much greater impact on how Sudanese people are perceived in the international community — I will now examine this.

#### **4.3.2. The Sudanese Abroad-Identity Dynamics**

Another dynamic to the issue of identity perception described by some of my respondents was in the way some Sudanese perceiving themselves to be Arabs tend to de-emphasise the self-ascribed identity they harbour when they go abroad. Taking examples from Deng’s book ‘*War of Visions*’(1995) where several participants expressed how they perceived themselves while abroad and how that, in turn, changed their perception when they returned to Sudan. One of the respondents in that study said:

*‘I went to Saudi Arabia and was outright rejected as an Arab. I was always told ‘you are an African. Even though you speak Arabic, profess Islam, and go to the mosque, you are still... African’ in comparison, he reports that in Africa*

*he was often mistaken for an Ethiopian, a Nigerian, or generally an African and never taken for an Arab. I am in fact very proud of that'* (cited in Deng, 1995, p.441).

Another of his respondents in that study also said:

*'I was in the gulf for almost four years and moved around there. We, the Sudanese in the Gulf are not respected or accepted as Arabs. How can we come back home and pretend that we are Arabs?'* (cited in Deng, 1995, p.442).

These narratives confirm the discovery of the real self when Sudanese go abroad — leading to the de-emphasis on what they thought they were originally — and also reinforces the argument made earlier on the geographical location of Sudan and its impact on the definition of the Darfurian identity. This is especially true for the first example quoted: after returning to Sudan, the respondent now appreciates his African identity. This African identity does not necessarily have anything to do with skin colour but mainly with the geographical location of the country on the African continent. The second narrative corresponds with my respondent, **Kura**'s, thought:

*"But, with the advent of Arab identity, the problem of Sudan is that most people who claim to be Arabs are not Arabs because they are not even respected as Arabs when they go to other countries. They are being taken as Africans. Because they still claim to be Arabs, most of the people are just Arabised, why they are Arabised, I don't know [why] because I don't think Arabs have any advantage over other countries".* (Development Officer: Sudan).

Looking at these narratives, I would like to allude to the work of Mason (1990, p.345), which uses the narrative of Mary Church Terrell's autobiography (1863-1954) to

highlight that journeys could serve as a source of self-discovery for individuals. She concluded that when people travel, they tend to come back with a reawakening of whom they really are and henceforth change their perception of self. The social capital which that might be attached to claiming such identity, however, means they might not be inclined to change their views on who they claim to be. This could lead to a situation where these types of individuals might switch identities while at home or abroad; hence, choosing the identity which best suits their interest at a given time.

Furthermore, Mason (1990) asserted that this kind of discovery could make journeys become a 'commitment to action'. In light of **Kura**'s narrative, I would say when Sudanese who perceive themselves to be Arabs go abroad and are not treated as equals, they tend to come back to Sudan with a feeling of disappointment, which henceforth makes them rethink their Arabised identity. This notion correlates with the narrative of one of Deng's (1995) respondents, who explained that from his personal experience, many Arabised Sudanese who went to the Gulf had never met Arabs before and when they find out that they are treated differently and have little or nothing in common with the Arabs; they henceforth come back feeling anxious about being identified with the Arabs.

On their returning, the culture which they have imbibed through the process of Arabisation (i.e. the Arab culture) becomes distasteful, because of the treatment they received abroad. As a result of this, their identity might be dissonant from what they really perceive themselves to be. As a commitment to action, individuals on returning from abroad could perhaps engage in activities to change or reconstruct their own identity. Additionally, they may try to convince others, whom they believe share those salient Arabised particularities with them, to perceive their identity differently. This, therefore, cements the idea that individual perceptions of themselves and their in-groups could strengthen their

belief in the insignificant differences they have created between themselves and the out-groups.

Another respondent who viewed self-perceived identity being changed when Sudanese, who had perceived themselves as Arabs, returned from abroad was **Maput**:

*“When you go outside of the country, particularly Northerners, who perceive themselves to be Arabs and they see Arabs of the Middle- East and they interact with them and they see [the] kind of attitude that is shown, perhaps even discrimination based on their skin colour; then you come back with a different emphasis on self-perception. Some begin to see themselves as Sudanese and not Arabs as a reaction to the way their identity was perceived abroad. It is a combination of continuity and also a certain element of shift, as you begin to see, for instance, Sudanese who come to the United States of America and they begin to see people who are called Blacks, many of whom are really quite light skinned and perhaps more Arab looking than the northern Sudanese. And then they really start to see themselves differently from the way they see themselves”.* (Darfurian Expatriate: New York).

Considering the above narratives, Blanton (1997, p.5) said travels are ‘about the interplay between observer and observed, between a traveller’s own philosophical biases and preconceptions and the tests those ideas and prejudices endure as a result of the journey.’ What Deng (1995) was saying in terms of Northern Arab-Sudanese returning from abroad with a different emphasis on identity based on the discrimination suffered can also be said to



correlate with Blanton's discovery. In that sense, that the discrimination or disrespect suffered serves as the benchmark against which those ideas of being an Arab-Sudanese are tested when abroad. As a result, on returning, the preconceived ideas and philosophy of being Arab have been tested against typically Arab nations, where they have not been accepted, perhaps based on skin colour or country of origin. This will create a shift in their emphasis on their Arab identity when they come back to Sudan. This might also lead to either a renegotiation of the Arab identity; thereby, opting for a more general Sudanese identity as opposed to an imposed or imbibed Arab identity.

In my opinion, the two statements by **Kura** and **Maput**, which emphasises the discrimination against Arabised Sudanese abroad and the de-emphasis of the Arab identity on return negates any argument for an essentialist view of defining an Arab in Darfur/Sudan. This is because Arabs in the Gulf, who are predominantly light brown skinned, do not see any racial likeness between themselves and the predominantly black skinned Sudanese. As a result, any essentialist criterion of defining an Arab based on skin colour in Sudan is again irrelevant, as they do not meet that criterion when they come in contact with the typical Arab world. This further strengthens the argument that any difference along ethnic lines in the form of an African/Arab dichotomy is not sustainable when examining Arabness in Darfur/Sudan against typical Arab societies. This, in effect, might lead to conflict when groups perceive that they are being forced to accept an identity which does not necessarily represent who they are and, most importantly, are discriminated against both at home and abroad. In my view, this discrimination encourages groups to champion their own identity and, crucially, work to strengthen beliefs in whatever difference they perceive to already exist between existing groups; thus, resulting in a public safety concern.

The Arabised Sudanese renegotiation or change of identity perception on return from abroad could be correlated with the argument Hall (2000) expressed in *'Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities'*. He argued identity is:

*'always in part a narrative, always in part a kind of representation, it is always within representation and identity is not something which is formed outside and then we tell stories about it. It is that which is narrated in one's own self'* (Hall, 2000, p.147-48).

Additionally, I would like to add that identity is also relational. My interpretation of this assertion is that identity is continuously produced and reproduced as a result of our interaction with the external world. This is in line with the social constructivist view of identity: in this case travelling, which is making the Arab-Sudanese reshape their own identity conceptions on returning from overseas. It still points to the whole idea of perception and misperception by various agents involved in the process of identification and re-identification of the Arabised Sudanese identity. This is due to the Arab-Sudanese perceiving themselves to be of equal standing with Arabs of other nations and, by contrast being discriminated against; thus, leaving them in a state of confusion and a process of possible re-identification when they get back to Sudan. Such a new perspective might influence a group's cultural awareness affecting several parts of its culture, such as writing, painting, photography and music. This is a result of the possible re-identification motivated by the way they were treated by people, who they thought shared similar identities (Hall, 2000).

Consequently, in my view, individuals who do not leave the country might find themselves in a situation where they have to deal with learning new things passed down by the elites and a re-orientation towards a new form of identity. Seeing how identity changes overtime by travelling and engagement with people of similar identities takes me to my next point, where some of my respondents described the extent to which identity becomes a tool for international engagement.

### 4.3.3. Identity as a Tool for International Engagement

Some of my respondents would talk about the way identity has influenced the pattern of international engagement in the Sudanese conflict more so than the one observed locally or nationally in Sudan. This notion was expressed by **Ben**:

*“This means that the conflict in Sudan becomes of interest to many actors within the region and outside the region. How the world responds to the conflict in Sudan has a lot to do with the configuration of identities. So, that by and large, you see the Arab world and the Muslim world are sympathetic to the position of the government because they are identified with that identity of Sudan as an Arab or Muslim country. You see the black African countries sympathetic to the cause of the South and to the cause of the non-Arabs as a whole”.* (Field Officer, UNDPKO: New York).

**Ben**'s narrative supports the work of H.D.S. Greenway's concept of 'kin-country syndrome': 'groups or states belonging to one civilisation that become involved in war with people from a different civilisation naturally try to rally support from other members of their own civilisation' (cited in Hutchinson, 2003, p.15). The idea that identity serves as a rallying point for support in times of conflict was also echoed by another respondent, **Omogo**:

*“Also, the neighbouring countries like Libya and Arab countries are not helping matters. For example, when you go to them for assistance, they will tell you that you are fighting against Islam. It's the government that is against Islam because Islam does not say you have to kill people if*

*they are against you. The international organisations play a very important role when people are suffering, but the Arab nations don't do any of that". (Lawyer: Sudan).*

This idea might not be exactly as accurate as it sounds here, given there is no evidence to back up **Omogo**'s narrative. Looking at the statement from the angle of relations between the bordering Arab countries such as Libya and Chad, however, it might be correct to suggest that support would be given to groups which are seen to foster the Arab identity, as opposed to groups not seen to share similar identities. This, therefore, buttresses some elements of the Libya-Chad relations examined in Chapter Two. In light of this, De Waal (2005, pp.200-201) asserted that:

*'From the point of view of the government in Khartoum, the labels are tactically useful. While insisting that the conflict is tribal and local, it turns the moral loading of the term "Arab" to its advantage, by appealing to fellow members of the Arab league' [in this case Libya and Chad] 'that Darfur represents another attempt by the West ( and in particular the United States) to demonize the Arab world. In turn, this unlocks a regional alliance, for which Darfur stands as proxy for Iraq and Palestine. Looking more widely than Darfur, the term "Arab implies global victimhood'.*

Considering this alongside **Omogo**'s narrative and given the sentiment involved in giving support to fellow Arab countries by the Arab league countries, it is highly plausible to have a situation where they might decline to help groups not considered Arab or Arabised. This, therefore, compounds a situation where groups already see themselves as different. The

belief in those differences would be strengthened by the preferential treatment that some groups might receive as a result of their alliance with the Arab league countries.

By contrast **Omogo**'s notion seemed to contradict the argument made by Mamdani (2009) in *'Saviours and Survivors'* that the *'Save Darfur Movement'* in America was a combining of Christian and faith based groups to highlight the criticality of the Darfur crisis. They helped with the humanitarian situation on ground and, to a large extent, made the international community pay extra attention to the conflict. The notion that international engagement in the Darfur conflict is viewed along identity lines is predicated on the perception held by some of my respondents. This led them to argue that help is provided and received based on the identities of the different groups in the camps, where Arab and African groups are associated with good and poor conditions respectively. This notion of preferential treatment for identities in camps is, however, negated by Mamdani's argument and the works of organisations like the *'Save Darfur Movement,'* whose work is victim focused as opposed to identity focused. The discriminatory provision of help would be largely impossible, as most of those in the camps share similar religions which could have been considered another dividing line.

In addition, at the level of international organizations like the *United Nations*, there were strands of identity and how this has affected international engagement. In her interview, **Coret** (field staff, UNOCHA, New York) said: *"The peculiarity of the Sudanese state is such that because it is viewed as an Islamic state, it [therefore] tends to receive so much attention"*. Another respondent, **Jorin** (Practitioner, UNHCR, Sudan), also expressed similar thoughts but this time in terms of the self-perception of Khartoum itself: *"The fact that Khartoum views itself as an Islamic state also makes it view the international community's action in its territory with suspicion"*.

I will explain these two narratives in terms of their instrumentality to the conflict. The first statement by **Coret** could be explained in terms of the attention Sudan received in the aftermath of the September 11 attack on the *World Trade Centre* in New York. Sudan is perceived in some quarters in the international community as an Arab and Islamic country and once a host to the Al-Qaeda leader (Osama Bin-Laden). This perception of Sudan as an Islamic and Arab nation made the United States government under President George W. Bush's administration change its policy to see Sudan as a 'good Arab' nation. As a result, Khartoum recognised that the United States now values its relationship more than just a routine ally. This gave the Sudanese government more flexibility in the negotiations of the North/South conflict and a relaxation of accusations of committing atrocities in Darfur filed against politicians (Imran, 2009).

The practical and ideological benefits to be derived from the change in policy towards Khartoum were needed to gain Khartoum's assistance and cooperation in the '*War on Terror*'. The change in policy direction towards Khartoum resulted in the Darfur conflict being seen as a secondary matter; thereby, allowing the government of Sudan to continue with its atrocities in the Western part of the country. This change also caused a lacklustre approach from other countries and international organisations, such as *USAID*, Norway, Britain, Kenya, and France, towards the Darfur crisis (Prunier, 2005).

The second statement can also be considered from an international community perspective, by looking at how the government of Sudan manipulated it because of the way it perceives both itself and is perceived by the international community. Since Sudan perceived itself as an Islamic and Arab country, the Sudanese government manipulated politics by hiding behind the sentiments of religion (Islam). This played out by Khartoum's resistance to any *United Nations* intervention force for fear of stopping the atrocities it was committing in Darfur and for fear of being arrested for prosecution in the *International Criminal Court* at *The Hague*. The government threatened the withdrawal of its acceptance and support for the

African Union Mission in Sudan, evident in an extreme rant by President Bashir that '*Darfur would become a graveyard for UN troops*' (cited in Prunier, 2005, p.174). This attitude climaxed when the government denied the *United Nations*, Under Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs', an entry permit to visit Darfur under the guise 'that as a Norwegian he [could] offend Muslim sensibilities' (Pruner, 2005, p.176). Both narratives depict the result of perception by the international community and the government of Sudan and also show how this distorted perception leaves a large section of the nation unrecognised. This, therefore, creates a situation where the other segments of the population are forced to agree with the identity tag they are represented by their government and the international community.

This (mis)perception shows the insensibility of the international community to identity dynamics in a country like Sudan. This insensitiveness only stands to complicate issues, by taking the government's perception (Arab-Islamic) of itself as representative of the nation's identity. This, in turn, creates a problem for citizens within the country, as they are forced to accept that only one identity (Arab-Islam) exist in Sudan which must be adhered to, possibly by force. Most importantly, these points show the instrumental use to which the distorted perception of identity could be adapted to suit the goals of the government or the international community. In the case of Darfur, religion could not be attributed as a direct cause of conflict, given nearly all of the identities involved have the same religious orientation (i.e. Islam). Religion, therefore, cannot be emphasised as a cause of conflict and henceforth be implicated in the escalation of violence as mentioned in Chapter Two. As will be seen later in this chapter, however, there are traits of religion which could be implicated in this conflict; therefore, it could still be considered to be a secondary factor.

Furthermore, none of my respondents actually saw or expressed the need to implicate religion in the conflict process. With this in mind, the extent to which religion can be implicated as a primary cause of conflict in Darfur, particularly among the identity groups

under consideration is downplayed. It could, therefore, be argued that religion did not conceal the supposed causes of the Darfur conflict. Furthermore, because the victims and populace of the conflict areas are a mixture of: perceived Black Africans, who are Muslims; perceived Arab citizens, who are Muslims; and the Khartoum government, which is Arab-Islamic oriented; religion, therefore, becomes of little relevance. These religious dynamics should minimise or totally eliminate the need to blame and obliterate one particular religious group; it could, therefore, be said the explanation lays in the perceived identity difference. Overall, the perceptions of identity, both locally and internationally, have implications for certain groups within Sudan, especially those groups in peripheries like Darfur. This leaves me questioning why an Arab-Islamic government would fight against people of the same religious identity. It also leads me to my next point on the motivation which might warrant this, i.e. Arabism versus Islamism.

#### **4.4. Arabism versus Islamism- The Ideology to Creating Misperception**

In the previous section, I discussed identity and how perception has led the groups under consideration to possess a strong belief that their in-group is different from the other. I argued that the identity groups (i.e. Arab/African) are a result of perception rather than real or objective differences among the groups. The group dichotomy, I argued, are strengthened by the belief in such differences and reinforced by several factors as raised by my respondents: biology, migration, historical processes, leverage, language and regional/international politics.

From the discussion, one crucial point raised was the process through which these identities were dichotomised or how this dichotomy was further strengthened. My respondents talked about these processes of the Arabisation and Islamisation of Sudan and how they have contributed to why groups now see themselves differently from another. The processes described portray an instrumentalist view, which largely uses identity to the



benefits of some groups and to the disadvantage of others; the politicisation of identity problematises identity issues in Darfur/Sudan. This is the case when the 'so-called Arabs' try to model the whole country on the basis of an Arab-Islamic identity. In the Sudanese context, the terms 'Arabism' and 'Islamism' could have different meanings. It could mean a process of adopting or claiming a lineage that is linked with an Arab ancestry; thereby, believing their culture and race is Arab by nature. Closely complementing this belief in their cultural and racial assumptions is Islam, which is usually seen as the religion of the Arab world. Pertinent here is the ideological outlook of these terms, which is perpetuated both nationally and internationally (Deng, 1995).

The ideological utility of Arabism and Islamism serve as the basis for dispute among the groups under consideration. This is because the so-called Arab groups who find themselves in government tend to impose these ideological views on the whole country. In my view, Arabism is the politicised nature of the Arab culture, which is being imposed as the national identity of Sudan with international implication(s). To clarify, any group that does not accept this categorisation is considered an enemy and dealt with, leading up to the use of force. Islamism, on the other hand, is the process which aids Arabism, as its complementary nature allows Arab culture to spread.

This was a major sub-theme emerging under the theme of identity. My respondents would talk about Arabism and Islamism (in an age of globalisation) from a variety of viewpoints. These views range from international engagement to how the issue of Arabism constitutes a broader international policy agenda of Islamist governments, currently being executed in Sudan. In this section, Arabisation will be subsumed under the term 'Arabism' and used interchangeably by both myself and, quite often, my respondents. Further to the discussions above, in the case of Sudan, no one has really clarified what it is to be Arabised or provided a clear and distinct definition of the concept of Arabisation. The closest to a

definition of Arabisation can be found in the work of Altoma (1970, p.695) in *'Sudan Notes and Records'*:

*'A process aiming at achieving maximum use of Arabic in different Arab countries in oral and written communication. It covers issues ranging from the general question of making Arabic the official language of the state, the language of instruction, to matters related to the preparation of technical and scientific terminology in Arabic. In this broad sense, all Arab countries are faced with one phase or another of Arabisation'.*

Altoma only spoke from a socio-linguistic perspective, explaining how the Arabic language could be used as a resource of the nation. He failed to take into consideration other aspects of society which Arabic culture could be having an influence on, such as politics, foreign policy, health and so on. It has further been asserted that 'the process of homogenization could be referred to as Arabisation of Islam which places much significance on rituals and codes of Islamic conduct more than substance and Islam's universalism. Arabisation of Islam is a trend that tends to block Muslims from the real divine value of Islam' (Ghoshal, 2008, p.1-2).

From Ghoshal's explanation on the process of homogenisation, some of my respondents talked about how the system has been Islamised by the *'so-called'* Arabs dominating the polity, as a result, it is insurmountable to separate the influence of Islam on the Arab culture and vice-versa. For instance, my respondent, **Ekole**, said:

*"Perhaps there is an Arab domination, but this Arab domination came from another depth of the problem. We see it as rather the Islamist domination, in the sense that*

*what is now dominating Sudan is what they call Islamism. It's not only something in Sudan, it's rather international, and the Islamist group is called (al-Jamir) or Islamist movement. This movement is something rather international: you can feel its effect in Algeria, where there was the salvation government which came by elections, but after only few months it's fading down, because people clearly saw what was happening, you can feel it in Yemen, in relation to Hamas in Palestine which is also related to Iran. It happened that once the Arabs or what can be called Arabs in Sudan affiliated to this, it became directly affiliated to the Islamist group". (Lecturer: Sudan).*

This statement, to a large extent, gives some indication of where the perception of Sudan as an Islamic state comes from and how its propagation and support by Arab countries tends to create a perception that Sudan is exclusively an Arab state. This perception creates a problem in terms of how some citizens view their imposed Arab identity, which is, paradoxically, deeply rooted in a geographical African location. It also creates tension amongst several groups with regards to how the national identity of Sudan is defined (i.e. Arab or African, Afro/Arab or Sudanese). For instance, the question of national identity largely intensified the North/South conflict: the North wanted to define the country as Arab; the South wanted it to be defined as African. Given the independence of the South, however, the question of identity is still prevalent for several groups in the North, as it has been taken for granted that the North is an Arab entity. The other groups have now become more outspoken and reject the idea that they are all 'so called Arabs' (Salih, 2005).

From **Ekole's** statement, it could be said that because most of the opposing identities are predominantly Muslims, it was assumed they would automatically take on the Arab

identity. In other words, the already Islamised should be automatically Arabised. Furthermore, my respondent sees this unwarranted assumption in Sudan from the context of something bigger than just a local or national political agenda. He sees the domination of Sudan by the people perceiving themselves to be Arabs as part of an international political agenda to Arabise and Islamise the state through the various Islamist movements in Sudan. The nascent effect of international Islamist movement in politics can be traced back to the Muslim brotherhood in Egypt (Rashwan, 2009). The growing influence of politicised Islam, however, can be seen from the angle of Islamic movements becoming more involved in the political system. Their enthusiasm can be linked to the success of the Islamic Movement in the 1986 election in Sudan and the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front landslide victory 1991 (Boddy-Evans, n.d). More recently, Muslim brotherhood victories were evident in the Egyptian elections of 2005 and 2012. Of particular note is the victory of Hamas in Palestine in 2006 (Elad-Altman, 2006).

What comes to mind with **Ekole**'s view is the concept of political Islam. This term has been used interchangeably with other connotations like Islamic fundamentalism, radical Islam, Islamic extremism. Several writers (for instance, Fuller, 2003; Feldman, 2003; Roy, 2004) have tried to describe or define political Islam. In my view, the most analytical and encompassing definition is that of Denooux (2002, p.61), a French writer who described Islamism as:

*'A form of instrumentalisation of Islam by individuals, groups and organizations that pursue political objectives. It provides political responses to today's societal challenges by imagining a future, the foundations for which rest on re-appropriated, reinvented concepts borrowed from the Islamic tradition'.*

Framing the narrative of **Ekole** in line with this definition of Islamism and the extent to which countries can be seen working in line with it, it could be suggested religion is mixed with the socio-political and economic aspects of the State. This relates to my earlier allusion that religion could be seen as a secondary factor, due to the inability of leaders to separate religion from politics. Although most of my respondents were not opposed to the Sharia, they were opposed to the fact that the culture of foreign Islamic states, who are the sponsors of the spread of this Islamism/Arabism, is being imposed on them.

These countries are Arab states who intend to spread Arab culture to create a sphere of influence, alongside the propagation of Islam which they believe should be the way of life for everyone. In the case of Darfur/Sudan, this was reflected in the geopolitics involving Libya (under Gadhafi), Chad and Sudan, with Libya being the main sponsor under the guise of Pan-Arabism (De Waal, 2005). Darfur was always considered an important element in the creation of that Arab belt. For instance, in 1972, Gadhafi sponsored the creation of an Islamic Legion in Darfur called '*Failaka al-Islamiya*,' whose main purpose was the unification and Arabisation of the region. Likewise, in Darfur, Gadhafi also supported the creation of an Arab Union represented by a 'militantly racist and Pan-Arabist organization' called 'Tajammu al- Arabi'. The sole purpose of this organization was to emphasise the Arab character of the region (Prunier, 2007).

Taking this argument further, I will now attempt to examine Arabism (Arabisation), Islamism (Islamisation) through the perspectives of my respondents. The extent to which Islam has been Arabised was highlighted by some of my respondents, by pointing out that not all Arabs are Muslims. One of my respondents, **Sidika**, said:

*“Of course, I differentiate between Arab and Islamic culture. Islamic culture is obeyed by all Muslims irrespective of the tribes. It is not true that every Muslim is*

*an Arab. Many Arabs that you see are not even Muslims”.*

(Cleric: Sudan).

What **Sidika** was referring to here was the fact that you find Arabs who are non-Muslims; as a result, trying to impose Islam on everyone despite them not being Arabs is another way of explaining the Arabisation of Islam. So, the idea of forcing people to take on identities which are not their own is a total contravention of their rights; hence, people are willing to fight against that. **SH**'s assertion is similar to the findings of O'Fahey (1996, p.256) on *'Islam and Ethnicity in the Sudan'*:

*'The manifest aim of the Sudanese Islamists is to create a new Sudanese Islamic identity; their means are complex and include educational initiatives, control over money from Arab oil states, banking, and the acculturation of the influx of Southerners and Westerners into the North because of war and famine'.*

Likewise, Deng (1995) further strengthens O'Fahey's (1996) assertion on the aggressive policy option adopted by the polity. He said, historically, Arabism and Islamism were a result of peaceful relations and assimilation; whilst the latter patterns of Arabism and Islamism have been 'pursued through organised force and ruthless use of military power' (Deng, 1995, p.37). This assertion buttresses O'Fahey's (1996, p.256) claim about the 'influx of Southerners and Westerners into the North because of war and Famine'. This could have been systematically and/or deliberately arranged by the Arab dominated government to ensure that people moved to the North, which is a symbol of its Arabisation and Islamisation pursuit. Presumably, the orchestration was carried out to get the new arrivals acculturated and assimilated into the perceived identity of the North. This assimilationist perspective is in line with Lesch (1998, pp.8-9):

*'leaders of the dominant group assume that they have a civilising mission in relation to the smaller groups and [in their view] history-less' peoples in their midst. The latter should welcome assimilation of the national culture and identity'.*

O'Fahey's (1996) assertion shows the aggressive nature through which groups perceiving themselves as Arabs and occupying the government seek to impose Arabisation policies on all of the country; thereby, defining their identity as Arabs. It also reinforces how these policies create a feeling of difference between groups that do not consider themselves Islamist (usually from an ideological standpoint) and are, therefore, not Arabised since both concepts reinforce each other. This situation reinforces earlier arguments on perceived differences, by generating a belief that if one is not an Islamist and Arabised, then they do not belong to Sudan thus leading to conflict between opposing identity groups.

To most of my respondents, Islam is a way of life: this is in line with the teachings of the Holy Quran (7:52): *'For We had certainly sent unto them a Book based on knowledge, which we explained in detail- a guide and a mercy to all who believe'*. Despite this, my respondents do not believe its doctrines should be imposed on others nor do they see Islam as synonymous to Arab culture because non-Arabs are also Muslims. They believe Islam is the belief in one God and the strict adherence to certain rules of faith as prescribed by the Prophet Mohammed. On the other hand, in my view, Islamisation is the conscious or deliberate effort by authorities to encourage or forcefully ensure their citizens take on the ideals of the Islamic faith.

From some of my respondents' statements, they try to distinguish between who is an Islamist and who is a Muslim. As explained, being a Muslim means following the tenets of the Islamic religion; while an Islamist is someone who shares a more forceful or extreme view of tenets of the religion and hence makes it more of an ideology to be imposed on

others regardless of their religious beliefs. This imposition could be done explicitly by attrition or implicitly through policy implementation when it becomes a matter of national policy. Another respondent, **Owuro**, in Wad Maddani, said:

*“Also, the external parties are not helping matters at all. For instance, because you don’t conform to their ideology, you are told you don’t deserve help. I don’t know where it is prescribed that unbelievers deserve to die, so who is the greater enemy of God?”(Doctor: Sudan).*

What **Owuro** was suggesting here is the government adopts aggressive means in implementing its policy of Arabising the State through the forceful spread of Islam. In contrast to my earlier argument about religion not being a primary basis for conflict, religious differences from this narrative arise in opposition to the ideology which is considered by my respondents as synonymous to Islamism. Also, the international dimension comes into being from the statement, showing that Arabisation through Islamism has gained external support. The solidarity was shown in reverse during the Gulf war, when the Khartoum government showed its support for the Iraqi government because Saddam Hussein had supported it in its war in the South when no one did. As a result of this, even Sudanese in diaspora showed a sense of solidarity for an Arab brother, even if they did not believe that Iraq should have invaded Kuwait. A perceived stronger reason for their support was that they believed Iraq was fighting a much bigger evil (i.e. the United States of America) (Deng, 1991).

**Ekole** goes further on his point about the perpetuation of Islamism in Sudan as part of a bigger international agenda. He expressed displeasure at how the government is not doing anything for the people of Sudan, and continues to propagate the Islamic ideology to the detriment of its citizens. **Ekole** said:



*“They say that their first test for the Islamist movement was in Sudan and it succeeded and because of that all of them are trying by all means to be successful and not to be defeated. This is exactly what is happening in Sudan, they are not working for the benefit of Sudan or the Sudanese people. They are working for something even larger. This is what they say: that even if three quarter of the Sudanese people die, they will continue to rule the quarter of the people who are Islamists”.* (Lecturer: Sudan).

**Ekole**'s use of 'they' refers to both the government and the external parties offering support to its Arabisation and Islamisation pursuit. The propagation of Islamism has been demonstrated by several governments in various ways, which invariably leads to and aids conflict and its continuation. Focusing on the present government, President Omar Al-Bashir, after two years in power in 1991, sealed his Islamist-leaning ideological stance, by adopting the Islamic penal code (Sharia). The adoption of this law re-echoes the '*September Laws*' of Nimieri, who also changed to being an Islamist for political expediency (Beshir, n.d).

Furthermore, on economic and trade matters, Sudan utilised the Arab racial and cultural angle to garner support from the Arab world for investments in Sudan. Although the Arab countries tried, as much as possible, to separate trade and business interests from their religious affiliation with Sudan, the government of Sudan ensured this was particularly played out. As mentioned by **Ekole**, however, the benefits accrued from these affiliations did not spread to the majority of the Sudanese people through the treasury; rather, it only benefitted stalwarts of the 'National Islamic Front', who are the current ruling party officials (Deng, 1995). In this vein, O'Fahey (1996, p.264) also said:

*‘The promulgation of an Islamic Law is only one aspect of a process whereby the Islamists are seeking to establish their hegemony over both the state and society. Their current means, given impetus by the 1989 coup, include ad hoc alliances with locally influential Sufi families or movements, the establishment of armed militias both in the cities and countryside, purges of academics, lawyers and journalists, and perhaps most importantly, the creation of financial institutions and trading monopolies that are increasingly independent of outside financing’.*

Another event supporting **Ekole**’s narrative was the visit of President Al-Bashir to Tripoli in March, 1990. On that visit, he purportedly announced the merger of Sudan with Libya within four years to create an Arab belt, which would then spread Islam throughout the whole of Africa (De Waal, 2005). The narratives and literature show the extent to which the Sudanese government gets external support for its Arabisation policies, as well as demonstrating a situation in which the polity (re)structure identity for instrumental reasons, enhancing its own power and support base to the disadvantage of other groups. The aggressive nature with which the government pursued its Arabisation and Islamisation policies is characteristic of a *‘control model’*; whereby the state by all means necessary tries to undermine or even annihilate other groups existing within the country. This could be done either by assimilation, repression or outright conflict as in the case of Darfur (Lesch, 1998).

Another dynamic to Arabisation in Darfur is the extent to which the government encouraged the flow of foreigners into certain parts of Sudan without control. The main people whom the government left uncontrolled are Arab migrants from neighbouring countries like Niger and Chad. This is aided by the geographical location of Sudan which is bordered by several Arab states. Also, some groups within Sudan share the same ethnicity

with other groups in the bordering states; thereby, creating a situation whereby governments could seek support from others it considers friendly to its cause. In the case of Darfur, the Khartoum government was largely able to displace the perceived African population with the help of militias from within (Janjaweed) and groups from across the border aided by the Arab Chadian government. Despite this, for reasons of size, the displaced groups found themselves mashed into 'Bantustan-like ethnic reserves', which left the perceived Arab groups to run Darfur. As a result of the cooperation between Khartoum and Ndjamen, the conflict escalated more than expected because the Arab militias used for the displacement took ownership of the villages that were captured (Prunier, 2007). This allegedly intentional act by the government is seen by my respondents to be a way of causing conflict between the indigenous people, with the aim of Arabising those communities once the foreign groups occupy those villages.

They also talked about how the influx of foreigners has affected the traditional distribution channels which existed amongst indigenous people perceiving themselves to be Arabs and those who see themselves as Africans. Respondent **Ekole** said:

*"Yes, they are cultivators, they are semi-nomads and they are nomads. All of them created the traditional Darfur, they have their norms of co-existence; they know how to benefit from the resources. They know how to distribute these resources between them, i.e. nomadism and agriculturalism fairly. But all these changed with the import of foreign trend of Arab groups from North Chad and even from Niger, there's one reason, in order to Arabise the state". (Lecturer: Sudan).*

This narrative is supported by various writings on the peaceful coexistence of Darfurian communities who are split along occupational lines, with perceived Arab communities as

pastoralists and perceived African communities as sedentary farmers. The use of land was based on a system recognising all groups as owners of the land. This is not to suggest that communities were devoid of conflict over the use of land resources, but it had never been along the lines of being an Arab or an African, just on a community basis. It is well-known that Arab communities do fight themselves over shrinking animal resources. These conflicts were dealt with by the elders in such communities, who sought a win-win situation for conflicting parties (De Waal, 1989, 2005; Prunier, 2005; Young *et al.*, 2005).

The point raised by **Ekole**, to an extent, correlates with what will be discussed in the next chapter on cultural marginalisation, where the import of foreign culture creates a sense of animosity among indigenes and the foreigners who came with the aid of the government. Considering the repressive nature of the control model, it could be assumed that the government's support for the militias it used to displace its own citizens and, at the same time, allowing those militias to settle in those areas is a deliberate and strategic government policy to Arabise those areas (in this case, Darfur). This assumption is also based on the knowledge that the identity of the militias to be settlers is in line with how the government perceives itself and how it wants to be perceived; thus, resulting in a need to change the demographics of the area to suit its Arabisation policy. This point correlates with the role of identity in the conduct of New Wars, as postulated by Kaldor (1998, 2007).

**Ekole** further elucidated the government's intentional use of foreign occupants to Arabise and Islamise the country. He pointed out the strength in how Darfurians see themselves as a nation with long history and dignity and, contrastingly, what is being imposed on them is at variance with what Islam preaches:

*“Within these contexts they brought people whom they believe can be with them in Arabising and Islamising the area. Darfurians are more stronger in the face of these people by the way, because Darfur is a sultanate like Sokoto*

*in Nigeria. Islam entered in its great power from the West but because Islam in their mind is something they know, they want to bring that to Darfur and Sudan; and because of that, these new comers (non-indigenous Arabs) are the ones who are more eligible in their minds to dominate in Darfur". (Lecturer: Sudan).*

This narrative to an extent corroborates the argument on the government's policy of deliberate displacement for the purpose of Arabising those areas. Considering the settlements which arise, the government's Arabisation and Islamisation policies are being implemented to the detriment of other groups which are not considered identical to its model of identity. In addition, when Islamisation becomes a key component of the ethnic identity advocated by the government of Sudan, the power of solidarity becomes really strong. This, in turn, leads to the government's ability to gain support/cooperation from neighbouring governments and militias for the execution of violence in Darfur (Lesch, 1998, Marsh, 2007, Warhola, 1991).

This solidarity power was reflected in Marsh (2007, p.811):

*'Whenever a society must motivate its members to kill or risk their lives, thus consenting to being placed in extreme marginal situations, religious legitimations become important. Thus the 'official' exercise of violence, be it in war or in the administration of capital punishment, is almost invariably accompanied by religious symbolizations'.*

This quote shows the extent to which religious sentiment becomes a very potent force in recruiting groups who see opposition to Arabisation as antagonism to the will of God: to clarify, their belief in Islam and willingness to die for such a cause. It also reinforces the argument on the instrumental use of identity (in this case religion) for socio-economic and/or

political benefits accrued to groups which stand with the government in carrying out its Arabisation and Islamisation policies. This was exemplified in the recruitment of mainly perceived Arab groups in the military in the aftermath of 1989 coup, as well as the absorption of the Janjaweed militia into the army after the government was forced to dissolve them by the international community (Prunier, 2007). This situation is also characteristic of the *'ethnic model'*, where the dominant polity negatively skews recruitment into military, ministries, and parastatals in favour of its own ethnic group (Lesch, 1998). This breeds animosity between groups which already perceive themselves to be different and, additionally, strengthens the belief in such perceived differences.

**Ekole** also made a comparison with Nigeria; however, the only similarity between northern Nigeria and Darfur is the populace of both areas are predominantly Muslims. With Darfur sharing the same religion as the dominating polity, one could safely suggest that there should be no tension between the two sides. As argued earlier, however, religion is not a primary cause of conflict; therefore, it is debatable the extent to which Islam is being misinterpreted and used as a political tool in order to meet strategic aims of the government and the external parties supporting its Islamist agenda. This was reflected in **Ekole's** narrative: *"But because Islam in their mind is something they know, they want to bring that to Darfur and Sudan"*.

This narrative also depicts a situation where one party's definition of Islam differs or is at variance with that of the other party. In this study, Islam is defined by the Khartoum government ideologically; hence, creating a sense of political and/or religious identity which needs to be imposed on others. This imposition is in line with the ethnic and control models. The identity being imposed is not accepted by the other party who view Islam as God guiding principles for human relations rather than an ideology which should be imposed at the national level to satisfy personal, regional and international interests. The opponents of this imposition believe politics should be devolved of religion and it, therefore, should not be

involved in the policy and decision making realms. In the case of Sudan, religion labelled as Islamism through the Islamist regime has been used in perpetuating politics and policies in government. The argument here correlates with the works of O'Fahey (1996, p. 259):

*'To be a Muslim in a Fur- speaking village in Jabal Marra means something different than to be a Muslim in a Ja'aliyyin village near Shendi on the Nile; to be a Fur Muslim or a Ja'ali Muslim in Khartoum has yet another significance. In turn, these meanings are different from deliberate adherence to a specific Islamist political ideology'.*

In essence, the basic statement of differentiating between a Muslim who adopts the Islamic principles for human relations and who is an Islamist can be extracted from O'Fahey's (1996) statement. This differentiation is possible on the basis that the Fur people are Darfurians, whose vision of Islam is seen as God guiding principles for human relations without a need to politicise those beliefs. On the other hand, there are the politically well-placed Ja'ali and Khartoum Muslims who believe Islam should transcend the principles guiding human relations and that these should be extended to other aspects of society including the conversion of everyone to Islam. It, therefore, transforms into an ideology, as opposed to just a faith or religion. Consequently, different visions of Islam emerge. With this in mind, Deng's (1995) argument for the outbreak of the two civil wars between the North and the South could be applied to the Darfur situation. Deng (1995) argued that the civil wars were a result of the imposition of the Arabisation and Islamisation policies by the North on the South which viewed itself differently (i.e. Africanism and secularism). This argument could be applied to the Darfur crisis, for groups opposed to the Arabisation and Islamisation policies became targets of repression and overt violence (Deng, 1995).

From one perspective, Islamism, as viewed by the National Islamic Front (al-Jabha al-Islamiyya al-Qawmiyya) and implemented by the ruling National Congress Party (NCP), is an expression of the northern oligarchs system of preserving their control over most of Sudan. This especially applies to the Nile Valley which is the most industrialised, economically viable area of the North, occupied mainly by the Arabised elites. From NCP's perspective, Sudanese Islamism is a local expression of the Islamic resurgence, the determination to establish a social and political order based upon God's revelation (O'Fahey, 1996). This vision parallels Deng's (1995, p.45) argument: 'Historically, the language of politics was at the same time the language of religion' and 'orthodox Muslims also regard politics as an unseverable ingredient of Islamic order. This is why no Muslim government would separate the secular from the religious side of life'.

Even during the colonial era, it is worth mentioning that the northern Sudanese identity (Arabised identity) was being aggressively encouraged to be adopted as norm for the Sudanese identity. This was achieved by training merchants and government officials who came from the periphery in this form of identity; in return, the merchants and government officials took their newly learnt culture to the periphery and taught its people. Such trainings included: speaking the Arabic language, architecture, restrictions on women, and circumcision (Bona, 1981). Assessing the dichotomies regarding the definition of Islamic identity by the ruling party and my respondents, I now return to my argument on the perception of identity amongst conflicting parties.

The issue of perception here is represented in religious terms; although parties involved agree on the sanctity of Islam as the religion to follow, they conflict on the interpretation and misapplication of the tenets of Islam. This does not suggest religion is a primary cause of conflict; rather, it is a factor in pitching two parties which already perceive themselves differently against the other, with one party seeing itself as Arabised and the true defenders of Islam. On the other hand, there are people who perceive themselves to be non-



Arabised and view religion solely as a guiding principle to everyday life. These divided opinions about Islam within a population of people who perceive themselves to be ethnically different serves to intensify existing conflict but does not account for the onset of conflict. The Arabisation and Islamisation policies, in my view, strengthen the idea between the groups that they are different from one another. This is henceforth reflected in their varied perceptions of: Islam and its implication for politics; the inherent benefits to be achieved by taking on the national identity portrayed by the Central polity. These policies also further reinforce the historical idea that once one was Arabised and Islamised, they were free, superior and developed; conversely, as an African or non-Arabised, one was considered to be a slave, backward and undeveloped — this hence strengthens the group dichotomy (Deng, 1995; Flint & De Waal, 2005; Salih, 2005; Prunier, 2007).

The issue of identity was also highlighted when **Ekole** said:

*“In this case, our resources are known: in the past we had no problem of distribution, but with the new regime and with the Islamisation we have a problem. Not, as I said, of ethnicity but of a domination of an idea making use of ethnicity. So, in this case, ethnicity is just a means for serving a bigger purpose of Islamising and Arabising the country”.* (Lecturer: Sudan).

This narrative portrays identity as a tool being utilised in the propagation of an agenda which seems to go beyond the scope of Sudan: the bigger international agenda of Islamising and Arabising the country. The identity involved, in this case, is a more global form of Arab identity which is trying to use religion as a pretext to culturally dominate people who do not perceive themselves as Arabs or even Arabised. For instance, the famine which occurred in Darfur in 1984 was exploited by Gadhafi and Sudan’s Prime Minister, Sadiq al-Mahdi,

because of their preoccupation with the spread of Arabism (Prunier, 2007). Also, as Prunier (2007, p. 154) puts it:

*‘The impact of the Chadian War was not merely some kind of natural catastrophe which fell upon Darfur from the heavens; it was a deliberate policy engineered by Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi and the “Guide” of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi’.*

This event was exploited to foster the government’s Arabisation and Islamisation policy agenda. Historically, people who were Arabised are now referred to as the Riverian elites who tend to trace their ancestry to Saudi Arabia, Egypt and moved in through the North of the country (Nile valley area). Also, during the Anglo-Egyptian condominium, they were well educated, trained and took the reins of power after the departure of the colonial administration (El-Tom, 2006, De Waal, 1989, Flint & De Waal, 2005, Deng, 1995, Prunier, 2005). These instances show how regional and historical factors created a heightened sense of discrepancy among the different groups, as well as showing how this discrepancy has been reinforced by Arabisation and Islamisation policies over a period of time. This, thereby, encourages and shows one group’s claim to superiority, development and the right to rule: this is characteristic of the ‘ethnic model described by Lesch (1998). As a result of these policies, beliefs in the perceived differences amongst groups have been strengthened.

One of my respondents, **Kura**, talked about how, historically, Arabs are a new phenomenon and Islam does not belong to those Arabised Riverian elites who believe they are Arabs but are instead only Arabised: *“The existence of Arabs is recent as far as history is concerned, so they are not the rightful owners of Islam in Sudan.”* This respondent does not believe Islam should be dictated to others in Sudan by people who are not considered original inhabitants of Sudan. By virtue of their access to power and resources, these people are able to impose their views on the less privileged identities; thereby, in the process,

shaping the national identity in the Arabised model. The Arabisation of the Riverian elite was conjectured in the narrative of **Juju**, who classified himself as Arabised Riverian elite but chose to be defined as neutral in this case:

*“Sudan is not an Arab nation, such as Saudi Arabia is an Arab country. In Sudan, we are quite a bit Arabised. In terms of ethnicity, we are a bit of mixed ethnicity, i.e. Arabs and Africans. The degree of being Arab or African varies from one place to another”*. (Director, Research Institute: Sudan).

This assertion by a person who would normally be described as an Arab and an elite in the Sudanese context further strengthens the suggestion made earlier that the term Arab in Sudan is a matter of culturally adopting the Arab ways of life: for instance, the language, architecture, clothing, etiquette; and, currently, trying to imbibe and impose a political modus operandi based on Islamic teachings, given it is the main religion of the Arab world. To that extent, some of my respondents also talked about the ways Islam has been used by the ruling elites in the realm of politics, which is at variance with what they believe Islam preaches — this will be considered below. It also shows that Arabness in Sudan should not be seen as a racial term, as it has no objective facts to support this essentialist claim.

This analysis also agrees with the findings of Deng (1995) that Arabness in the Sudan should not be discussed racially but in cultural terms. To a large extent, this statement also correlates with my earlier suggestions about the Afro-Arab nature of the Darfur people. When **Juju** said *“in terms of ethnicity we are a bit of mixed ethnicity i.e. Arabs and Africans”*, it suggested there is no clear distinction between an Arab and an African; thereby, corroborating the blood line arguments outlined in previous section. In that sense, it could once again be suggested that creating a very clear cut line between Arab and African identities in Darfur will be fictitious if not impossible.

Regarding the politicisation of Islam by the ruling elites — which is perceived to be at variance with their beliefs about Islam — **Samba** said:

*“The Arabs, in a way, are dominating economically, socially, politically, culturally. Yet, we think that this has been maximised and galvanized by the present regime. In the past, there were plenty of students and after University they are selected into offices, but some are more equal than the other based on how you practice your rights. That is why we [perceived African groups] are struggling to have equal political, economic, and even social rights. We should also have equal cultural rights. Islam does not support the status quo, it’s just being used by some people for political purpose”.* (Engineer: Sudan).

The politicisation of Islam, as expressed by this respondent, shows the way in which a particular group has dominated the polity by adhering to a particular set of values that other parties find foreign and against the dictates of the religion (Islam) being used to infuse the spread of Arab culture. Since the independence of Sudan in 1956, it is on record that only three Northern Arabised groups have ruled Sudan to the detriment of other regions and groups (El-Tom, 2006; Prunier, 2007).

The domination also resonates with several arguments about the historical roots of the Arabised North and how colonialism helped put the Arabised Northern elites in a much better position due to their level of education and development in the regions they occupied. The domination of the polity by a particular group enables this group of Arabised elites to implement policies which enhance the relative power and position of their group. This dominance is particularly characteristic of the ethnic model, allowing for negatively skewed inter-ethnic competition in favour of the dominant polity for positions in important public

institutions, such as the military and civil service; as well as over the distribution of economic values, as evidenced in **Ekole**'s statement (Lesch, 1998).

This statement contains the core issues of dominance and discrimination discussed in Chapter Two. The dynamics of this will be discussed in detail in the following chapters. Those issues were also addressed by another respondent, **MADA** who said the non-inclusive nature of government policies has an ideological slant to it:

*“Not only implementation, but also the main government policies are not inclusive. They are biased to us; they are Islamist to the exclusion of non-Islamist and inclusion of only riverian Sudan to the exclusion of others. Basically, I see that the government policies are not fair with regard to my interest [development, welfare and security]”.*

My respondent here talks about an ideological culture in Sudan excluding other parties: if one is not an Islamist, they become excluded from both the decision making and the implementation processes of government policies. The degree to which Islamism has become entrenched in the polity and policy realm, as highlighted by **Samba** and **Mada**, parallels what Deng (2006) discovered in his study ‘*Sudan: A Nation in Turbulent Search of Itself*’. He asserted that Islamic fundamentalism has always existed in Sudan and has been very divisive. The fundamentalism promoted by the leading Sufi order was, however, accommodating of traditional Sudanese beliefs and institutions, but later prevailed with the spread of Islam. In addition, Deng (2006, p.156) stressed that:

*‘This aspect is important because it reflects a more tolerant and accommodating version of Islam than today's politicized and intolerant use of Islam by Arabised Muslim leaders at the Centre. Even among the modern Islamists, there are profound differences between the religious sects*

*with root in Sufism and the more contemporary Islamic movements that claim to represent a "rivalist" vision of Islam. In each of these sects, interpretation of the doctrine also differs significantly'.*

The nature of politicised Islam, where certain groups of people are denied access to their basic rights on the assumption that their commitment to the preferred national ideology is non-existent, leads to crisis between both groups. Also, as a result of the discrimination — to be discussed in later chapters — by one group of elites to another part of society tending to perceive themselves as different, some of my respondents talked about the perceived superiority complex expressed by those perceived to be Arab groups — due to their hold on power and state resources — which has come about because of this Arabised identity being propagated through Islamism. My respondent, **Mada**, said:

*"It's clear on the street even when you go on the streets; they say that son of the Nile area, i.e. Arabs, they think that they are superior to the other people". (Teacher: Sudan).*

I tested this assertion in Khartoum and the adjoining areas I visited, by speaking to people who would be considered African. As it transpired, their comments were: *"The Arabs are the owners of everything here, so they are superior to us"* and *"For me, in the Sudan, there is nothing for me as we are not equal. So, there is little I can achieve unless I turn to these Arab people"*.

Moreover, even someone considered to be Arab said: *"Even though I am Arab, but if you don't come from the Ja'aliyin or Nile area you are nothing and won't even be respected"*. The first two comments showed superiority in economic terms and the unbalanced nature of identities in Sudan. The last comment shared the sentiment that as long as one was not from the Nile area, then it was pointless to consider oneself to be an Arab or Arabised; however, he fails to mention the economic angle highlighted by the other two

commentators. This is not to say that all Arabs are well placed economically; rather, they are perceived in that way. The feeling of superiority is not actually new in the case of Sudan, as reported in the findings of an independence commission set up in 1955: 'It is unfortunately true that many northern Sudanese, especially in the uneducated class, regard Southerners as an inferior role.... the traders referred to and often call the Southerners Abud and slaves' (McCorguedale 1956 cited in Boumah-Wiafe, 1982, p.97).

The difference is that superiority feelings only existed within people of the North towards people of the South; it now exists amongst people of the Northern region in contemporary times. For instance, in the case of the conflict under study, Darfurians who are considered geographically to be part of the North are now also complaining about people who perceive themselves to be Arabs feeling superior to others in Darfur. So, the conflict is not only against people in the South but also Northerners, whom they perceive to be not part of the Arabised core. This also contributes to the debate on the Sudanese national identity espoused by Arabisation and the Islamisation policies of the government. The government failed in its imposition on the South, which, in turn, led to the two Sudanese civil wars. It is now trying to impose such ideological stands on other peripheries (in this case, Darfur) tightening and strengthening the existential belief between groups who perceive themselves differently; hence, resulting in violence to protect their respective identities.

At the other end of the discussion is the international aspect once again. One of my respondents, **Timbi**, talked about considering the international connectivity of the Islamisation and Arabisation processes, as it relates to Sudan:

*"At this moment, the Arabs have an organization called Jāmi'at ad-Duwal al-'Arabiyya. This is an international organization, the aim of this organization is that Arabs should be stronger and govern others everywhere, even in Sudan or any place. This situation led Arab tribes in Darfur*

*[to] feel that they are better than these other tribes. They support them to live better and give them chance to be officers in high offices". (Ex-Rebel: Sudan).*

The organization he mentioned, ‘*Jāmi‘at ad-Duwal al-‘Arabiyya*’, is the ‘*Arab League*’ whose main goal is:

*‘The strengthening of the relations between the member-states, the coordination of their policies in order to achieve co-operation between them and to safeguard their independence and sovereignty; and a general concern with the affairs and interests of the Arab countries’ (Arab league, 2012).*

No matter how inaccurate my respondents’ projections that the objective of this organisation is ‘*governing others everywhere*’ — this seems more like mere wishful thinking— **Timbi**’s notion supports the idea of the internationalised nature of Arabism through Islamism. Moreover, it cements earlier thoughts about the role Arabisation plays in ensuring those who were acculturated and now see themselves as Arabs tend to be elevated to higher status, as highlighted by **Maput**. This also corroborates what **Ekole** said about Arabism allowing for the Arabised to get leverage over those who are not accepted to be Arabised. It also confirms the superiority feelings expressed by **Kura** in his statement. Considering the last sentence of that narrative, Nadel (1985) also agreed that, in the process of Arabisation, new standards of wealth, power, pride and prestige were set. Even during the Anglo-Egyptian condominium, in order for one to be considered Arab they had to be Muslim. Consequently, it meant that they were free and could claim an Arab heritage. The outcome was that Arabs were not considered slaves and the term Arab henceforth connoted high status (Sharkey, 2008).

Another point worth talking about, which was raised by some of my respondents and connected with the theme of Islamism and Arabism, is the issue of equality. As explained



earlier, the identities in conflict here are predominantly Muslims who do not contest Islam as a way of life but, at the same time, do not agree with the ideological stance adopted by the dominant Arabised government and its Islamisation policies. The issue of equality becomes relevant in this section and by implicating how the process of Islamisation and Arabisation has, to an extent, created a non-level playing field between conflicting identities; thereby, strengthening the divide. This is synonymous to what **Kura** and the other two respondents talked about earlier. Furthermore, some respondents see inequality in terms of the treatment received when seeking jobs and how this relates to wealth distribution. Another respondent, **Arin**, said:

*“For me, the government support the Arab and there is no equality between all tribes in Darfur. The government says there is equality; but none is existent, because when you visit Darfur, you find the government treat the Arabs as employees and pay them salaries but the other tribes [are paid] nothing”. (Director, DRTA: Sudan).*

Whilst **Ekole** claimed:

*“Since that time we felt we had rights as Sudanese in the national wealth or heritage; very unfortunately, we have been treated as unequal to the North of the country”. (Development Officer: Sudan).*

These two respondents talked about how the people who they perceive as Arabs receive preferential treatment compared to other identities in the conflict region. The mistreatment is a result of the perceived Arab groups’ identification with the ideals of being Arabised, which falls in line with the ideological stance of the government. This identification results in them accruing benefits (security, such as arming of perceived Arab groups and the Janjaweed)

attached to being considered Arabs. Once again, this shows the instrumental use of identity and also creates a very strong basis for citizens' dislike of one another because one group is perceived to be treated better.

Such treatment prompted Idris (2005) to argue in *'Conflict and Politics of Identity in Sudan'* that when ethnicity instead of citizenship becomes the basis for socio-political and economic entitlements, the result is often tension and conflict often preceded by claims of injustices by individual and groups. In a similar vein, he asserted this situation has not been helped by the post-colonial regimes, as they tend to favour different levels of entitlements for certain groups. 'Those who are considered Arabs by the racialised state are treated as citizens and those who are perceived as non-Arabs are treated as subjects' (Idris, 2005, p.83). As argued earlier, these are discriminatory policies where some groups are seen to be more equal than others; this results in direct conflict and further strengthens the belief within the groups that they are different from each other. This perception of difference can be seen in economic terms expressed in disparity of wealth, as non-Arabised groups do not consider themselves equally competitive to the Arabised groups. Some of my respondents believe this state of affairs was not helped by the kind of policies implemented by the colonial government —accordingly, I consider identity and colonialism next.

#### **4.4.1. Politicised Religious Identity and Colonialism**

Another way in which this politicised religious identity was implicated in creating inequality was, from the point of view of some respondents, by looking at the issue of colonialism and its impact on constitutionalism, power and wealth distribution. Respondent, **Samba**, said:

*"They have also used Islam to dominate as well, because people being Muslims should not mean that you should use that culture to dominate. Islam does not do that and it does not mean people should not be given their rights. I think,*

*that because of the domination that's why the other parts of the country to the South or the West feel that they are marginalised and that they don't share equal rights and that they are not considered equal; and also in practice they are not equal citizens, when it comes to jobs etc."*

And

*"It's the problem of the colonisers when they left the country, they should have a structure in place about the constitutional aspect in Sudan in a manner that allows everyone to feel that they have equal rights; for them to have a good life". (Engineer: Sudan).*

Another respondent, **Bukky** (Women Rights Activist: Sudan), who talked about the existence of the status quo from the period of colonisation said: *"We can say that, like tribes in Darfur, they have not shared, since colonisation, independence in the decision making levels and resources"*.

Also corroborating this idea was **Jato**:

*"Actually, there were so many problems even before the independence in 1956 in many parts of the country. I don't think that the problem has anything to do with ethnicity, but because of maybe the backwardness of some parts of Sudan, as a result of the ruling style of the British. When they came, they came to the Centre and developed it, and also made education available to those in the Centre and part of the North. So, the most educated people got the most benefit.*

*This was the case; as a result, ethnicity does not have much to do with the distribution of services. It also happened that most of the people who are located in the North/Centre during the colonial rule are people we could refer to as riverian Arabs". (Diplomat: Sudan).*

The idea that those educated during the colonial era were allowed to acquire some kind of modern economy and took over the helms of affairs after independence was also strengthened by another respondent, **Juju**. He also implicated the structure left behind by Sudan's colonisers, which favoured one group to the detriment of others:

*"The seat of power in Khartoum is always dominated by those who are better educated or those who come from an economic background that relates to some kind of modern economy versus traditional economy and those who are citizens of urban centres. These set of people happen to be Arabised Riverian elites. This is also the result of the structure which the colonialist left behind; whereby, education was first known by Arabised Riverian elites".*

(Director, Research Institute: Sudan).

From the preceding, my respondents implicated colonial policies which, to a large extent, encouraged a state of geographical inequality between the Sudanese people through inadequate or poorly formulated constitutional arrangements. This left power to be concentrated in the hands of the Riverian elites, who are considered migrant Arabs and mainly Arabised elites of northern Sudan (Prunier, 2007): these groups are called 'outsiders, enemies, colonisers and usurpers' (Sharkey, 2008, p.42). The other Arab constituents during the pre-independence leading to independence era were mainly foreigners, who migrated from neighbouring Arab countries, especially from North Africa during the Middle Ages and

Islamic invasion of northern Africa, which led to intermarriage with indigenous groups (Deng, 1995). The immigrants were allowed to settle in northern Sudan and, furthermore, they were fully accepted and integrated into local communities with little or no objection (Boamah-Wiafe, 1982). Also, historically, Islamisation and ‘the acculturation of the indigenous population of the Northern provinces in the middle Ages had the unusual effect of shifting the native political authority from African rulers to immigrant Arabs and their Arabised progeny. Initially, the immigrant Arabs did not have any share in the political leadership; however, once they married native women, including daughters of traditional rulers, they were, in most cases, Islamised and Arabised with their offspring’. Accordingly, inheritance among native ethnic groups was generally maternal. The immigrant Arabs and Arabised natives who gained political power retained it because, according to Arabic customs, inheritance is paternal (O’Fahey, 1996).

Concurrently, the African groups believe the Arabised elites who currently dominate the polity are immigrants and also view Arabisation as unjustifiable and unacceptable. Furthermore, Islamising the nation is also an unacceptable state of affairs to the so-called African groups; thus, resulting in conflict, which started with South Sudan and spread to other parts of the country. The Arabisation and Islamisation policies have been positioned, managed and executed in a manner which allows other citizens to feel inferior and unequal to other citizens due to their identity (Miller, 1989).

Returning to the issue of colonial influence, which my respondents (**Samba, Bukky, Jato** and **Juju**) talked about, strands of Islamisation and Arabisation policies were encouraged during the Anglo-Egyptian condominium in northern Sudan and its peripheries (see Sharkey, 2008). The British policy in Sudan was synonymous to its policies followed in other colonies which were usually designed to avoid socio-political unrest alongside rising expectations. For instance, political activities engaged in by Southerners in the North were, to a large extent, restricted or even discouraged. Northern teachers in the South were

petitioned for engaging too much in politics and less on teaching, which, in turn, made children lose interest in learning (Sandell, 1982).

Moreover, a pass system was introduced to control inter-regional migration; whilst Southerners were discouraged from practicing some of the Northern style and customs they had acquired, including the adoption of Arabic names, clothing styles, architectural styles (Boamah-Wiafe, 1982). In the 1930's, a policy of the two main regions was implemented which barred Northerners from entering or working in the South. The reason for this was to prevent the undeveloped southern culture from being shadowed by that of the North. It could be said, however, 'the real objective was to create a self-contained racial or ethnic unit based on indigenous customs, traditional usage, and beliefs. In a way it was a divide and rule strategy' (Boamah-Wiafe, 1982, p.93).

Sudan, like other British colonies, after independence was left with defective political and constitutional structures based on models of Western societies and applied to traditional societies, without adequately considering the cultures and social tensions which define everyday life (Deng, 2008). Post-colonial elites in Sudan, i.e. immigrant Arabs/Arabised Riverian elites, accepted them and, more notably, frequently manipulated them for their own purposes (El-Tom, 2006). These defects have led to a breakdown in the society, as they tend to erode indigenous African norms and cultures with laws and regulations which are not entrenched in the host culture. This has led groups to engage in violent endeavours to secede by people who consider themselves marginalised or, at the very least, the request for social justice amongst peoples which maintain strong group identities. Instances of this phenomenon were seen in the quest for the Biafra (Igbo) people of Nigeria to secede, the armed insurrection in the Niger Delta of Nigeria in their quest for resource control; South Africa during the apartheid, northern Uganda and the ethnic cleansing in Rwanda (Baker, 2009).

Similar to others, in the case of Sudan, the constitution did not cater for the protection of people, who were at the time of independence not well represented in government. Moreover, the constitution left behind was easily manipulated by the elites, who were in charge due to low literacy levels and the undue optimism felt by now marginalised (Deng, 2008). The dividends of independence never came to fruition; instead, some groups received worse treatment than they had during the colonial period. This kind of treatment could be measured in terms of neglect, reflected in under-development, socio-economic and political marginalisation; hence, the eruption of conflict in its different ramifications (Horowitz, 2000). Overall, identity relations favoured by the colonial regime and built upon by post-independence governments have helped to strengthen the perceived differences between the groups under consideration. This could be attributed to the colonial regime's acceptance of the Northern elites' Arab-Islamic portrayal of the entire country at the time of independence, there being with little or no constitutional protection for groups which viewed themselves as different from that identity construct. The attendant effects of those decisions are evident in issues of development and marginalisation, which will be discussed in the next two chapters. In the next section of this chapter, I conclude on my findings providing a clear overview. Most importantly, I want to underline how the perception of identity led to conflict, rather than there being any real or objective fact depicting differences in identity; and how the government's national identity agenda, through its pursuit of Arabism and Islamism has further strengthened the belief in group identity differences. Overall, I intend to show how these factors contribute to the heightened level of (mis)perceptions of differences amongst the groups: a factor which threatens peace.

#### **4.5. Conclusion**

In this section, I conclude on my findings in relation to what has been examined in this chapter. I discussed how identity, in its entirety, is implicated in the conflict process. The crucial argument for this chapter is the idea that a belief in perceived differences — as

opposed to real/actual differences in identity — account for the onset, escalation and intermittent continuation of conflict. I also argued how the processes of Arabisation and Islamisation in the formation of a national identity are implicated in the development and concretisation of a strong sense of belief in perceived differences expressed by people in the conflict area. This section concludes on the basis of themes discussed in this chapter. To do so, I elucidate the different arguments about biology, historical migratory process, Arabisation, Islamisation, and the language used to actually depict perception as opposed to objective differences of the identities under consideration.

The argument for biology as a way of distinguishing people could not be substantiated by my respondents, as those who did talk about biology failed to convincingly demonstrate it accounts for distinctiveness between Arabs and Africans in the conflict area under study. Another assertion about symbolic biological traits, which discussed the features which could distinguish Arabs from Africans, fell short of credibly claiming such distinctiveness amongst the groups under consideration. These arguments did not support any essentialist or racial criteria, which could have helped in solidifying an Arab genealogy as often claimed by groups who perceive themselves as Arabs (Deng, 1995; Prunier, 2005; El-Tom, 2006).

From fieldwork observations in Khartoum, I did not see any differences between my respondents, who were a mixture of people likely to consider themselves to be ethnically distinct units but all related in some way. What I discovered, however, was they instead failed to accurately define what constitutes an Arab and an African; what they all did instead was implicate stereotypes as the defining characteristics of both groups and as the certain parameters for distinguishing these identities. Such defining parameters included the extent to which the people perceived to be Arabs acquire higher statuses as a result of their perceived identity; how people seen as black Africans are considered to be slaves and subjected to lower statuses. Historical migratory processes were also implicated as one of the



reasons why there are people with Arab looking features; but, at the same time, those who implicate immigration failed to acknowledge that typically Arab looking people exist in Sudan. What they do acknowledge, however, is that there is an intermingling of ethnic groups, from the historical era to colonial era and present day Sudan. Those who argued for the impact of migratory process, to an extent, negated any essentialist arguments for a pure Arab biological line: they do not see its possibility, given the extent to which groups have intermarried and co-existed.

Of importance are the phrases used by my respondents elucidating that they do not see real differences, but a belief in perceived differences which serves as a cause and stimulant for conflict. Such phrases used to depict perception — rather than a real difference, if it exists — and which would have been simple and clear enough to express are: ‘*consider themselves*’, ‘*the so called Arab*’, ‘*calling themselves Arabs*’, ‘*allegations*’, ‘*some who consider themselves Arabs*’. These are the kinds of phrases used by my respondents throughout the research. All of these phrases fail to create a clear dichotomy between Arabs and Africans; furthermore, they only tend to express what my respondents would like to see which, in reality, does not exist (i.e. a clear distinction between an Arab and an African). Additionally, these phrases cast doubts on the legitimacy of a person who calls him/herself Arab or African; thus, leaving beliefs in differences between the groups in the realm of perception and self-defined criteria.

From the point of view of my respondents, a crucial requisite to be considered an Arab is the ability to speak Arabic —most of my respondents learned this knowledge. Language knowledge or proficiency, from the viewpoint of government, serves as a standard through which one qualifies to be called an Arab; as a result of being an Arab, leverage is accrued, as highlighted by some of my respondents. The existence of this language capability within my sample of respondents, who were a mixture of people considered to be Africans or Arabs, to a large extent, shows that difference cannot be justified in terms of language;

henceforth, rendering this cultural criterion of distinction flawed. Even though most of these groups have different languages they speak because of the various tribes which exist, they all speak Arabic; this, therefore, makes it even more difficult to distinguish the groups by language. As a result, this strengthens the argument that language as a cultural criterion does not serve as a distinguishing feature for these groups; once again, implying the distinction of these groups relates to a strong belief in their imagined differences (Nyombe, 1994).

Biology was once again implicated as an aspect of difference which could lead to violence: the belief in the existence of blood value, where there is greater value on the blood of a person perceived to be Arab compared to a black African. This blood-value argument, as shown earlier, could be used by elites to gather support for their own selfish and personal socio-political and economic gains, as opposed to real defence of their people. This line of argument strengthens the instrumental property of identity and challenges essentialism. The biological, historical migratory process, blood value and language arguments which I have discussed do not create or show a clear dichotomy between the identities under consideration. I suggest, at this point, that the belief in perceived differences rather than real/actual differences account for the conflict process under study; this is a result of the imprecise distinction of identity along the criteria which was extrapolated from my data.

Furthermore, the facilitating factor, which led to the problem of perception, was the process of Arabisation — this was discussed under the theme of *'Arabism versus Islamism'*. It was discovered that the process of Arabisation created a scenario where there was a deliberate and forceful act by the State to make other sections of the population part of a culture considered alien; for example, the imposition of Sharia law on the South (Deng, 1991, 1995; Salih, 2006; Sharkey, 2008). Some sections of the population embraced the foreign culture and viewed themselves as Arab, although nothing in their physical features indicated this. The reluctance of other sections of the population to take on what is considered a foreign identity can be suggested to have led to conflict with those who

consider themselves to be proponents of the national identity. The group which fails to take on the new identity, in this research, now see themselves as victims of marginalisation and development when compared to the other group; even in cases where both groups fail to show a clear dichotomy between themselves along several criteria.

This heightened sense of victimhood could be said to be a result of perception justified by experience, which is then strengthened by the continued pursuit of Arabisation and Islamisation policies. The process of Arabisation which leads one group to perceive the other differently —has implications for identity and also has a far reaching implication extending beyond the borders of Sudan. It was also discovered the perception of identity affects the level of international engagement: this has been shown to affect the level of engagement and commitment to reaching an amicable solution to the problem of Darfur; however, that has, to a large extent, been minimised with the acceptance of a hybrid African Union/United Nations mission in the Darfur.

A factor both at the local and international levels, religion was implicated by my respondents as affecting commitment to conflict resolution. Instances where, as raised by **Omogo**, Arab countries do not like to commit resources because they see people who are not or are less Arabised as fighting against Islam; as a result, there is the belief they should not be helped. This, to an extent, was correlated with Islamisation policy, which considers all groups not conforming to that policy as outsiders and rebels which should be fought and expelled. This was reflected in President Al-Bashir's statement that the regime was 'fighting for Sudan's Arab-Islamic existence'; furthermore, that its imposition of Sharia was the will of God, meaning its war against non-conformists was a Jihad (Lesch, 1998, p.22).

Religion has also been considered a factor aiding the spread of Arabic culture (Arabisation). This gets regional and international support, which, to an extent, could be responsible for the government's desire to use force in achieving its objective of Islamising and Arabising the state. This was reflected in the regional support for Islamist groups, as mentioned earlier, by

Gadhafi in the Darfur region: the aim of this was to Islamise and Arabise the region by all means necessary, resulting in the use of force (Flint & De Waal, 2005). This led to the settlement of foreign Arab groups from neighbouring countries in villages they are able to bring under their control. As a result of occupation by foreign Arab tribes, the dynamics of the conflict changed from pitching two groups which perceive themselves as Arabs versus Africans, to people who are seen to be indigenous Arab groups against immigrant Arab groups the government now aids to perpetuate its Islamisation and Arabisation policies.

Another very important issue raised by my respondents — which I believe will contribute to social constructivist views — is the extent to which travelling identities can be renegotiated and reconstructed. As a result of travel, people who see themselves as Arabs come in contact with foreign lands they believe they share the same identity and culture with; following rejection and returning home, they tend to have a different emphasis on their identity and how they define themselves. This renegotiation or reconstruction of identity is carried out by: greater identification with people who are not or less Arabised; trying to educate Arabised ones about how the identity they profess is a misnomer and not accepted in typical Arab countries.

Overall, I have been able to demonstrate that the processes of Arabisation and Islamisation are a very potent factor contributing strongly to the creation of differences which does not exist in real or objective terms between people who are biologically, culturally and linguistically identical. These two processes further strengthen beliefs in those imagined differences, because of the discriminatory perspectives emanating from the Arabisation and Islamisation policies. I have also been able to show how identity could be reconstructed or renegotiated, by coming in contact with what is considered to be similar culture.

Finally, the internationalised nature of the Islamisation and Arabisation processes has been implicated in the creation of an avenue, whereby commitment to resolving the

conflict is flimsy because individuals/groups holding identities see themselves to be different. On a positive note, however, this has been mitigated with engagement of a hybrid *African Union* and *United Nations* force (*UNAMID*), which, to a very large extent, has been effective in the conflict management and resolution process of my case study. Despite this beneficial aspect, there are areas of human existence which the (mis)perception of identity has either created or encouraged; synonymous to Nayak's (2006, p.419) suggestion that identity 'signs are encoded into everyday practice'. This takes me to my next chapter which will consider how identity in its various forms has helped to foster marginalisation, as well as continue to be strengthened by the pursuance of the government's Islamisation and Arabisation policies; this further elucidates the identity divide.

## Chapter Five

### 5.1. Identity and Marginalisation

In this chapter, I discuss another major theme which evolved from my data. This theme, to a large extent, correlates with the theme on identity and ethnicity. In this discussion, I highlight why and how identity aids marginalisation in Darfur as a direct consequence of perceived differences and in relation to the government's Arabisation and Islamisation policies. In addition, I demonstrate how marginalisation and the identity politics surrounding it help to strengthen the perceived identity divide in Darfur. Marginalisation is seen in relation to the two (mis)perceived identity groups, as discussed in the previous chapter, which are now being exploited by the Centre. One group sees themselves as being marginalised because they belong to a particular group: this does not fit into the national identity framework. Madibbo (2012, p.304) has argued that 'the identity divides in [Sudan] are sharpened by a socio-economic marginalisation that is itself a product of self-serving colonial policies and inequitable postcolonial processes'. What she has failed to show, however, are the several dimensions of marginalisation sharpening these divisions and how these are maintained. Furthermore, her arguments were based on Sudanese identities along Arab/African divides, without due consideration for identities in places like Darfur.

This Chapter will help to elucidate those dynamics in the case of Darfur. On this theme, my respondents expressed several areas of concern in marginalisation, such as culture, education, politics, and, in turn, how these can be implicated in the conflict process. This connection is, to a large extent, correlated with the perception of identity/ethnicity. Some respondents even claimed the current conflict situation emerged as a result of the level of marginalisation they have suffered. Further, although they expressed some optimism, they

do not envisage how the current negotiations would balance out that level of marginalisation, even if the on-going peace process were to succeed.

In the case of Sudan, several regions and groups considered to be subordinate have been subjugated by the Central government. This situation led to two civil wars between the North and South and insurgency by several other regions and groups in the country, such as by the Beja people, Nuba and Darfur (Deng, 2005; Prunier, 2007; Lesch, 1998; Horowitz, 1985). The discussion in Chapter Four argued for factors creating the dichotomy between the groups under consideration and how the government have exploited ethnic cleavages for the advancement of its Arabisation and Islamisation policies/interest in Darfur. As a result, the cultural and regional derivative of marginalisation originates in the Arab-Islamic dominated hierarchy exploiting the peripheries and depriving them of regional development prospects (Ylonen, 2005). With this in mind, I will be discussing this issue based on several subthemes which emerged, highlighting the idea of marginalisation; for example culture, education, politics and elitism.

#### **5.1.1. Cultural Marginalisation**

Discussing culture in a multicultural society like Sudan, it is imperative to take into consideration different groups in the society and also highlight basic cultural differences. For the purpose of this study, I considered the two major ethnic groups discussed in my previous chapter, Arabs versus non-Arabs. In this section, I look at cultural marginalisation from the point of view of my respondents and how this has contributed to the conflict's outcome. Some of my respondents expressed their culture had been marginalised and why they believed this (in)deliberate action led to conflict. Respondent, **Omogo**, for instance, expressed her disappointment at how the government has weakened their local administrative system to the detriment of the people:

*“If there is any tribal war in Darfur in the past, it is usually settled by local chiefs and traditional councils, but the government made sure that [the] local council of elders is not strong and put their own people in charge of affairs because they don’t want Darfurians to rest, they want total control”.* (Lawyer: Sudan).

A similar sentiment was expressed by **Ekole**:

*“They never understood what will happen in Darfur if they dissolve our local traditional leaders, like our Umbda, Shaktai; they have taken away their powers, the power is given to others who work for the government and creating problems”.* (Lecturer: Sudan).

Historically, the traditional dispute resolution channel was used to mitigate and resolve issues which could be of an inter/intra group nature; it was not even disrupted during the Anglo-Egyptian condominium rule, i.e. they performed their functions as normal adhering to the divide and rule strategy. Darfurians, however, were deprived of any economic and developmental growth with the existence of that system. In fact, the condominium government officialised the role of the tribal administrators, henceforth granting them judicial powers in addition to their executive powers. The allocated powers partially regulated the confusion surrounding ethnicities and tribal loyalties which were wide spread in Sudan. Most importantly, in Darfur, these powers allowed for the regulation of grazing land and allocation of pastoral land between groups for economic reasons (De Waal, 2005).

This situation changed in 1971 when the government of Nimieri systematically started the abolition of the native administration, offering no viable alternative to replace the



old and tested system. The consequence of this phased abolition was evident in lack of expertise on land issues and the resolution of ethnic tensions (O’Fahey & Tubiana, n.d). Another consequence of the weakened system was the ‘radicalisation of political attitudes’, which paralleled the government’s Arabisation and Islamisation policies. Nimieri also imposed on Darfurians, leaders and governors who were foreign to the region (De Waal, 2005). The weakened powers of the traditional institutions combined with external parties interested in the Arabisation of the region, adhering to the wider politics of Sudan. This led to the radicalisation of several groups, with the support of the government, by arming groups considered to be Arabs.

In my view, the radicalisation of Arabised groups strengthens the belief that those groups should see themselves differently from non-Arabised ones within Darfur. It also largely puts in place an Arabised establishment, ensuring that the local administration is in the hands of Arabised groups working towards the national Arabisation and Islamisation policies (Salam, 2008). Furthermore, native or customary laws are seen in opposition to Islamic laws; therefore, are viewed with resentment and also assumed to be a barrier to national integration. Any group or region practicing the native or customary laws are thus seen as ‘inferior and therefore something to be ashamed of or at least not to be encouraged by any means including the mere knowledge of it’ (O’Fahey & Tubiana, n.d, p.22). This reinforces the politicised nature of Islam and the Arab culture by disregarding any other cultural values in the country; thus, creating a state of mind where groups which saw themselves following the precepts of the Islamic law considered themselves superior to other groups in the same environment. This situation was echoed in **Timbi**’s statement:

*“They will be in a place and the Arab tribes will move with their herds and sometimes they will take their herds into the fields, so this leads to conflict. They will kill each other but we have local leadership, e.g. sheikh. They will sit together*

*and solve the problem. This situation was like this until 1989 when this government came into power and destabilised all the local dispute resolution channels by trying to impose Arabs as head of communities and committees, thinking their laws are better than our own”.*  
(Ex-Rebel: Sudan).

Also, **Irawo** spoke vaguely about how the population is been lost due to the impact of alienation of the indigenous culture:

*“These people are being put into concentration camps, imagine the whole population is lost; people are in a state of cultural alienation aside from political and economic depravity”.* (Director, NGO: Sudan).

These statements convey the extent to which this conflict has been fuelled by cultural dimensions and, furthermore, how cultural practices affect both political and economic issues. For example, as said by **Timbi**, it is also a well-known practice in Sudan regarding the seasonal migration of pastoralists who are mainly of Arabised identities. In search of grazing land, pastoralists come in contact with settlers who are mainly peasant farmers, whose farms are sometimes trampled upon by feeding cattle (Flint & De Waal, 2005). The need for economic survival on both sides provokes conflict, which, to a large extent, negatively threatens the economic wellbeing and survival of the population. In order to avoid these negative outcomes, the traditional dispute resolution channel was instituted to proffer solutions to such problems as the need arose (Beshir, n.d). No matter how vague **Irawo**'s statement might be, it, therefore, shows the extent to which this conflict is fuelled by a mixture of factors. In this section, an aspect of identity being marginalised is the culture of the people who see themselves to be a different identity to the political elites.

The type of marginalisation discussed by these respondents has to do with the

erosion of their tradition based administrative system, which was used for dispute and conflict resolution purposes and also served as a platform for economic and political negotiations. People tended to believe in the local dispute resolution process, where there was a council of elders from different communities: when there was any inter/intra communal dispute, it was brought before the council for resolution. One of the reasons behind this is that the council of elders are usually seen as the custodian of culture, ethics and tradition: they are expected to be of impeccable character in order to build trust and confidence in their judgement. This is what is obtainable in most traditional/rural settings in Africa, Sudan included (Adesida, 1998). This point resonated with some of the other respondents, who viewed their cultural identity as being infiltrated by a foreign culture and hence causing them lose their own identity as a nation. Respondent, **Ekole**, reiterated a point:

*“Darfur had its rules of co-existence among the different groups and they all knew what needs to be done at any point in time. They shared resources among themselves with no problem. But things changed when the government decided to undermine Darfurians by imposing itself on us and denying us the benefits of citizenship like other Arab groups have”.* (Lecturer: Sudan).

Also supporting this view was **Sidika**, who explained how the intentional process of Arabisation by the government and its agencies led to disregard for local traditions and culture. He described it in the following way:

*“The other thing is that there are always rules governing the movement of cattle from the South to the North and North to South, depending on the time of the year. And this having been observed very strictly by the tribal administrative system; but because the new Arabised*

*government intended to Arabise the process, they did not respect or support this tradition; and the government gave these people more support, power and arms, and they tried to use this authority to create conflict with the farmers, basically African farmers". (Cleric: Sudan).*

In this case, these individuals perceived their culture as being destroyed by the imposition of foreign Arab values and replacing the traditional elders committee with people perceived to be Arab representatives — respondents believed these only served the government's interest in the implementation of its Arabisation and Islamisation policies. The division of Darfur into three administrative divisions (North, South and West) led to ethnic majorities being split between several administrative divisions, which, to a large extent, made them minorities. This led to a situation where most of the non-Arabised groups lost their political, legislative and judicial powers when the 'tribal administration was chosen by a majority of the rank below'. So many new positions were also created by the implementation of these administrative boundaries; however, almost all the new positions were given to Arabised groups as rewards for loyalty, mainly to foreign Arabs from Chad (El-Fatih, 1989). The significance of this type of institution — which they saw as a symbol of their culture — is that it gives my respondents a sense of self-governance, which is inherently more fulfilling than being dictated to by people who are seen and perceived to be foreigners.

The abolishment of traditional institutions was viewed by Darfurians as a denial of their own unique cultural heritage and also as a denigration of citizenship (De Waal, 2005). These actions, in my view, are linked to the Arabisation and Islamisation policies of the national government. This connection is made based on the government's support for Arab groups; considering the desire by Libya to annex Darfur because the region was considered strategically important in its Arabisation policy of the Sahel. It was necessary, therefore, for the political and economic landscape of Darfur to change necessitating its division into three

administrative boundaries and leading to the non-Arabised emergence as minorities. Also, the Arab supremacist ideology of Arabisation policies necessitated a situation where Arab groups could not be seen to be governed by non-Arabs. This was reflected in a letter sent by the Arab gathering to the Prime Minister on October 5, 1987:

*'Should the neglect of the Arab race continue, and the Arabs be denied their share in government, we are afraid that things may escape the control of wise men and revert to ignorant people and the mob. Then there could be catastrophe, with dire consequences'* (cited in De Waal, 2005, p.52).

Another angle to the issue of cultural marginalisation is the extent to which it is being perpetuated by the media. This is described by one of my respondents, **Sidika**, who talked about how media outlets are used to promote what they observe to be foreign culture and (un)intentionally being imposed on the citizens:

*"I think there is too much Arabisation in the country to the extent that they are giving very little attention to other cultures especially the African cultures in the media".*

According to **Sidika**, the media plays an important role in the propagation and spread of the government's Arabisation agenda, which then aids the marginalisation of other cultures. Indeed, Sudan as a country has a highly restricted and censored media in which everything broadcast only reflects government policy. Additionally, the private print media is a highly censored market to the extent that its publications are subjected to a pre-publishing screening; thus, limiting the scope of what is allowed to be publicised (*BBC News*, 2012).

The role of the media in perpetuating marginalisation of other cultures has been implicated by other studies. Report of the *African Commission's* working group of experts on indigenous populations/communities found that in Morocco, Berbers saw their identity

threatened by discrimination and marginalisation, as a result of restricted access to the media in the country (*TRACHP*, 2005). The type of marginalisation perpetuated through media outlets was not only observed in the case of Morocco, it was also observed in the case of Algeria, where the cultural and linguistic rights of the Amazigh in Algeria tended not to be respected relating to the government's continuing programme of Arabisation: this is executed with the help of the media (*TRACHP*, 2005).

In my view, the main source of conflict is not the extent to which the media is being used in promoting the Arab culture; rather, it is the extent to which other cultures are being discouraged or blocked from publication in the mass media. In the case of Sudan, the state uses Arabic 'as a language of instruction in schools and in the media'; thereby, promoting Arabism and Islamism as a state ideology with no regard for other cultures in the state (De Waal, 2005).

Using the theory of 'cultural abrasion'<sup>18</sup> (Varan, 2006) in the Sudanese context, I discuss this theory in relation to what my respondents (**Sidika** and **Ekole**) suggested regarding the impact of the media in the spread of a foreign culture, as well as my personal observation on the field. It was observed that about ninety-eight percent of all the media avenues (i.e. print, television, and radio) were communicated in Arabic, with there being little or no regard for cultural diversity of the state as guaranteed and prescribed by the Constitution of the Republic of Sudan (*TCSR*, 2005). Broadcast and print news were all in Arabic, hence leaving little or no room for any other indigenous languages to flourish. Most of what was brought into public domain was in Arabic and perceived to be foreign by the other groups which do not perceive themselves to be Arabs; thereby, conflicting their traditional and cultural beliefs as citizens of Sudan.

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<sup>18</sup> This theory refers to an 'interaction where the values of a host culture conflict with those of another culture introduced through a media agent'. It also posits that the resulting friction from the interaction between the local cultural terrain and the media or the material carried by that media agent can potentially result in the erosion of particular facets of the local culture; thus, resulting in the adoption of foreign values and culture (Varan, 2006, p.60).

Drawing upon cultural abrasion theory, hostility is exhibited when the non-Arab group cultural value is relegated, for being in conflict with what is being transmitted by the media agents who are predisposed to the Arab culture. The result of the material published by the Arab inclined media is the erosion of aspects of the local culture; thus, favouring Arab culture. The non-Arabised groups also consider this marginalisation trend by the media outlets as a continuation of the government's Arabisation policies, which seek to ensure all identities in Sudan are either Arabs or Arabised at the very least; resulting in conflict amongst the opposing identities. Also, because of the homogenous identity the government tends to portray at the international level, it is in its best interest to portray Sudan, using the platform of its media, as an Arab-Islamic country with little or no regard for its African component. This also encourages the international community to label Sudan as a homogenous Arab country; thus, encouraging the continuation of investment and business links with the Arab world and thereby politicising the national identity for its economic agenda (Deng, 2005).

From my understanding, the narratives on cultural marginalisation still points to the perpetual salience of identity, as discussed in the previous chapter. Within the references used in this section, the recurring theme is a situation where the non-Arabised groups perceive their cultural identity values to be in conflict with an infiltrating Arab culture, often termed Arabisation. This perception sets two main indistinct cultural identities against one another, leading both groups to struggle for supremacy. This was evident in the use of Janjaweed (Arab militias) by the national government in Darfur in order to achieve a level of Arab supremacy/domination, and the subsequent resistance by the other groups; it, in turn, led to what has been referred to as the 'World's Worst Humanitarian Crisis' (Flint & De Waal, 2005, Prunier, 2007). This struggle for supremacy strengthens the belief among group members that the groups under consideration are different from one another because of the

preferential treatment given to certain groups and the politicised nature of certain aspects of their cultural heritage.

In order to demonstrate how cultural marginalisation leads to conflict, my respondents used the following phrases: '*they don't want Darfurians to rest*', '*creating problems*', and '*Arabise the state*'. All of these phrases show a state of conflict with the government and the Arabised side of the population, who are believed to be the architects of this state of affairs. The Arabisation process is perceived by my respondents to be a deliberate policy attempt by the government of Sudan in order to marginalise other parts of the country and impose the Arab culture on everyone as part of a larger agenda to make Sudan a completely Arab state. In carrying out this level of discrimination, the so-called black African community are in constant conflict with the Arab community, who are supported by the government in terms of fire power, financial resources and development. Such a view was reflected in the recruitment of the Popular Defence Force, which was comprised of the regular Armies and the Janjaweed militia. On assembling the six thousand men, the government gave weapons only to the Arab groups and sent away a thousand men from non-Arab groups. They were tricked to the assembly point for the purpose of having a head-count of the potential combat force the non-Arab militias have (Flint & De Waal, 2005).

The ensuing situation has resulted in more dire consequences for the so-called African population, hence leading to displacement and occupation of their lands by Arab populations from neighbouring countries. This situation was reminiscent of the Nuba Mountains, where the government herded together displaced people in areas which could be easily monitored and then reallocated the deserted land to Arab groups from neighbouring countries which were allied with the government in the displacement (Sudan Tribune, 2009). Due to shrinking resources, however, a different type of conflict emerged between the imported Arab population and the original Arabised population. This henceforth led to the



escalation of the conflict in an unprecedented manner (Prunier, 2007). The situation led the old Arabised population to solicit solidarity with the African population who occupied the camps because they feel the government whom they fought for had betrayed them by attempting to displace them as well, alongside the import of this new breed of Arab population (Prunier, 2007).

Further, the cultural marginalisation by the media, to a large extent, buttresses the point of **Sidika**: *“They impose their culture and traditions to all sectors of life.”* I would least expect the state to use the media intentionally as a transmitting agent in perpetuating its policy agenda but this is what is obtainable. Overall, the linkage of cultural marginalisation with the all-encompassing Arabisation process and the extent to which all sectors of life were being affected leads me to my next point about the marginalisation of some sections of the population in terms of education.

#### **5.1.2. Educational Marginalisation**

Marginalisation infiltrates other facets of the daily life of my respondents; one such area expressed by my respondents was education. Once again, **Omogo** expressed how she thought identity plays a role in the educational sector and how there is an intentional policy with regards to how Arabised students should perform compared to non-Arabised students:

*“Even in the University, they are being asked about their tribes; this is usually used in curtailing the amount of good results that comes from the students of African origin, because they will want to have more Arab students with good results, so that they are more employable when they have good results”.*

Although **Omogo** said the government would like to curtail the amount of good results the African students receive, this cannot be further substantiated with any raw

evidence. A precursor to this kind of mind-set could be seen in the laws passed and policies implemented by the government. Considering the government's Islamisation and Arabisation policies implemented in higher education, this will certainly exclude many students from access to most higher education institutions. This will be especially true for students whose command of Arabic is not adequate for study at the higher education level and those who profess a faith other than Islam. The imposition of Arabic as the language of education was reflected in the words of the first Sudanese Minister of Education:

*'As the Sudan is one country sharing one set of political institutions, it is of great importance that there should be one language which is understood by all its citizens. That language could only be Arabic, and Arabic must therefore be taught in all our schools'* (cited in Sandell, 1982, p.66).

This proclamation shows strong elements of the ethnic model, by imposing Arabic as the national language which the Arab culture is then transmitted through. It also negates Article (5C)(1) of the *UNESCO* 'Convention against Discrimination in Education' (1960), which guarantees 'the rights of national minorities to establish their own educational system that use or teach in their own languages', provided it does not 'prejudice national sovereignty'. I also agree with Lesch (1998, p.11) that this situation does not only create a 'delicate relationship among the centre, region(s) and linguistic groups'; it also leaves linguistic minorities disadvantaged and facing de facto discrimination'. Juxtaposing this position with the Arabisation and Islamisation policies of the Sudanese government, the government requires proficiency in Arabic language for employment in the civil service, military and higher institutions. Although this is justifiable to create 'political and social unity and administrative efficiency' (Lesch, 1998, p.11); in the case of Darfur/Sudan, it leaves certain groups at a disadvantage, thus reducing their employability.

According to Horowitz (1985, p.220), 'language issues are symbolically capable of weaving together claims to exclude others with claims to shore up uncertain group worth. Language is the quintessential entitlement issue'. Lesch (1998, p.4) has also argued that 'conscious action can be taken by a government to create a national language out of diverse dialects and then to inculcate language through the educational system and other cultural vehicles'. Again, in view of the government's Arabisation and Islamisation policies being considered here, the government of Sudan has taken it upon itself to impose Arabic as the national language of Sudan, with little or no regard for other identities within the polity. This has proved to be problematic. For instance, South Sudan refused to be defined as Arabs or Arabised and instead declared an opposite identity: Africanism. With the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005, which allowed the South to maintain a secular constitution and semi-autonomous administration, the problem shifted to different identities in other peripheries, who do not want to be defined by the national rhetoric being carved by the government (a case in hand is Darfur) (Deng, 2008; Nyombe, 1994; El-Tom, 2006). The government's implementation of its Arabisation and Islamisation policies in the educational sector impedes the success of certain groups who do not perceive themselves in that way. It also helps to strengthen the belief amongst group members that they are different, as a result of the government's educational policies.

Even if the government were to set up new universities to cater for the needs of 'minorities, the result would still be separate but not equal educational opportunities' (Abbas, 1991, p. 25). Given the language and religious requirements, the minority students whose language is not primarily Arabic might have difficulties coping in schools, which would, in turn, impact on their educational performance. This, to a large extent, affects their employability; thus, the Arabised-Islamic government achieves its aim of limiting access to the sections of the population which are not Arabised. This statement by **Omogo**, to an

extent, could be used in justifying a general feeling among my respondents that the more educated one is, the better their chances of getting a good post:

*“Historically, Sudan has been dominated and ruled by Africans, but because of the infiltration of the Arabs from the North like Egypt. They took the helms of affair through their education and opportunity”.*

This statement shows how the Arabised elites are viewed and the evolution of that identity as described in Chapter Four. The part of that statement I am particularly interested in is where she said: *“They took the helms of affairs through their education and opportunity”.*

This is typical of societies which consist of groups that Horowitz (1985) described as ‘advanced and backward groups’<sup>19</sup>, as highlighted earlier. All of the advanced characteristics are claimed by the Arabised groups in Sudan, leading to the adoption, execution and imposition of policies which consider other groups not adhering to it as ‘backward’. This is reflected in the Arab supremacist ideology espoused by the government’s Arabisation and Islamisation policies, coupled with the educational arrangements and provision under colonialism limiting education to the ‘sons of chiefs and native administration personnel’ (Prunier, 2005). Also, in terms of educational facilities, in 1935, there were only four schools in Darfur, each with a very meagre budget. Moreover, the teachers could not even spell their names nor list the provinces in Sudan. In terms of higher education, in 1929, out of the 510 students at the *University of Khartoum* (then *Gordon College*) — the only higher institution during colonialism — there was not one student from Darfur; whilst 311 of those students originated from Khartoum or the Blue Nile Province (Prunier, 2005). This distribution clearly shows the disproportionate educational achievements between the groups, especially those at the periphery.

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<sup>19</sup> He described being advanced as being: educated, resourceful, intelligent, ambitious, arrogant, industrious, and successful. Backwardness, for Horowitz (1985), meant groups considered: ignorant, dependent, docile, traditional, unintelligent, lazy, inefficient.

Although Britain abolished the slave trade in 1899, they maintained the existing ‘local status hierarchies’ in Sudan and reinforced this through educational policies. The colonialist favoured Arab male academic achievements which led to administrative jobs; while, on the other hand, groups mainly in the periphery (Darfur inclusive) were preferred for the military and menial jobs. The colonial educational policies not only favoured self-defined Arabs, but also created a group of people who were literate and had the ‘political know-how to develop and articulate nationalist ideologies. Such an advantage prompted this Arabised group to seek defining Sudan in their own image, as an Arab-Islamic nation (Sharkey, 2008). This is now exemplified in the propagation, imposition and ardent implementation of the government’s Arabisation and Islamisation policies, which have, in turn, torn the nation apart.

As argued in Chapter Four, however, the problem is not actually the level of education of the Arabised groups, but the extent to which the opportunities (education and administration on colonial exit) afforded the Arabised groups: this led to these state of affairs which have been sustained post-independence. Such a situation reinforces age long discriminatory practices from Arab groups which consider black Africans as slaves and backward (Deng, 1995). It also further strengthens the belief in differences amongst groups considering themselves Arab(ised) and non-Arab(ised) in contemporary times, most especially by the aggressive implementation of the government’s Arabisation and Islamisation policies, as witnessed in Darfur.

The discussion above is also further supported by the narrative of **Alhaji**:

*“You mean, Arab origin are almost dominating the jobs and post in government in relation to those who are non-Arabs. According to my personal viewpoint regarding the Arabs dominating the jobs in government, I can say or put it in the other way, only the educated Arab ones, since 1900 or*

*earlier, are the ones dominating the posts and those dominating are not only Arabs, the Danagla, Mahas, Al-Fawid; they are not totally Arabs but Arabised and they are educated. I believe strongly that those who got higher and better education has [sic] the chance to govern and to dominate; and I believe it's not discrimination".*

(Technician: Sudan).

The other non-Arab groups (*the Danagla, Mahas, Al-Fawid*) mentioned by **Alhaji** are Nubian groups, who, by virtue of their origin (i.e. North of Khartoum and close proximity to Egypt), had a good command of the Arabic language and were excluded from the colonial educational policies (Sharkey, 2008). These groups were usually referred to as the 'stranger elite', denoting a group of people whose language and social capabilities were on par with the Arab community. This meant that, during the colonial administration and the post-colonial phase, they blended in well with the emerging Sudanese intelligentsia to an extent that other non-Arabs could match in terms of their educational achievements and political know-how (Hale, 1979). Darfur's distance from the centre meant it was not able to take advantage of any of the developmental and educational facilities enjoyed by these other groups which had occupied or had close proximity to Khartoum, where the condominium government was located. This left a vast population educationally disadvantaged; thereby, limiting their access to good jobs and political posts which could have addressed the inadequacies.

Inferring from this, if what **Omogo** said is true, by error of omission or commission, it could be suggested that most of the Arab students who have good results might invariably get into higher posts, when compared to their non-Arabised counterparts. This does not suppose that non-Arabised students would not have good jobs and posts, but instead that this would be curtailed, to a large extent, by their academic achievements, especially in light of

the government's abrupt implementation of its Arabisation and Islamisation policies. In contrast, **Alhaji** did not believe there is any kind of favouritism in terms of who gets allocated good results; rather, what he believes is that as long as one is educated, then they stand a chance of getting a good job, regardless of ethnic affiliation. Although **Alhaji** downplayed the importance of identity in academic achievement, he agreed that the people who benefitted educationally, even before an independent Sudan, were either Arabs or Arabised. As a result, he pointed to the impact of identity on the educational achievement of a particular group (Arabised) — enabling them to keep control of the good jobs both in private and government establishments. This situation typifies the advanced groups which the colonial governments gave preferential treatment to in terms of education, administration, trade and politics; most of those platforms have remained the same since the colonial governments departed (Horowitz, 1985). As Deng (2008) argued in *'Identity, Diversity and Constitutionalism in Africa'*, the imbalance left behind by the colonial administration could only be resolved by the adoption of a constitutional framework, which is adapted to suit the multiplicity of identity groups within the African state.

Another element to the educational marginalisation of non-Arabised groups is viewed by some of my respondents in terms of the geographical location of educational facilities — which are mainly situated in the capital, Khartoum. Respondent, **Juju**, suggested:

*“The seat of power in Khartoum is always dominated by those who are better educated, or those who come from an economic background that relates to some kind of modern economy versus traditional economy and those who are citizens of urban centres. These sets of people happen to be Arabised Riverian elites. This is also the result of the structure which the colonialist left behind, whereby*

*education was first known by Arabised Riverian elites”.*  
*“So, the more educated you are, the more able you are, the more background you have with regards to modern economy, contributes most, with regards to share of power or national resources. It happened that people of certain parts of Sudan were only privileged to have access to better and early education, [and] then concentrated that aspect of development to their areas”.* (Director, Research Institute).

This statement is similar to **Sango**'s narrative. He talked about the geographical distance of population determining access to education:

*“Even nowadays those with good education are the ones now dominating the higher posts. Those who stay far away and [are] not getting education from the Centre, believe me they will not find posts”.*

To further buttress his point, he also said:

*“I think the educated ones get the high post in the capital of Sudan, they move from their original towns and cities and live and build their livelihood in Khartoum. So, even those from my area in Kordofan and Darfur come to Khartoum, and even from the South and West all come to Khartoum and try to educate their children in Khartoum. The distribution of the national income, I can say, is based on where the high posts are, where the big bosses are; so the highest distribution of income is based in the capital and its surrounding”.* (National Expert: Humanitarian Affairs).



The statements by my respondents advanced the argument that those who have ‘access to better education’ are ‘those who come from an economic background that relates to some kind of modern economy versus traditional economy’<sup>20</sup> and ‘located in urban centres’. These features are reminiscent of Khartoum residents, occupied mainly by ‘Arabised Riverian elites’, therefore leaving the periphery — the other parts of Sudan — educationally marginalised, as the educational facilities are mainly located in Khartoum. These narratives could be traced back to the colonial era, which encouraged the education and access to ‘modern economy’ for some groups to the disadvantage of others. This is exemplified typically by the Northern merchants known as Jallabas<sup>21</sup>. In terms of introducing a modern economy (i.e. a money economy), this was negatively skewed in favour of the Jallabas from the North, because they were the only ones with the knowledge to carry out trade and commerce. Even though they were spread all over the country, they redirected their wealth back to their groups in northern Sudan. Today, they monopolise both trade and parastatals for their own enrichment (El-Tom, 2006).

As a result of their access to the colonial government and participation in the colonial administration, the British gave power to a small educated elite recruited from groups around the *University of Khartoum* and secondary schools in close proximity to the capital. This category of people represented less than 5% of the country from the Riverian areas and Khartoum thereby limiting education to the Arab or Arabised groups in the North of the country. Also, any form of development that was to take place was the responsibility of these groups, as a result of their proximity to the centre and government and at the expense of the rural peripheries (O’Fahey & Tubiana, n.d). Overall, for pupils from places

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<sup>20</sup> Modern economy here is seen by my respondents as a group that is closer to civilisation in terms of money utility, open to the forces of globalisation, economic interaction of demand and supply, mechanised farming, foreign direct investments, banking. While, on the other hand, traditional economy involve groups closed to the forces of globalisation with: little or no connection with the world, rural and subsistence farming, trade by barter, and little or no socio-economic developmental projects in the areas.

<sup>21</sup> They are traders from the Riverian part of Northern Sudan which created and maintained trade networks all over Sudan: these are used in financing politicians from their areas, i.e. Khartoum and the Nile areas. They supported the colonial invasion, which brought them a lot of opportunities as they were made assistants and later successors.

like Darfur to have education, they had to travel long distances; for example, in the *'Black Book Publication'*, which showed the level of discrepancy between the centre and the peripheries. One of the writers who later became the General Co-ordinator of the *'Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)*, Abubaker Hamid Nur, said:

*'From earliest youth we felt there was a problem, but we didn't know what it was' 'there was too much suffering. I travelled 60 kilometres to go to primary school, in Kornoi, when I was 7; 350 kilometres to go to intermediate school in Geneina; 400 kilometres to go to secondary school, in Fasher; and 1000 kilometres to go to University in Khartoum'* (cited in Flint & De Waal, 2005, p.92).

Also, Darfur in 1935, during colonial rule, had just 'one elementary school', 'one 'tribal' elementary school' and 'two sub-grade schools' for a population of about three million people. The British policy was not to educate many Sudanese, in order to avoid a challenge to their authority (Flint and De Waal, 2005; Mamdani, 2009). This shows the distance to which one had to travel to get any form of education. It also strengthen the argument that the farther away from the centre one was, the lesser their chance of getting any higher education. Geography was, therefore, linked to upward social mobility.

With respect to the government's Arabisation and Islamisation policies which sought to create a homogenous Arab-Islamic society, the control and manipulation of the educational system by the government could serve as 'conscious action' for the implementation of its Arabisation and Islamisation policies (Lesch, 1998). This would be seen in view of several actions taken by the government of Sudan. In contemporary times, the government have withdrawn scholarships that were available to students from educationally disadvantaged peripheries like Darfur, which had allowed them to study in cities like Khartoum (Abusharif, 2010). This constituted a failure of responsibility by the

government towards its citizens, as stipulated in Article (5) of the *UNESCO* ‘Convention against Discrimination in Education’ (1960); it also went against Paragraph 87, under Article 14 of the ‘Darfur Peace Agreement’ (DPA), signed by the government of Sudan. This agreement calls for more pro-active measures — defined as positive affirmative acts — from the government ‘to promote the educational interests’ of Darfurians. This is to be achieved through the provision of tuition free education, scholarships, bursaries and development of educational facilities in Darfur, with the ‘aim of bringing Darfur to parity in national levels of educational enrolment and achievement at all levels’ (DPA, 2006).

Non-adherence to this agreement has a double standard dimension to it. It has been discovered that Darfur communities considered as being in line with the Arabisation and Islamisation policies in Darfur have seen considerable developmental projects in terms of educational facilities in their areas and financial support from the government to students from those communities. These communities also happen to be groups that the government recruited the Janjaweed militias from, which helped in the perpetuation of its so-called counterinsurgent war (Abusharif, 2010). This goes a long way to strengthen the belief within non-Arabised groups in Darfur that they are being discriminated against because of their ethnicity. This also brings to the fore the government’s discriminatory policies; thereby, strengthening the earlier position made about the government’s use of its Arabisation and Islamisation policies to provoke and solidify the belief in differences amongst the Darfur groups under consideration.

Also, the government’s introduction and imposition of Arabic and Islamic studies for admission into universities, regardless of the student’s religion or ethnicity, limits access to some groups of students from educationally disadvantaged peripheries like Darfur (Lesch, 1998). The purpose of this policy is to make every student ‘true Muslims’ and ‘protect them from Western invasion’ (Abbas, *et al.*, 1993). Although, as stated earlier, most Darfurians are Muslims, they do not necessarily have the required level of knowledge to pass the

national level examinations allowing them to gain entry into University. This is mainly because the level of primary and secondary education received is largely sub-standard; thereby, putting them at a disadvantage to compete against groups in or around the Centre. This is evident in the ratio of educated teachers to students at the secondary school level, which, in 2009, was at 1:90 and the level of education of teachers was mainly Secondary School Certificate holders (Haroun *et al.*, 2011). In my view, this situation limits the academic achievements of non-Arabised groups from Darfur; it, furthermore, hinders their ability to achieve what my respondents termed ‘modern economy’ and high enough political stature.

Moreover, in my view, this further strengthens the belief in the already existing false dichotomy between these groups, because of the government’s support for one group to study in a more conducive and enabling environment allowing for progression to university. This situation creates an Arabised elite group in Darfur; it also generates a tendency among these Arabised elites to perpetuate the government’s Arabisation and Islamisation policies, which are also well enshrined in the idea of Arab supremacy. This was the kind of situation mentioned earlier in the letter to then Prime Minister, Sadiq Al-Mahdi, where Arabised elites expressed their unwillingness to see non-Arabised groups in authority/leadership positions and hence would do anything to reverse the situation if and when it happened (De Waal, 2001).

At a more general level across Sudan, for the government to reinforce its Islamic ideology, some Departments like music and drama were closed because they were considered by the government to be un-Islamic and promoting Western values (Lesch, 1998). The government in its early years adopted a patronage system, by providing its ardent members (student, careerist) credit for businesses and employment in Islamic banks and firms. The government also purged the *Ministry of Education* of those people it believed were not fervent supporters of the ‘*National Islamic Front*’ (NIF). In addition, the President

imposed himself as the chancellor of all universities which led to the removal of ten university Vice-Chancellors and the appointment of administrators considered sympathetic to the Islamic cause of the government. This led to the mass exodus of teachers and lecturers for foreign appointment most especially in the Gulf region. At one point, a report found there was an eighty percent shortage in teaching staff in universities and recommended that some courses be closed or consolidated. This exodus led to the hiring of unqualified teaching staff, who had themselves graduated with little or no teaching experience. All of these actions had a damaging impact on the quality of education in Sudan. Also, for the government to bolster its Arabisation credential through the Arabic language, it mandated that Arabic should be the only 'medium of instruction' and henceforth foreign languages were banned from all its public institutions (Lesch, 1998).

The foregoing discussion about government policies/actions in Sudan and its impact on educational achievement in the peripheries is supported by other findings. For example, a *UNESCO* (2007, p.79) report discovered that 'nearly eighty percent of those enrolled in higher education [came] from the Northern and Central regions and Khartoum. The remaining four regions, with two thirds of the total population, account for only 20% of total enrolment'; this was mainly attributed to 'massive skill migration to oil-rich countries in the Persian Gulf which contributed to severe shortage of teachers'. Additionally, higher education suffered from 'inefficient management of resources, deteriorating infrastructure, few educational facilities outside Khartoum, repeated attempts by military regimes to curtail freedom of thought and research, and frequent disruptions as a result of student factional conflict' (*UNESCO*, 2007, p.83). All of these factors contributed to the discrepancy in the level of educational achievement across regions.

I employ Table 3 to show the level of discrepancy across regions, with regards to literacy and primary school enrolment from 1993 to 2002. Although I am more interested in higher education, the unavailability of such data means I justify my adoption of this

particular table on the basis that it will show why peripheries would find it difficult to gain admissions into universities: the level of literacy needed to gain university admission would be curtailed, as a result of their inaccessibility to proper primary education. This, to a large extent, limits their ability to achieve 'modern economy' and elitism.

**Table 3:**

**Literacy and Primary School Enrolment Rates and Trends by Region**

Regions	Literacy 1993			Literacy 2002			Gross Primary Enrolment Rate. 2002 %	Percentage Change 1993-2002		
	Average (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Average (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)		Average (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
North	65.3	74.1	56.5	71.7	72	71.3	82.4	9.7	-2.8	26.2
East	49.5	61.3	37.7	43.0	43.5	42.5	42.5	-13.1	-29.0	12.7
Central	64.0	73.4	54.6	63.3	64.7	61.8	74.9	-1.1	-11.9	13.2
Khartoum	73.1	81.1	65	74.9	75.9	73.9	82.8	2.5	-6.4	13.7
Ex-Khartoum	57.5	67.9	47.1	53.6	54	53.1	70.4	-6.9	-20.5	12.7
West	42.4	58.8	25.9	38.1	39	37.1	44.2	-10.2	-33.7	43.2
Darfur	43.6	63.2	24	38.6	39.8	37.4	45.5	-11.5	-37.0	55.8
Kordofan	40.4	51.9	28.9	37.1	37.6	36.5	42.3	-8.2	-27.6	26.3

**Source:** Sudan Ministry of Education, 2002.

This table shows a time period before the onset of the war in 2003, so it is fair to assume that the present level of educational marginalisation could be partly accounted for by the onset of the conflict. From the above table, it is evident that Khartoum and its immediate environs are at an advantage in comparison to other regions. In 2002, Khartoum recorded a gross primary enrolment of 82.8%, followed by the Central region with a rate of 74.9%; both regions recorded, in 2002, an average literacy level of 74.9% and 62.4 % respectively. Darfur's gross primary enrolment rate in 2002 was only 45.5%, compared to 42.3% for Kordofan, with an average literacy rate of just 38.6% and 37.1% respectively (MoE, 2002).

Furthermore, the trend of change from 1993 to 2002 — the downward trend of enrolment — it is also clear that peripheries like Darfur and Kordofan had a much higher level of non-enrolment, which was in the negative figures of -11.5% and -8.2% respectively. Comparing this to Khartoum and the Central, which only witnessed a decline of 2.5% and -1.1% respectively, it showed huge gaps in non-enrolment levels. Looking at the figures for the regions discussed, the gap in the enrolment rate and literacy level are not comparable by any standard; it showed huge gaps between people living in the Central and Khartoum, when compared to the educationally disadvantaged occupants of Darfur and Kordofan. As a result, the chance of a pupil obtaining higher education in peripheries like Darfur is very slim compared to someone who lives in the Central or Khartoum which is predominantly occupied by so-called Arabs or Arabised Riverian elites; thereby, keeping the status quo intact.

Based on Table 3 and the thoughts expressed by my respondents, it could be said that a significant proportion of the population living outside Khartoum are educationally disadvantaged by not living in close proximity to the capital, Khartoum. This situation can also be attributed to the colonial era's educational policies, which largely restricted development mainly to the Centre and a skills shortage for the very few facilities outside Khartoum. The location of educational facilities in the capital is consistent with the findings of Horowitz (1985) that these were influenced by factors such as proximity to rail lines, sea ports and/or proximity to natural resources. He further explained that groups taking advantage of the educational facility opportunities were groups that were situated in and around the capital, or those that were willing to migrate from their regions. Horowitz (1985, p.151) also said that locational influences 'correspond to the distinction between the Centre and the Periphery'.

All these factors, except those relating to natural resources, were all present in Khartoum, which Britain chose to be the capital city: the people which took advantage of

that opportunity were the Arabised groups; thereby, leaving them in administrative and political positions post-independence. The opportunity afforded to those groups, with regards to their level of education and positions held in public institutions and politics after independence meant they have maintained the state of affairs to their advantage (El-Tom, 2006). In contemporary times, this abnormality has been reflected in the government's support of policy and financial assistance for Islamic educational and charitable organisations they believed were advancing their Islamisation objectives (Einas, 1997). In view of the support given to educational charities in Arabised areas, the level of educational development and achievement around these areas will exceed that of the non-Arabised areas. Consequently, this will leave mostly non-Arabised periphery groups in a difficult if not impossible position to achieve educational parity with groups from Khartoum and its immediate environs.

One of the main distinguishing factors determining the extent to which an individual from other parts of the country could or would succeed is their ability to convert to Islam — for non-Muslims — and their ability to communicate effectively in both written and spoken Arabic. This takes me to my next point about the language of education inadvertently strongly linking with the issue of religion in Sudan and how this contributes to educational marginalisation.

#### **5.1.2.1. Language of Education**

As explained previously, the mastery of language goes a long way in determining one's acceptability as an Arab or in being Arabised. At the same time, it becomes an important issue for consideration when deciding to have a higher education. **Kura** raised the issue of language as a requisite for access and achieving educational success:

*“The government is influenced by the Arab culture. For example, if I come to the University and pass every other course apart from Arabic, then you would not be given*



*admission into the University and you can't have a Sudanese certificate, even in the private Universities."*

(Development officer: Sudan).

The issue of language was partially discussed in earlier sections in terms of how the government mandate students to pass both Arabic and Islamic studies as requisite subjects before they can gain admission into institutions of higher learning. This issue of language came into being without any consultation. The current government came out with one of the most significant changes in higher education, when the President adopted three decrees that would transform higher education in Sudan. The regime announced: the creation of five new public and private Universities; doubled the number of entrants to all the older universities; and insisted on the use of Arabic as a medium of instruction at the higher education level (Abbas, 1991).

The rationale for changing the educational language to Arabic for the '*National Islamic Front*' was to dually ground education in the culture of Sudan and stem foreign influences on Sudanese students studying abroad. Instead of arguing that students learn better in their own language or trying to improve the standard of education already available, the focus of the '*National Islamic Front*' was to situate education in the culture and traditions of Sudan as interpreted by the ruling elites (Abbas, 1991). In view of the government's Arabisation and Islamisation policies, the use of Arabic as medium of instruction fulfilled the government's objective, alongside a divine function. This is because the Arabic language is believed to be the 'language of God', which it is believed should occupy a sacred space in the consciousness of Muslims (Prunier, 2005). This also fits in with the Arabisation policies of the government perceived as a divine will of God, coupled with underlying historical Arab supremacy ideologies pursued by several Arabised governments (Hasan, 2003). The imposition of Arabic as a language of instruction by the government of Sudan fits in perfectly with what Lesch (1998, p.4) said: 'Conscious action can be taken by a

government to create a national language out of diverse dialects and then to inculcate that unified language through the educational system and other cultural vehicles’.

Taking this into consideration, it could be said that the government’s decision to make Arabic the official educational language even in higher institutions could be seen as a more aggressive pursuance of its Arabisation policies. As a result of this policy, it might become problematic for students, who are not from Arabised communities in Darfur to, at the very least, have access to higher education. Even if they were able to pass the entrance examinations into these institutions of higher learning, there is the further problem of coping with the academic use of the language of instruction, which invariably is more complex than the entrance examination they went through. As a result of this, the academic outcomes of students from non-Arabised groups might be less favourable in attracting employers after graduation; thus, limiting the job opportunities available to them, compared to their Arabised counterparts. This government policy, to a large extent, has created a situation of ‘Us versus Them’, situating the educationally advantaged against the disadvantaged in view of the Arabised and non-Arabised dichotomy respectively. This supports the notion of Watson, 1993 (cited in Watson 2007, p. 256):

*‘The importance of language cannot be underestimated. It is what makes a person human; how s/he thinks, expresses his/her deepest feelings and emotions, what helps identify a person with a particular ethnic or linguistic group. It is important at a national level; also, for the language policy that a government pursues has significant political implications. Language policy can be used to bring about a sense of national identity and ethnic harmony or it can just as easily be used to maintain one particular ethnic group in power, thereby exacerbating ethnic conflict’.*

Watson (2007, p. 254) further buttressed his point on the politicisation of language policies when he wrote:

*'The issue was made more problematic with the development of state education systems from the middle of the nineteenth century since states took upon themselves the right to use the school system to inculcate certain cultural and religious values, a specific interpretation of the past and to develop values of loyalty to the state'.*

Such notions show the dangers associated with the government of Sudan's language policies, which will see non-Arabised groups in disadvantaged positions because of their non-acceptance/disloyalty to the Arab identity. It also enabled the ruling Arabised Northern elites to pursue its policies of limiting access to elitism and political prowess; thus, strengthening the belief between the groups under consideration that they are different from others due to language competence and its attendant effect on the achievement of elitism and political power.

Given the historical antecedents of the groups under consideration, combined with the pursuit of Arabisation and Islamisation policies with an underlying racial ideology, the issue of language of instruction, therefore, becomes very divisive. Applying Horowitz's (1985) *'advanced and backward'* groups analogy to the case of Sudan finds that the Arabised groups consider themselves advanced, while any non-Arabised groups are seen to be backward. Horowitz said the issue of group worth comes into play, where an advanced group could not see itself studying in the language of a backward group and also calls attention to the assumed characteristics of the backward group, such as inferior, lazy, superstitious. This analogy adheres to the ethnically biased and ideological standing of the Arabised elites which consider non-Arabised groups as inferior and slaves; coupling this with the notion that the Arabic language is the language of God, thereby, fulfils a more

important function to humanity (Prunier, 2005). This led to the reluctance to recognise any other language aside Arabic.

Horowitz (1985) stated that the language of the colonial administration usually determined the status of speakers. In the case of the British-Egyptian condominium government in Sudan, Arabic was favoured as the official language because of its proximity and historical link to Egypt. For convenience, the condominium government maintained that hierarchy, without taking into consideration other parts of the country thereby conferring that status on the Arabised groups, making them assume they are superior to other groups in the country (Hasan, 2003). The ‘opportunistic monopolisation’ by Arabised elites of successive governments and its emerging policies after independence have largely maintained the status quo, which fits in well with its ethnically biased Arabisation and Islamisation policies (El-Tom, 2006). The government has largely succeeded in creating and strengthening a perception of differences between the groups under consideration, using language constraints to supporting certain groups they consider to fall under their definition of the Arabised identity.

The extent to which educational policies are formulated and implemented by Arabised Riverian elites — to the disadvantage of other groups — can also be linked to another extreme: political expediency became the order of the day in determining this regime’s educational policy, especially at the higher education level. This was evident when the regime made the decision to increase enrolment and create new universities at a time of dire economic crisis. These actions were designed to broaden the *NIF*’s base in the higher education system and increase its share of adherents amongst future members of the elite, with the aim of eventually controlling professional unions and associations which are very powerful in the case of Sudan (El-Hassan, 1991).

Invariably, as a result of the requirement for Arabic and Islamic studies in universities, Darfurian students from non-Arabised groups will be marginalised

educationally. This will exempt them from elite decision making bodies, such as professional unions/organisations, public institutions and even the government. This leaves managing affairs to the Arabised groups, both at the micro and macro levels in Darfur and Khartoum respectively. This, in turn, aids the continuation of the government's Arabisation and Islamisation policies, with an implication for the marginalisation of other groups and resulting in conflict.

Furthermore, the notion of the Arabised groups monopolising power due to their level of education is historical as well as contemporary. This was noted by **Samba**: *"They have used this advantage of being educated to take all the post from the colonisers to dominate"*. From this statement, it may be deduced that an educated Arabised individual tended to belong to the elite class. In my view, the adopted educational structure of the colonial administration — built upon by several Sudanese governments through its rather ethnically biased policies in Sudan — produced and continues to produce an Arabised elite group that dominates the polity. As a result, a political landscape is created that suits their image of national identity; thus, leading to a (in)deliberate marginalisation of other groups both in the polity and other facets of life.

From the discussion in this section, it has been suggested that the level of education certain groups receive leads, directly or indirectly, to elitism and political power; as a result, they are able to adopt and implement policies which are beneficial to their in-group and of dire consequence to the out-groups. This is exemplified by the Arabisation and Islamisation policies in the educational sector, which tend to favour certain groups even within the same community of Darfur, because adhere to the elite's definition of their identity. As a result, in the next section, I consider elitism and political marginalisation. In the case of Sudan, this is considered to be a direct result of the educational system and the policies produced by such institutional arrangements are thereafter implemented by the elites. This invariably creates a situation where some groups remain politically marginalised and have no formal avenue to

resolve their grievances. In that regard, I will now consider elitism, how this is constructed by my respondents and its contribution to marginalisation.

### **5.1.3. Elitism and Political Marginalisation**

The linkage of elitism and politics serves as an instrument of political domination, where certain elites in the state seek to dominate other groups considered subordinate (Kandeh, 1992). My discussion of elitism and political marginalisation is seen from the perspective of my respondents, attempting to demonstrate how they perceive it. I also consider how being elite, to a large extent, determines one's access to what **Juju** termed 'modern economy' and how this was maintained by the government's pursuit of its Arabisation policies. Finally, I will discuss how these policies/actions contributed to the political marginalisation of non-Arabised groups which are not defined as part of the Arab identity; thereby, showing the politicisation of elitism and its implication for politics and policy choices. In that regard, some of my respondents saw negatively skewed elitism as emanating from the legacy left behind by the Anglo-Egyptian colonial rule; whereby power was left in the hands of a minority and failed to fully consider the ethnically diverse nature of Sudan. **Ekole** expressed this notion:

*“Since the independence of Sudan in 1956, certain group of elites used to rule Sudan, especially from Arabised northern Sudan. The President was always from that ethnic group. They centralised the power and wealth within themselves and left all other parts of Sudan. The other parts of Sudan felt that they were marginalised and they have no chance to develop their regions”.* (Lecturer: Sudan).

This notion is not reminiscent of Sudan alone, as it also applies to many other Third World countries, like Nigeria, Cameroon, Togo (Horowitz, 1985). In the case of Sudan, the

polity has been dominated by what El-Tom (n.d) referred to as *'the Tripartite Coalition'*. As mentioned earlier, only three ethnic groups have shared the country's leadership (military or civilian) and they only represent five percent of the population (Sudan Tribune, 2009). They also formed an organisation called Kayan Al Shamal (KASH)<sup>22</sup> to prevent any other groups from accessing the leadership of the Central government (El-Tom, 1997).

The uniqueness of Sudan stems from the inability of non-Arabised groups to stage a major uprising, which could force the Arab dominated centre to tilt in their favour. In the colonial period, the government's arrangement swayed the balance of power in favour of the Northern elites due to their level of education. As De Chand (2000, p.16) asserted in his writing: 'This Sudanisation process favoured Northerners over the peripheral population due to their generally better educational level'. This situation showed the extent to which very few groups have monopolised the polity, due to unequal educational achievement levels between the groups in Sudan. In addition, it also showed the extent to which Arabised Northern groups had the opportunity because of their positions to acquire wealth and power for their personal gains. This situation was further aided by most of the developments being located in or around Khartoum, which left groups in the peripheries at a disadvantage. This level of marginalisation can be traced back to the colonial period, making it important to look at the colonial inter-regional policy, which was largely based on extracting resources from the peripheries. This, in itself, promoted economic and educational under-development in the periphery regions, which limited the level of representation by the regions at the point when decisions were being made about the independence of Sudan (Ylönen, 2005).

This representation deficit was reflected in the composition of the six member Sudanisation committee in 1946: this was entrusted with the task of creating a national

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<sup>22</sup> 'KASH was formed in 1976 when the government of Dictator Nimeiri was nearly toppled by an army officer from Kordofan and who is currently classified as "black and non-Arab. Kash was then formed to ensure that irrespective of the ideology behind the government of Khartoum — democratic, fascist, military, socialist, religious fanatic or otherwise — the leadership remains in the hands of Northern Region. But KASH is an exclusive club, open only for the three elite groups of the Northern region. This is what various circles, including the Arab congregation, referred to as Al Thalooh, i.e. the Tripartite Coalition.'

political framework for post-independent Sudan. The committee made up of mainly Northern elites concluded that part of the criteria that would help make good administrators were 'academic qualification' and 'acquired experience' (SAD425). Based on this criteria and the extent to which peripheries like Darfur were educationally disadvantaged, it is viable to suggest that Darfurians will be marginalised in the post-independent political and administrative establishment; thereby, giving advantage to the already educated and experienced Northern Riverian elites.

The 'opportunistic monopolisation' of the polity by the Riverian elites led to the retention of the status quo, as well as its definition of the national identity along Arab-Islamic criteria. This definition helped in creating a parallel group strengthened by the level of marginalisation experienced that did not wish to be defined along those lines. In the case of Arabised groups in Darfur, who considered themselves equals with the Arabised Riverian elites, the relationship between both groups was seen as a 'marriage of convenience characterised by love and hate' (El-Tom, 1997). The Riverian elites consider 'its members as the civilised heir of the colonial project of modernisation and for which the Arab congregation is badly suited'. Moreover, 'in the eyes of the Tripartite Coalition, the Arab congregation [Darfur Arabs] are no more than a bunch of nomads, steeped in savagery and only fit for use as foot soldiers' (El-Tom, 1997, p.14). This shows the impression that Riverian elites have of the 'so-called' Arabised groups in Darfur. This, to an extent, shows that the government is only politicising ethnicity to foster its Arabisation and Islamisation policies. This is achieved by choosing to align and support certain groups for the implementation of its Arab-Islamic project. This situation lends credence to the argument that Darfurians are not seen differently by outsiders but that differences within Darfur are a result of perception, generated by the magnification of small differences and government policies.



In terms of identity, elitism is synonymous with being Arabised, as this plays a significant role towards one's level of achievement in society. Also, one's proficiency of the Arabic language determines their eligibility to be accepted into institutions of higher learning; this, to a very large extent, serves as the basis for acquiring education and keeping positions that would lead an individual to elitism. The use of language as a yardstick for measuring acceptance as being Arabised — which also serves as a basis for the attainment of elitism — was expressed by **Kura**:

*“But if you speak fluent Arabic, even if you are not Sudanese and your complexion is not as dark like the African [sic] or if you believe in the Arab culture, that means you will take a lead in the country. This is something that is well known and practised and undeniable by the President himself”.* (Development Officer: Sudan).

Regarding the above narrative, there tends to be a general belief within non-Arabised groups that embracing Arab culture gives people an advantage, regardless of their origin. This notion fits in well with Mamdani's (2009, p.106) supposition that, historically, in Sudan 'The term Arab was progressively being emptied of nearly all its ethnic significance' and 'from this point of view, Arab is a cultural identity. Whoever speaks Arabic and partakes in "Arab" cultural practices is an Arab-regardless of their ethnic origin'. This assertion confirms what **Kura** said in terms of speaking Arabic and the belief in Arabic culture. **Kura** further discusses the way this has been used (politicised) to the advantage of certain groups and to the disadvantage of others. This situation made Mamdani (2009, p.108), in the same vein, conclude that 'to be an Arab is thus to be a member of any one of contemporary political communities called "Arab". Arab is above all, a political identity.'

**Kura** expanded and clarified his point:

*“Arabs believe that they have upper hand in this country*

*even though in history they are not mentioned at all; there is monopoly by Arabs in terms of power, resources, future, that is quite clear”.*

This narrative elucidates the belief in certain quarters that Arabised groups are migrants in Sudan; hence, the conflict is between Arabs migrants from the Middle East and the Africans (Steidle cited in Eichler-Levine & Hicks, 2007). As discussed in Chapter Four, historical migratory processes played a role in the evolution of the Arabised groups. Mamdani (2009, p.108) explains it in the following way:

*‘There is no single history of “Arabisation.” Nor is there one overarching history of Arabs in Sudan, a single history woven around the common experience of migration; the histories of Arab groups are multiple histories in which migration has at best played a marginal role’.*

This statement negates the assertion by **Kura** that Arabs were not mentioned in history, it also shows that Arabised groups have a longstanding history in Sudan and hence should not be written off as migrants who do not have a place in Sudan. Furthermore, the position of **Kura** tends to show resentment for the Arabised groups. Such a feeling is in line with Horowitz (1985) notion of ‘*positional group psychology*’<sup>23</sup>. Petersen (2002) (cited in Cederman et al. 2011, p.482) advanced this principle when he explains that ‘resentment is the feeling of being politically dominated by a group that has no right to be in a superior position. It is the everyday experience of these perceived status relations that breeds the emotion’.

Pertinent within **Kura**’s narrative is the extent to which the Arabised groups have politicised identity; thus, leading to their monopolisation of power, state and natural resources which has culminated in conflict. As a result of these groups’ monopoly on power

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<sup>23</sup> Resentment could arise as a result of a group’s disadvantaged position in relation to the other groups, which provokes ethnic mobilisation.

and resources, they determine the area or population requiring attention, which, in most cases, is their own group; this results in the neglect of other groups henceforth leading to a perceived sense of marginalisation. Stewart (2000, 2008) and other authors such as Gurr 1993; Gurr and Moore 1997, have shown that inequality has been utilised by leaders to galvanise group members to protest and partake in violent conflicts. The mobilisation is most likely associated with political and economic inequalities, which are typified by exclusion from political power and the economic deprivation of group members. This fits in well with Collier and Hoeffler's (2004) grievance theory<sup>24</sup> on the onset of conflict. In his work '*On Economic Inequality*', Sen (1973, p.1) also asserted 'that relation between inequality and rebellion is indeed a close one'.

From my personal observations in Khartoum and Omdurman, most of the public offices I visited were mainly occupied by those who are perceived to be Arabised, whilst most of the other workers who are non-Arabised were auxiliary staffs, such as typists, cleaners, receptionists and more. The non-Arabised workers that were considered to be in high positions in most of the Ministries were perceived not to be powerful enough, or were usually termed "Ministers without portfolio" that wield little or no authority and contribute little or nothing to the policy and decision making processes. With this in mind, although they are considered elites, their marginal influence means the individuals and people they represent are equally marginalised. This notion was expressed by **Mada**:

*"Now it's all about pragmatic and group interests. At the moment, ethnicity is at its peak; most of the key power positions are held by people from the Nile and people feel that any position in the civil service is not worth competing for, as it will be filled by people from the Nile. So, there is*

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<sup>24</sup> 'Political science offers an account of conflict in terms of motive: rebellion occurs when grievances are sufficiently acute that people want to engage in violent protest' (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004, p.564).

*clear bias towards the people from the Nile which needs to be corrected". (Teacher: Sudan).*

**Mada**'s narrative shows how the different groups now make use of their common ethnic heritage for their own interests. In the case of Sudan, however, the advantageous groups are the Arabised ones occupying top positions in both private and public domains. This situation tends to further strengthen the dichotomy between advanced and backward groups, as per Horowitz's (2000) distinction. The result of this strengthened dichotomy is that backward groups find themselves in a very politically marginalised playing field where they have to resort to violence in order to achieve relative equality. As Stewart (2000, p.6) wrote: 'For a group, being severely deprived of political power has all sorts of adverse effects, including making it difficult to reverse other inequalities'.

Considering **Mada**'s assertion, the marginalisation of non-Arabised groups from meaningful political power has negative effects on several aspects of life, such as education, health, security and so on. It also becomes very difficult to reverse that situation because these groups do not occupy any meaningful decision or policy making position and so the end result is violence. The Darfur uprising also got manpower from unhealthy competition between the different groups in the civil service. For example, Khalis Abakir, a commander in SLA, narrated the ordeal which led him to join the rebellion.

*'Khamis had spent twenty-one years in the army. He said 'Arab friends got two holidays a year; non-Arabs only one. Arab friends who had signed on with him became officers; he never rose above sergeant. He accepted this without protest, seeing no other route out of poverty, until his village, Kassieh, was burned and twenty-one people including his brother, the village Imam were killed. At this point he asked himself: 'why am I working for the*

*government? I am not working for money. I am working for my community. He joined SLA as soon as he heard of it'* (Flint & de Waal, 2005, p.68).

Another person also expressed disappointment at how he was treated in the police force:

*'Arabs pass examinations; Africans do not. My Arab friends became officers; I did not. Arab police are kept in the towns. African police are sent to villages, where salaries come late. If you go to the town to protest you are told: 'who ordered you to come here? Go back! He joined the SLA after his village was attacked in December 2003'* (Flint and de Waal, 2005, p.68).

This level of marginalisation has implications for strengthening the level of perceived difference and animosity between the Darfur groups; whilst also crystallising the level of economic disparity between such groups, since one is favoured to occupy positions that, in economic terms, are well paid and attracts higher statuses. Woodward (1995) argued that economic inequalities are the underlying factors leading to the politicisation of ethnic identities and driving ethnic conflicts.

Aside from the perceived marginalisation enacted by the Arabised groups within the government towards non-Arabised groups, there tends to be a deliberate attempt by some of the few non-Arabised elites within the government to ensure the conflict continues for their own personal gain. This dimension to elitism and political marginalisation was supported by

**Jato:**

*"Even in terms of the Darfur conflict, now it's complicated that some elites even from some ethnic groups in Darfur are against the fear of resolution to Darfur. They are against it because they think they will lose, as they are benefitting in*

*terms of post, services, employment. Also, they believe that they are pro-government: if they have any problem, the government will support them. So, if the Darfur problem is solved, then the government does not need their support anymore. Sometimes they block serious positive decisions being made to resolve the Darfur problem. Really, this group of elites from Darfur and other places affect negatively very much the distribution of services, employment, basic amenities; it is affecting, this is a fact we cannot deny". (Diplomat: Sudan).*

This personal dimension creates a problem for the government's intention, if one exists, to find an amicable resolution to the problem; furthermore, it constitutes a problem for the people of Darfur, by creating a scenario where the few influential Darfurian elites in government are working against their own people. The selfish attitudes of some Darfur elites make it easier for the government to renege on agreements for Darfurians, since they are able to buy over a few elites to their side; the result of this is conflict from the armed movements. The characterisation ties in closely with the works of Collier & Hoeffler (1998, p.653) arguing that 'a government which rewards its supporters by exploiting a section of the population will increase the incentive for rebellion'. In relation to the Darfur conflict, the elites in government which are benefiting from their positions would not necessarily want the conflict to come to an end. This position also ties in closely with Collier & Hoeffler's (2004) greed theory on conflict<sup>25</sup>.

In the case of Darfur, the opportunities are seen in relation to positions in government, professional bodies, contracts from government bodies, and protection from

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<sup>25</sup> This posits that rebellions are not necessarily borne out of perceived grievances but are a result of elites wanting to take advantage of opportunities provided by the conflict. They used the example of natural resources, such as illegal mining and control of gold deposits, illegal mining and sale of diamond and crude-oil.

security services. As a result, those Darfur officials could serve as a stumbling block to achieving progress in the resolution of the conflict, since they stand to lose all the gains attached to their positions. It is especially made difficult because they are seen as the representatives of the people. An example of this situation was an Air Force General Abdalla: now a Member of Parliament, a friend of President Bashir, and the most powerful member of the Darfur tribe in Khartoum. It was hoped that since he was in government and close to the President, he would work to bring peace and development to Darfur; instead, he has concentrated on building his own personal career and trying to survive in the polity (Flint & De Waal, 2005).

Moreover, it is a practice which has been linked to a '*neo-patrimonial state*' in which the following apply: public officers methodically appropriate public resources for their own personal use; and political authority is based on practices of clientalism, which includes patronage, rent seeking and prebendalism (Van de Walle, 2001). In my view, the reason for this selfish attitude varies between: (1) a monopolisation of the elite status, (2) creating a sense of tension between government and the local people thus making the government look inefficient. The patronage system keeps politicians and technocrats from these regions in employment as long as they can maintain the status quo. Maintenance of the status quo will enhance or contribute to the widening gaps between the rich and poor; it also discourages development that would elevate part of the population to achieve the 'modern economy' asserted by **Juju**. This would have otherwise created more non-Arabised elites, which is not an acceptable outcome to the current group of elites. Keeping Darfur marginalised and under-developed could be seen in relation to status and class; as a result, elitism could be defined in those terms in that society.

I consider this from the angle of one group being in a position of affluence and influence and trying to subdue the other underprivileged group. Status, from a Weberian stance, 'is a principle based on prestige that ranks members of a society according to

culturally specific principles, which may include wealth, education, or distinctive beliefs or practices' (cited in Emberling, 1997, p.305). From my own perspective, within Weber's status theory, elitism is a product of certain characteristics: this could include wealth and education, located mainly in the north of Sudan which is occupied predominantly by the people perceived to be Arabised — they have dominated the political class in post-independent Sudan. As a result, this has concentrated everything which could serve as a source to becoming an elite in the centre; therefore, limiting access to education or infrastructure that would serve as a source of wealth to other groups in the periphery. Hertz (2005) found educational inequality to be one of the factors determining economic inequality. Relating this finding to my case study, I would tend to agree with Hertz. My arguments under the educational marginalisation section show the level of education received by the Arabised groups due to the levels of support they get from the central government in terms of development and sponsorship. It would be erroneous to assume that the non-Arabised groups would be able to produce enough elites to tilt the balance of political and economic power in their favour.

A consequence of not having the same level of education as the other group is evident in wealth distribution, as it will be negatively skewed in favour of the more educated groups and thereby gives them an edge. Since individuals from the different groups cannot get the level of education required to become an elite or compete as elites, this has an overall effect on the level of educational achievement for the groups; henceforth, leaving one group perceived as advanced and the other backward. The persistence of these group inequalities makes it difficult for deprived groups like the non-Arabised to ascend the status and wealth distribution scale; nonetheless, individuals can themselves move up but thus is highly unlikely for a group. Furthermore, the chances of upward mobility are much higher for individuals from richer groups than ones from poorer groups (Stewart & Langer, 2008). Putting mobility into perspective, in the case of Darfur, it is noteworthy that there are also



Arabised individuals/groups which are not wealthy. Given the levels of education and support for the Arabised groups, it might be much easier for individuals/groups from these communities to gain status and wealth, in comparison to individuals/groups from the non-Arabised groups; thus, leaving them in their backward status. This kind of situation strengthens my argument that the government's Arabisation policies favour certain groups to the detriment of others. It also solidifies the level of perceptual belief between the groups under consideration that they are different from one another because of the level of elites produced, which tilts power in politics in favour of the Arabised groups.

The level to which Darfur has been left undeveloped indicates how it might be insurmountable for the region to ever overcome its marginalisation problems. This was demonstrated in a statement by **Timbi**:

*"About services on the ground, it is very clear, the provisions are in Arab areas that mean electricity, communication will be in the area; but if you talk about Darfur in general, there is nothing from here (Centre). Though in Nyala, there is about 20km of road and 2km between Nyala and Kaki, that is Southern Darfur. In northern Darfur less than this, there is nothing. In el-Genina, in Western Darfur, there was no road till 2010 about 3 to 5kms". (Ex-Rebel: Sudan).*

This statement should be taken with an iota of scepticism but it is not actually far from what is obtainable and resonates with the core-periphery argument. In this case, my respondent tried to create an objective and quantifiable assessment of the situation. From **Timbi's** narrative and my personal observations, it was evident that amenities and infrastructures were predominantly situated in areas dominated by Arabised groups. This is partially a result

of colonial administration's development policies and the dominance of Arabised groups at the Centre since the independence of Sudan (Elihir, 2000).

Dominance by a particular group in the polity is highly correlated with discrimination. In the case of Sudan, this is highly correlated with the finding of Østby (2008b), suggesting a high level of interaction between inter-regional asset inequality and political exclusion. Inter-regional asset inequality is what was elucidated in **Timbi's** narrative: this, to a large extent, limits the region's ability to strive for elitism and, therefore, creates political exclusion. The discrimination arises when some groups within the same region are favoured to the disadvantage of other groups. In their studies, Stewart & Langer (2008, p.32) talked about the discriminatory practices which could lead to conflict, observing that:

*'Discrimination takes a number of forms. It includes, among others, discrimination in education admissions, in treatment while at school, in employment, and in access to and treatment by the legal system. There are overt and deliberate types of discrimination, implicit but intentional and implicit and unintentional forms. There can be a form of geographic or locational discrimination, whereby public infrastructures provided in areas where poorer groups are concentrated are less in quantity and of poorer quality'.*

Relating this observation to the statement of **Timbi** and my other discussions about the level of marginalisation in Darfur and its relationship with the government's Arabisation and Islamisation policies, the level of discrimination could be seen in physical and implicit terms. Physically, it can be seen in the infrastructures of places like Darfur in terms of: the number of school facilities, opportunities for employment after graduation and access to political offices — all of which will be considered in later sections. The implicit and

un(intentional) variant could be seen in the extent to which the government uses its Arabisation policies to disadvantage non-Arabised students, by imposing Islamic and Arabic studies as requisite subjects to gain entry to higher education alongside changing the language of instruction in schools. All these policies/actions tend to discriminate against a particular group to the advantage of another one.

The discussion so far points to a situation where certain groups (non-Arabised) are limited in ways to achieve elite positions through educational achievement. As has been already noted, such educational achievements are (in)directly associated with government's Arabisation policies placing certain groups at a disadvantage. This situation strengthens the perception of difference amongst the groups because of the way they are treated. In addition, it reinforces the need for a strong belief within the groups under consideration that they are different from one another; henceforth, leading to a need to reverse the situation through conflict. The most important factor leading to conflict from the above arguments is the extent to which identity is politicised and part of that problem. I would now like to consider the extent to which favourable political representation might have helped alleviate the situation — this idea is dealt with in the following section on politics.

In the event of gaining political clout, the individual elite could use this to the disadvantage of the people they represent, given, they tend to stand in the way of progress; this, thereby, creates a gridlock between their constituency and the government, provoking a violent strategy by the people to fight for their rights. In this case, elitism becomes a tool for both personal gains and oppression. So, for elitism to become a powerful tool in the case of Darfur/Sudan, an individual is required to be Arabised with some level of higher education and then to gain political power; this serves as the mechanism for manipulation, which leads to further marginalisation. The marginalisation which occurs limits people's access to amenities and infrastructures, which could have helped to elevate them to elite status to

being elites; this could be seen as emanating from the problem of political representation, leading me to the next section.

#### **5.1.3.1. The Politics**

In any society, regardless of the magnanimity of its citizens, there happens to be a point where certain groups of the society believe they are not being fairly represented in government or the decision making processes of that society (Adebanwi & Obadare, 2013). This feeling is not limited to top decision making arms in government, but also the extent to which such decisions, either positively or negatively, affect the everyday existence of its group members (Newman, 2005, Deng, 2008). As mentioned previously, the politics of marginalisation, like the other themes discussed, can be traced back into history. During the colonial era, the administration adopted a policy to enhance the interest of certain influential families from the Nile Valley area — this is now the present day Central and northern Sudan (Riverian Sudan). The objective of this was to minimise resistance to the administration's rule: it was achieved through preferential allocation of productive assets, contracts and bank loans. The groups which benefitted were mainly religious leaders, tribal leaders and merchants (Idris, 2005, Flint & De Waal, 2005, 2006).

After independence, authority and political influence rested in the hands of these social groupings; as a result, there were disparities in development within northern Sudan and also between North and South Sudan (*Sudan Vision*, 1989). One would have thought that independence would have allowed the Sudanese elites to find a way of addressing the imbalance and disparities which existed. By contrast, the state of affairs did not change after independence. This is probably why my respondents tended to describe the political environment as one of '*serious marginalisation*', impeding peaceful coexistence and contributing to the conflict situation in Sudan. Political marginalisation can be seen as being practiced at a tripartite level: local, national and regional.

I will demonstrate how the local, national and regional political environment is perceived by my respondents and how the identities in the geographical space think they are being marginalised. On a more general note, my respondents perceived political marginalisation in Sudan in terms of: political representation, power sharing, resource allocation, inequality, interests and its ramification on the day-to-day running of the country. It is in these terms that I will elucidate the linkage of how my respondents view how politics contribute to the conflict process. None of my respondents actually defined power; although they did use it in their explanations about what they thought the problem of Sudan is. In terms of power, **Mada** said:

*“There is a general feeling which means that there is some unfairness in terms of power distribution over the years by sections of people from East Sudan, Darfur, Kordofan; which results in the marginalisation of people from these regions. But at the end, the most important element that would bring stability to Sudan is to share proportionately in the power base and in the government machinery; otherwise, this is a gross type of inequality which is not going to help the country”.* (Teacher: Sudan).

He, therefore, viewed power in terms of the way it is perceived by the group of people who feel unfairly treated and marginalised. There is a commonality between the areas he mentioned: they are occupied by people considered to be mainly non-Arabised. This can be referred back to the issue of identity and how it played out in the power politics of Sudan. My respondents described unfairness in terms of feelings which cannot be measured in real terms; it was this feeling of displeasure with the status quo which, they believed, culminated in the conflict which broke out in 2003 and continues until the present moment. The power he talked about could also be seen in the political representation afforded to these groups in

the decision making bodies. The facts were presented in the publication of the *'Black Book of Sudan: Imbalance of Power and Wealth in Sudan'* (2000, 2002).

**Mada**'s narrative demonstrates how the accumulation of displeasure, over time, leads to conflict, as seen in the case of Darfur. Personally, I believe that the exercise of power is not actually the cause of displeasure but its misappropriation by certain groups. Paulson *et al.* (2003, p.209) asserted politics is seen 'as the practices and processes through which power, in its multiple forms, is wielded and negotiated'. Considering this, power is not the real problem; rather, it is the politicised nature of power and its implications for non-Arabised citizens or groups under consideration. The complexity of Darfur is the extent to which the Arabised identities involved are seen as monopolising power to the benefit of their clans (Idris, 2005). Within the theme of power politics and how this is wielded in its multiple forms, some of my respondents raised issues, ranging from economics, oil, national income distribution; and the extent to which all of these are politicised by people in power.

The extent to which these facets of the state are affected is what was also highlighted in the *'Black Book'*. Since the polity is dominated by a certain group this, thereby, leaves wealth and income distribution at the behest of the Northern region (El-Tom & Salih, 2003). Most of my respondents saw the power base as representative of some groups (especially Arabised Riverian elites). As a result, these groups are believed to have a monopoly of power, which, in turn, translates into resources for development and growth; this monopolisation, however, did not occur in isolation. As mentioned in chapter Four, the colonial legacy had a huge impact on the political platform which was created during independence: this, to a large extent, encouraged the marginalisation of other groups (Idris, 2001, 2005, Deng, 1995, 2008, Mamdani, 2009, Madut, 2001). This situation goes a long way in strengthening the differences amongst groups, especially given the government's Arabisation policies, which have been shown to discriminate against non-Arabised groups.

One of my respondents, **Jato**, claimed there is no official policy to marginalise any group but it is happening: “*Although, there is no official policy to marginalise them but in practice, it’s happening*”. This unofficial practice, as highlighted by **Jato**, affects other sections of the society and allows the government to deny that it practices a politics of marginalisation or exclusion. This can be traced back to the Turko-Egyptian era to the Mahdiyya and the Anglo-Egyptian condominium, where there was huge under-investment and a lack of basic social amenities in the peripheries. Darfur served as the main provider of cheap labour for the Gezira scheme and was ‘systematically shut out of government circles’; despite this, traditional land and conflict resolution mechanisms were left intact (De Waal, 2005).

Moreover, the self-appointment of Khallifa Abdullahi (successor of the Mahdi) was contested, particularly by Riverian elites, given the massacres by the Khallifa’s forces in Mutemma in 1897. As a result, there is a feeling within the ruling elites ‘that Western Sudanese have to be kept out of power at all cost’; although this is not officially written anywhere (Roessler, 2010, p.10). To an extent, one could say that both the feelings of revenge provoked by historical animosity and the mechanism which left power in the hands of the Arabised groups has resulted in this unofficial level of marginalisation in the political base of the country. This marginalisation put the non-Arabised groups at a disadvantage, compared to their Arabised counterparts who dominate politically and are able to wield and negotiate power; the end result of this is conflict (Paulson *et al.*, 2003).

The combination of these factors has led to the disenfranchisement of certain groups’ representation in the polity. This is reflected both in terms of the level of representation in the legislature and executive. This duality of marginalised representation is well documented in the ‘*Black Book*’ — in the following section, I will show and discuss some of the findings of it, as well as the legislative representation of non-Arabised groups. I use these tables to show the level of representation (executive and legislative) in the time

period since Sudan claimed to be a democracy. In a democracy, numbers are crucially important for any piece of legislation to pass and thereafter be implemented as policies, either to the benefit or detriment of the different parties/groups. The most represented party/group will most likely put in place laws or policies favouring its group members (Akintobi, 2012).

Data from the *'Black Book'* will be used in partially justifying the onset of the conflict given the period in which the figures were from. The data was based on figures and data from the 1986 census, which served as the most official census data for Sudan. Another census was carried out in 2008, but it was dubbed with several irregularities which led to a majority of groups rejecting its result (DRDC, 2010)<sup>26</sup>.

#### **5.1.3.1.1. Political Representation**

This section considers political representation and how it can be skewed in favour of certain groups. Table 4 (see page 232) shows that the Northern Arabised Region, with a population of just 5.4 percent, has 79.5 percent of representation in the nation; it also shows the dominance of northern Sudanese in the polity through the unbalanced distribution of representatives. These figures give credence to the earlier assertion that Sudan has been dominated by northern Sudanese elites, as a result of their 'opportunistic monopolisation' of power after independence (El-Tom, 2006).

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<sup>26</sup> "The 2008 population and housing census showed that the Arab nomad populations in Darfur were 2.95million while the 1993 population census indicated that they were barely 695,518. The number of the nomad population in Darfur has thus registered an increase of about 324% during the last 15 years. This phenomenal population growth among the nomads in Darfur was unmatched by any other segment of Sudan's population. Inflation of the number of the Arab nomads is clearly unusual to nomadic communities, especially with the context of the armed conflict in Darfur which limited their movement and profoundly altered their living conditions. Such sharp increase contradicts the accelerated urbanization trend taking hold among nomadic communities all over Sudan including Darfur in particular after the eruption of the current conflict in the region. It is to be noted that the census in Darfur was organised during the period between end April and early May 2008, a period that usually witness migration of nomads from areas of their traditional gatherings which makes it impossible for enumerators to trace them. It is also observed that in the past, nomads usually avoid the headcount and often they choose to remain off the voting rolls for their own social reasons or cultural beliefs".



**Table 4: Population and Representation in Sudan**

Regions	Population	%	Representation	%
Northern	1,026,406	5.4	58	79.5
Eastern	2,222,779	11.8	1	1.4
Central	4,908,038	26.5	2	2.8
Southern	4,407,450	23.7	12	16.4
Western	6,072,872	32.6	0	0

Source: *'The Black Book'* cited in El-Tom & Salih, (2003).

Table 5 shows ministerial appointments of successive governments from 1964-2000. It is evident that the executive arm of the polity is negatively skewed in favour of the Northern region, which has the highest number of ministerial appointment. Table 5 also gives recognition to the second democratic era of Sadiq Al-Mahdi (1986-1989), for increasing the appointments of ministers from marginalised areas. This, in effect, could be seen as 'as a testimony that liberal democracy goes some way towards tackling the dilemma of representation' (Salih, 1999, p.14).

**Table 5: Ministerial representation in Governments from 1964-2000**

Gov./Region	Northern		Central		Eastern		Southern		Western	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1 <sup>st</sup> Democracy	55	67.9	2	2.5	5	6.2	14	17.3	5	6.2
Nimeiri	79	68.7	4	2.5	19	16.5	9	7.8	4	3.5
Military	21	70.0	0	0	3	10	5	16.7	1	3.3
2 <sup>nd</sup> Democracy	55	47.4	3	2.6	17	14.7	15	12.9	26	22.4
NIF 1	120	59	6	3	18	8.9	30	14.9	28	13.8
NIF 2	18	60	1	3.3	2	6.6	4	13.3	5	16.7

Source: *'The Black Book'* in <http://www.sudanjem.com/?s=black+book>

The main reason for an unbalanced representation stems from the fact that all Presidents/Head of State since the independence of Sudan have come from just three groups in the Northern region; thereby, they have control over power and ministerial appointments (Idris, 2005). These tables show the extent to which several regions are severely under-

represented in comparison to the Northern region; they also highlight the difficulties encountered by any marginalised groups pursuing any meaningful developmental plans for their respective regions, since they are poorly represented. This situation is made possible because the Northern region has control of all the major decision making portfolios like the *Ministry of Finance*. This Ministry has been alleged to be a Northern preserve where ninety-five percent of the workforce is from the North (El-Tom & Salih, 2003).

In terms of budget implementation, which is also handled by the *Ministry of Finance*, 'no non-Northern state has ever exceeded 36% of its allocated budget while actual expenditure of the two Northern states has never dropped below 60% of their annual approved allocations. This [budget distribution] has left the Northern states in continuous position for attracting extra funds originally destined for other states' (El-Tom and Salih, 2003, p.513). These factors make it difficult for regions/groups to achieve any developmental goal, since they are under-represented; a resultant effect of that under-representation is the non-disbursement of developmental allocations to those regions/groups.

Considering legislative representation will illustrate how political representation further strengthens their perceived differences. The next table shows the distribution of Members of Parliament (MPs) from Darfur in the National Assembly, compared to the total number of national MPs. It also shows how the Arabised groups in Darfur have more political representation at the national level in percentage terms; thus, skewing development in their favour. Table 6 (see page 234) was published in 2005 in the policy document about the '*Darfur: Livelihood under Siege*' Campaign. It happens to be the last of its kind published, since it was mainly utilised as a policy guide and negotiation tool for Darfurians during the Comprehensive Peace Agreement talks in 2005. Since then, no further data with regards to political representation has officially been published.

This Table demonstrates that Arabised groups (26%) have much higher representation than any one group, except the Fur (29%). This shows inadequate political

representation for the other groups with implications for budgetary revenue and expenditure from the Centre (Young *et al.*, 2005). Revenue and expenditure served as the basis on which development and growth can occur in those communities: this was the rallying point for my respondents. The over-representation of Arabised groups could be attributed to the inflated number of Arab nomads in Darfur, as observed in the census figures of 2008 (DRDC Report, 2010).

**Table 6: Ethnic Affiliation of Darfur MPs in the National Assembly**

Tribe	North Darfur	South Darfur	West Darfur	Total	%
Fur	3	5	10	18	29
Zaghawa	3	2	-	5	8
Berti	6	-	-	6	10
Arab Groups	1	15	1	16	26
Masalit	-	1	5	6	10
Fellata	2	2	1	5	8
Gimir	-	1	1	2	3
Tunjur	1	-	-	1	1.6
Burgo	-	1	-	1	1.6
Birgid	-	1	-	1	1.6
<b>Total</b>	16	28	18	62	100

**Source:** *Darfur Region Transitional Authority*, (2005).

<b>Total Number of MPs in the National Assembly</b>	360
<b>Total number of Darfur MPs</b>	62
<b>Percentage of Darfur MPs</b>	17

The over-representation of Arabised groups in the census allows the Arab-Islamic government to make claims for more representation from that particular group, which, in turn, is provided for by the constitution of Sudan. Considering the situation in view of the politics of marginalisation, it allows for the government to provide support to the Arabised groups to the detriment of non-Arabised groups. This support is evident in the Arab-Islamic government having a majority in the legislature, which enables and emboldens it to lay claims to an Arab-Islamic identity for the whole country. The government is able to help

those groups which are considered to fall under the over-represented category, by offering more developmental projects to those communities. These situations not only contribute to the increasing belief of differences amongst the groups under consideration, it also creates an unbalanced level of development in a particular region thereby leaving members of the same group at a disadvantage when compared to others.

Using the perspectives of my respondents, I have shown how the imaginary/unofficial marginalisation policy contributed to the outbreak of what is termed the ‘Worst Humanitarian Crisis of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century’ (UN, 2007) and how the admixture of these factors existed in pre-independent Sudan. It is not just a contemporary issue, therefore, but one which has been in existence before the independence of Sudan. The realm of politics is viewed by the exercise of power and influence by politicians occupying top level offices. One of the aspects described by some of my respondent is national income distribution.

**Alhaji** said:

*“When the national income is not evenly distributed, and it’s not distributed according to the needs of minorities; and minorities here are the one who can’t speak for themselves and don’t know where to get their rights. People in all the rural areas all over the country don’t get anything simply because the focus is almost in the Centre. So, I guess if I was in the rural areas, I will not be feeling secured [sic] that they can help me”.* (Technician: Sudan).

In line with **Alhaji**’s assertion, I personally observed that even inside Khartoum there was a huge disparity between people considered Arabised compared to those perceived to be non-Arabised. This was evident in the sense that, within the city, most of the big and lucrative businesses were owned by the former identity groups and the latter identity groups

were used mainly for auxiliary purposes (such as cleaners, drivers, chefs, parking assistants) within such businesses. Also, on the streets, the ones hawking and begging are people considered non-Arabised. Out of curiosity, I asked one of the street hawkers, **Ishau**, who sells sugarcane at my guest house, “*Why is it that I don’t find Arabised people selling or hawking on the streets or road side?*” His response was:

*“These children of the Nile consider it a taboo to see themselves selling on the streets like beggars and would rather die than come on the street to sell. If you can also see, you will discover that the businesses are owned by their fathers, mothers, cousins abroad and all they do is manage for them. For people like me, we are cursed and this is where we belong or else no food”.* (Food Vendor: Sudan).

Looking at this in terms of personal income distribution,<sup>27</sup> this will be asymmetrically skewed in favour of big businesses, which are dominated by members from Arabised groups located in Khartoum and its environs. This group, to a very large extent, are the ones in power; thus, able to determine the areas in which the national income goes and who benefits from it. This situation was depicted in the *African Economic Outlook Report (AFDB et al., 2012, p.12)*: ‘The distribution of wealth is highly unequal along both social and regional lines and subsistence agriculture remains the predominant form of employment. Economic growth continues to be unevenly distributed, and as a consequence, inequalities continue to widen’.

Alluding to **Alhaji**’s comment on the poverty level in rural areas, 46.5percent of the Sudanese population are considered to be in poverty, with most residing in the rural areas of the country (CBS, 2009). This is partly attributed to negatively skewed income inequality

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<sup>27</sup> Bureau of Economic Analysis defines income as an individual’s total earnings from wages, interest on investments, and from other sources. Retrieved from: <http://blog.bea.gov/2012/08/14/personal-income/>

and resource allocation in favour of the security sector dominated by the Arabised elites of northern Sudan and a growth pattern that is generally unbalanced in favour of certain regions (ECA Report, 2012). This situation continues to enhance the wealth accumulation and social mobility capability of the Arabised groups, due to their advantaged economic positions which links to their political position within the state.

Returning to my discussion on the ability of citizens to achieve what **Juju** termed '*modern economy*', government officials chose to benefit Arabised groups with developmental initiatives and power; thus, leaving non-Arabised sections of the population in disadvantaged positions, hence discouraging the achievement of the same modern economy. The Arabised identity, as the one with political power, will formulate, influence and implement policies which will always be favourable to their groups; this, in turn, continues to empower them to own and run big businesses. This, invariably, will impoverish or disadvantage the other identity groups in this case study, creating a sense of displeasure. This conclusion is similar to '*realist conflict theory*', which emphasises that unequal power and wealth relations among groups are likely to result in ethnocentric and antagonistic intergroup relations (Tajfel, 1979). This also ties in closely with the findings of Collier and Hoeffler (1998) that a society where high per capital income exists, the risk of civil war is reduced. As with most other countries with low per capital income calculated on the basis of the national income generated, the likelihood of conflict breaking out is high when it is perceived or seen that a minority group of the population are the ones getting a huge share of the national income (Collier and Hoeffler, 1998).

Fearon (2004a) also concluded that countries with high Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Per Capita are wealthier and experience less conflict, because they are able to dissuade rebellion and put in place counter-measures. The works of Collier *et al.* (2006) and Fearon (2004) assumes that income is the same across the nation(s); however, this notion contradicts the findings of Buhaug *et al.* (2011, p.815) who found that the 'onset of conflict

is closely related to geographical variation in income'. It was also discovered that 'violent conflict was most likely to break out in places where low income exists'. In sum, it was concluded that 'variation in the local income matters more than the national income in the onset of conflict and that pockets of relative wealth within very poor countries are more likely to see conflict outbreaks'.

With reference to my argument on national income distribution and the absolute advantageous position of the Arabised groups, it could be said that the national income is not evenly distributed, which would have encouraged development or the non-marginalisation of other areas of the country. As a result, there is little or no displeasure over the national income distribution by groups which consider themselves marginalised. Any displeasure which might have arisen could have been resolved easily by negotiations before the marginalised groups— in this case the non-Arabised groups — adopted violent means to address their grievances.

On the findings of Buhaug *et al.* (2011), the statement of respondent, **Ishau**, and my own personal observation, it is suggested that the local income distribution study is acutely skewed in favour of the groups who own the big businesses and occupy the power base. With a larger share of the local income due to economic and political positions, this is a catalyst for conflict when the population at the other end feels displeased and discontented with the status quo. Birnir & Waguespack (2011) posited that the political representation of so many social groups helps in the creation and implementation of policies, where all the groups feel they can benefit mutually from the arrangements because of proper representation. On the other side of the divide is Per Capita Expenditure, which, in the case of Sudan, is also known to put people in the peripheries — in this case Darfur — at a disadvantage, when compared to people living in Khartoum and Central Sudan which is comprised mainly of Arabised Riverian elites. According to the study of Cobham (2005, p.5):

*'The Northern region and Khartoum have much Per Capita expenditures and revenue than any other area, more than twice those of the West... (in spite of) this large existing difference in the ability of the regions to raise their own revenues, Per Capita levels of government subsidy to states are biased in the same direction: the Northern states enjoy a subsidy more than twice that offered to the West'.*

Considering the argument on Per Capita Expenditure<sup>28</sup> and the area receiving more attention based on the capital expenditure, it is obvious from the findings of Cobham (2005), as well as my observations, that most of the social and capital projects are located in Khartoum and its immediate environs, occupied mainly by Arabised groups. This concentration in Khartoum left the periphery in a state of under-development, with little or no capital for social expenditure. The peripheries consist mainly of non-Arabised groups who happen to be in the majority but have little or no access to basic social and infrastructural facilities; as a result, they have taken to violence in order to achieve their aim of fair and equal treatment.

Despite gains made in the Darfur Peace Agreement (2006) — which stipulated the need for massive infrastructural development projects due to years of neglect and marginalisation — Darfurians were hopeful of an opportunity to, at least, bid for contracts and get some level of employment in their region. What was obtainable, however, was that most of the contracts for developmental projects were awarded to Arabised elites from Darfur and Khartoum, who had with close links to the government and were in advantaged positions, both politically and financially. The monopolisation of contracts left non-Arabised groups and less advantaged Arabised groups in auxiliary positions, skewing the potential

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<sup>28</sup> Per Capita Expenditure is measured by the level of basic social infrastructural facility that citizens benefit from (World Bank, 2013).



income in favour of the same ruling elites (Nugud, 2010). This situation adheres to the Arabisation policies, because it reinforces the position of the Arabised groups by giving them a more competitive edge; thereby, strengthening group member's beliefs that they are better than other groups, who are then treated as subordinates (auxiliary workers). This situation not only heightens the conflict situation, it strengthens the displeased party's position that the whole process has been hijacked by Arabised elites for the benefit of their group members. This further solidifies their belief that they are not equals when it comes to the implementation of policies; thus, widening the perceived identity divide.

The argument on national income is not a mutually exclusive topic of its own; it is closely related to what one of my respondents talked about in relation to the wealth of Sudan: this comes from its oil revenues, which serves as subsistence for the country. It is not the presence of oil that creates the problem, but how the wealth generated is used to the (dis)advantage of the people. Respondent, **Julia**, said:

*“Another core link to the conflict is that with the amount of money being made from oil, the wealth is not fairly distributed across regions — Darfur inclusive — this has fuelled the conflict a lot; as a result, we can say it's multi-causal”.* (Author: New York).

In this case study, national income and wealth becomes a derivative of the revenue made from oil which is meant to be used by the entire population. In the case of Sudan, 75 percent of the oil deposits are located in South Sudan; however, the refineries and shipment ports are located in the North, giving the Northerners and Arabised Khartoum elites access to oil revenues (Sudan Tribune, 2009). It is also in the North and Khartoum that the decision is made about how the revenue is disbursed and which part of the country gets what share. The decisions are made in Khartoum because it is the administrative capital and, effectively, where the power brokers that decide and implement budgetary and fiscal policies are located.

Considering the current political landscape, in the last election, ninety-seven percent of electable offices were won by the ruling ‘*National Conscience Party*’ made up of mainly Arabised groups (Sudan Tribune, 2010). This kind of political scene limits the ability of other groups (especially non-Arabised) in the country to have an equal level of opportunity in formulating and implementing budgetary/fiscal policies in the country. This situation shows the extent to which revenue and expenditure decision making will be politicised, because of the negative skewedness of the polity (representation) in favour of the Arabised groups. Furthermore, it favours the government’s implementation of Arabisation policies, since it has enough funds at its disposal to enable it to fund programmes and elections; thus, allowing it to remain in power for so long, without the need to raise tax revenues from the different peripheral regions. This allows the government to remain detached from the rest of the population not close to Khartoum; thereby, exacerbating the grievances. This situation ties in closely with the findings of Collier *et al.* (2006, p.11) in ‘*Beyond Greed and Grievance: Feasibility and Civil War*’ that one of the channels of rebellion is that ‘governments of resource-rich countries tend to be more remote from their populations since they do not need to tax them, so [with such abandonment] grievances are stronger’. The difference, in this case, is that the government is more remote to the concerns of peripheries like Darfur, as opposed to the entire population.

As pointed out earlier, conflict erupts from revenue sharing and not the mere presence of oil itself, which contradicts the findings of Collier (1998) that states with low incomes are typically thrown into conflict due to the existence of natural resources. He never really elucidated whether it was the actual presence of the resources that caused conflict or the revenue generated from sales. Bringing in identity as the focal point of this research, however, Collier (2003) also asserted that states with low income, combined with large dually polarised identities, have an increased likelihood of falling into violent conflicts. Birnir & Waguespack (2011, p.254) also found that ‘ethnic fractionalization is negatively

related to growth'. In the case of Darfur/Sudan, this appears to be true, as there is evidently a population of identities which essentially aggregate themselves into two main polarised and opposed identities; thus, creating an 'Us' versus 'Them' situation (Horowitz, 1985).

In this case, I take 'Us' to be non-Arabised groups and 'Them' the Arabised groups who are politically strong. The 'Us' versus 'Them' rhetoric is especially supported with the publication of the '*Black Book*' (2000, 2002), which showed the marginalisation of other parts of the country by the Arabised Riverian elites. This situation is explained with the help of tables 7 and 8, showing the population distribution of Sudan pre-2003 conflict and the revenue distribution for same time period. These tables illustrate that the revenue distribution is not proportional to the needs of the population in the different areas; therefore, leading marginalised groups (Darfurians) to seek redress via conflict in 2003.

**Table 7: Population Distribution of Sudan Pre-2003**

Population Distribution Table			
Region	Population (000)	(% of Sudan)	Urban Population(% of Region)
North	1511	4.7	26.4
East	3746	11.7	37.3
<b>Central</b>	<b>11787</b>	<b>37</b>	52.2
Khartoum	4936	15.5	86.7
Ex-Khartoum	6851	21.5	27.4
<b>West</b>	<b>9753</b>	<b>30.5</b>	20.9
Darfur	5976	18.7	17.9
Kordofan	3777	11.8	25.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>26797</b>	<b>83.9</b>	

**Source:** Sudan Ministry of Finance, Economic and Budget Department.

**Table 8: Regional Revenue and Expenditure Per Capita: 1996-2000 Averages (% of Value for North).**

Region	Total Expenditure Per Capita	Total Revenue Per Capita	Effective Subsidy Per Capita	Development Expenditure Per Capita
North	100	100	100	100
Central	104	134.1	16.8	245.5
Khartoum	161.5	213.7	13.3	532.9
Central Excluding Khartoum	60.6	70.9	23.8	35.5
East	73.7	98.4	1.6	79.5
West	44.1	43.9	43.3	17
Darfur	40.6	41.5	35.1	17.2
Kordofan	49.9	47.6	57.5	15.5

**Source:** *Cobham, (2005a).*

Tables 7 and 8 exclude South Sudan due to its independence in 2011 according to the provisions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005, which was signed by the GoS and the SPLM/A, now GoSS. Examining tables 7 and 8, it is clear that there is clear disparity in Per Capita total expenditure and total revenue Per Capita as shown in rows 2 and 3 of Table 8. It is also evident that both allocated revenues and expenditures were more in the northern and central regions of Sudan when compared to the East moving West. These figures could exist regardless of the type of government (democratic or authoritarian) in place. Although Collier (2000) suggested that ethnic political rights is positively related to growth, Birnir & Waguespack (2011, p.256) posited that ‘while general political rights are important, direct influence over policy is what distinguishes beneficial effects of diversity in democracy’. Drawing upon these assertions, the case of Sudan shows that the Arabised Riverian elites are the dominant political force; as a result, they have the upper hand in the

policy making and implementation processes. They have the ability, therefore, to skew policy decisions related to revenue and expenditure in favour of their own group members, and to further policies which shape the national identity of the country in their image. This situation leaves groups which fall short of the Arabised elite's criteria of identity at a disadvantage; thereby, increasing the level of grievance amongst those groups.

The differences in the economic strength of each region could also account for this kind of situation, where allocation of revenue and expenditure is based on income generated from that region (Robinson, 2009). In the case of Sudan, the people that occupy northern and central parts are predominantly members of a particularly self-ascribed ethnic group that happens to occupy strategic decision making positions; hence, are able to implement policies which will only (un)intentionally favour their group members. Moreover, infrastructures that will bring about strong regional economies are largely located in the Northern and Central regions; thus, leaving the other regions with little or no apparatus to develop or grow and henceforth little ability to generate enough revenue from their region. This regional disparity is synonymous to what Lipton (1997, cited in Buhaug et al. 2011, p.818) referred to as “‘urban bias’ and systematic neglect of peripheral areas”. It was said that these bias and neglect leads to ‘concentrated regional inequalities’ [and the] ‘lack of state involvement are more likely to give rise to willingness and opportunities for mobilisation in existing networks than diffuse social inequalities [which] can be exploited by conflict entrepreneurs’.

Furthermore, in row 4 of Table 8, which shows subsidy Per Capita, it demonstrates that peripheries like Darfur, Kordofan receive more subsidy. It is clear looking at the revenues, the percentage of revenue obtained in the North and the Central regions, and the level of Per Capita subsidy as a percentage of the population they receive, in comparative terms, are much higher than that of the periphery. With the level of revenue and expenditure in the North and the Centre — which, from this data, stands in the hundreds — they still get a Per Capital subsidy close to an average of 18%, when compared to the other regions. This

shows discrepant skewedness in terms of subsidies received putting into consideration the population distribution of these regions from Table 7. Finally, in the last row of Table 8 is the data for development expenditure Per Capita. In Sudan, the *Ministry of Finance* classified expenditures in the following categories for the year ending 2000: wages (38%), debt service (9%), subsidies (2%) and development (17%) (Cobham, 2005). Table 8 shows that Khartoum is the most resourced in this regard, having almost double the level of expenditure of the North, followed by the Central region. By comparison, the West (Darfur), which is my focus, with a higher population only gets 17.2% expenditure.

In view of the discussion on revenue and expenditure by comparing Tables 7 and 8, it is seen that the Central, which has a population of 37%, commands a total Per Capita revenue and expenditure of 104% and 134.1% respectively. At the other end of the spectrum, the West, which has the second highest population of 30.6%, only has a Per Capita revenue and expenditure of 44.1% and 43.9% respectively. Figures from this data suggest huge discrepancy in the level of marginalisation between the different regions. With regions containing higher numbers of people perceived to be Arabised being more favourable in terms of total Per Capita revenue, expenditure and development expenditure Per Capita, in comparison to regions occupied mainly by people who are perceived, by the other party, to be non-Arabised. This situation is possible because of the political domination by a particular group; thus, espousing the 'ethnic control order', which increases the chances of an outbreak of conflict (Lesch, 1998). This is not to suggest that there is no cohabitation between these groups that perceive themselves differently: for instance, in the core North and the Central, there are non-Arabised groups living there; whilst there are also people perceived to be Arabised living in the other regions., Table 6 also showed political representation as favourable to Arabised groups in Darfur; this suggests that the Arabised groups in Darfur might get a much higher share in terms of revenue and expenditure allocated to Darfur, in comparison to the other ethnic affiliations with low political

representation. This favouritism is partially accounted for by the flawed 2008 Census figures, which served as the basis for determining political representation. One of its flaws was the inflated numbers of certain Arabised groups (nomadic groups); thereby, creating over-representation of some groups and the under-representation of others (DRDC, 2010).

The representation dynamics breeds more contempt and conflict in an already tense environment. It also further strengthens distrust within the non-Arabised groups towards the Arabised groups in Darfur and their Riverian supporters. This state of affairs cannot be isolated from the government's Arabisation policies, which promote Arab dominance and superiority. Quintessentially, with a more Arabised political landscape and representation across the country, an image of an Arab-Islamic national identity is portrayed both locally and internationally.

As seen from the data and the testimony of my respondents, one can say that social, economic and political marginalisation was rather high prior to the outbreak of conflict. This was made common knowledge with the publication of the *Black Book*, which, to an extent, further exacerbated feelings of grievance within the marginalised groups. The pre-war situation, to an extent, supports the discovery of Hagan *et al.* (2011, pp.4-5):

*'Despite examples of mixed groupings, however, and the claims and even intentions of Sudanese elites at times to advance inclusion along with their development policies, the contemporary history of Darfur is more persistently one of marginalisation and neglect if not exploitation of Black African groups by the Sudanese government' .*

As much as I agree with the above narrative, the depiction of the existence of Black African groups shows one of the ways in which Darfurian identities are misconstrued and rigidly solidified; hence, creating a basis for an essentialist identity. As explained in Chapter Four, the people considered '*Black Africans*' are in no way different from those perceived to be

Arabised, being mindful of all the factors discussed. As a result, the existence of primordial-essentialist identity groups adhering to skin pigmentation is rather fictitious if non-existent. What I have argued, however, is the extent to which certain groups have been influenced by the Arab culture and hence are now considered Arabised. Drawing upon what Hagan *et al.* (2011) called '*mixed groupings*', I suggest they defeated their own classification of groups in Darfur using skin colour by alluding to the existence of mixed groupings. This somewhat confused categorisation largely shows the complexities involved in the labelling of groups in Darfur. This, therefore, created a need to explore the different factors which have contributed over time to the identity formation of the Darfur people, and have also helped to create and solidify a politicised identity among the groups under consideration.

## **5.2. Conclusion**

Culture is an integral part of my respondents' identities. It has been shown that it forms the foundations for people to rely on mechanisms such as native administration, which also serves as a channel for political and economic relations. Trying to manipulate or change the culture through the media and the weakening of the administrative apparatus not only undermines the people's identity, it is also seen as an attack on their way of life. They are being manipulated and weakened culturally; furthermore, a cultural identity is being imposed through several policy decisions under the umbrella of Arabisation. In the process of fighting for the survival of their cultural identity amidst other issues, conflict erupts between people that appear to be the same, as argued in the previous chapter. The government's Arabisation and Islamisation policies have been able to solidify the belief of perceived differences between the different groups; thereby, creating ethnic boundaries. This appears to be achieved by transforming cultural identity into racialised ideologies through Arabisation policies; thus, politicising cultural identity, which should mainly be a sociological phenomenon.



Closely related to the erosion of cultural identity is the extent to which channels or avenues of learning those cultures or practices are discouraged. Of key importance is the level of educational marginalisation, where it has been shown how difficult it would be for people from peripheries like Darfur to achieve what **Juju** termed '*modern economy*'. This is the case because of the discrepancy in the level of educational achievements between the Centre and the Periphery. Looking at the statistics shows that most of the educational facilities are concentrated in Khartoum and its environs, which are partially a result of colonial development legacy and the government's Arabisation and Islamisation policies. This, in my view could create a situation where citizens might have to pay heavily in the urban centres that might be unaffordable as a result of low income. Little or no infrastructural investment and the language requirements restrict certain groups' access and acceptance into institutions of higher learning.

In the long-term, the '*modern economy*' which **Juju** referred to would not be achieved by non-Arabised groups, due to their inability to access a higher level of education that would elevate them to a much higher status; this, henceforth, limits their ability to political power. An important element of education is the level of government support to certain groups; this resulted in the politicisation of education through its Arabisation policies. This situation brings education as a fundamental human right into the realm of politics; it, furthermore, strengthens the already existing gap between these groups. It achieves this in terms of the amount of elites that could be produced, which mainly affects the level of representation in the polity. The representation deficit solidifies ethnic boundaries because of the skewed nature of elitist representation in the polity, which tilts in favour of the Arabised group in Darfur that the government considers to be in line with its definition of national identity. In that sense, identity becomes an entrenched element in the educational system: it either boosts or reduces one's chances of making it to elitism and/or success depending on which side of the identity divide one falls.

Considering the discussion on cultural marginalisation, educational marginalisation, elitism and political marginalisation, I argue that marginalisation closely ties in with the issue of identity, given the politics involved at all levels. The inter-relationship between marginalisation and identity was qualified and quantified from the viewpoints of my respondents and secondary data respectively. To sum it up, identity becomes implicated, whether it is in the access to education or access to the '*modern economy*', which is closely linked to economic and political influence.

As shown, in all the themes discussed, politicised ethnicity becomes implicated in every facet of life and contributes negatively to the discourse on marginalisation; this has an implication for development to be discussed in the next chapter. In all, I have demonstrated in this chapter how the current conflict should not be simplistically seen as mere conflict between fictitious categorisations of Arab/African identity dichotomy; rather, it is being manifested as a microcosm of the larger Sudanese crisis. This, therefore, shows how the admixture of the government's Arabisation and Islamisation policies impact on culture, education, elitism and, most importantly, the politics of identity in Sudan. In light of arguments on the instrumentality of ethnicity in the polity, I have shown that the kind of ethnic politics adopted by the government of Sudan led to the level of marginalisation expressed by my respondents. These socio-political and economic issues led to feelings of perceived injustice by certain groups within the state resulting to government's loss of legitimacy in the face of citizens. This created a platform for mobilisation by elites to confront the state in order to correct the perceived injustices for their group members. The combination of these factors (ethnic politics, loss of legitimacy and socio-economic injustice) is what Kaldor said leads to New Wars, all of which are reminiscent of the situation in Darfur/Sudan, hence validating my choice of the New War theory as my theoretical framework.

## Chapter Six

### 6.1. Identity and Development

Development in any society is one of the main contributors to economic growth, national and personal wealth, poverty reduction and life longevity. All these benefits and more are achieved directly or indirectly from a nation's developmental goals and policies. This is why there is a huge and clear disparity in the above mentioned benefits of development, when comparing the developed and developing nations of which Sudan is not an exception (*UNCTAD*, 2009). In this chapter, I discuss development, as it is another significant theme which arose in the process of my transcription and analysis.

Sudan has significant human capital and a vast natural resource base providing enormous development potential (*Irma Specht & Mark van Dorp et al.*, 2009). There is, however, a sharp disparity in the level of development between the different regions of the country, which, to an extent, might explain their disparities in the life expectancy ratio, level of wealth, and provision of basic and social infrastructures — these will be examined later. Associated with this is the fact that the different regions accommodate a mixture of identity groups (along religious and ethnic lines), which have different political standing in the polity. The implication of this will be a favourable dispensation of developmental benefits towards Arabised groups that are acutely more represented in the polity. Given their level of representation, these groups also sought to define the national identity in their own image due to the privileged positions they held in post-independent Sudan (*Deng*, 1991; *Idris*, 2005; *De Waal*, 2005).

In order to understand how development issues contributed to the conflict in Darfur, I consider those indicators which can be relatively measured to determine whether an area or aspect of existence is developed, under-developed or undeveloped. After considering the different categories of measurable development, I will then show how each category

compliments the other, and how a disarticulation of the society can negatively skew development in favour of certain people, sections and regions of the state. Finally, I consider the factors affecting these indicators of development in Sudan, which largely determine the level which can be achieved.

Considering the preceding, I am able to show the extent to which identity and marginalisation contribute to the discourse on development issues in Darfur. In sum, the Chapter explores the link between the three issues/themes; thus, deliberating on many of the arguments from previous data Chapters. Fundamentally, I examine the issue of development from the perspective of my respondents and how the issue of identity and marginalisation has helped to encourage the development/under-development of the different geographical entities in Sudan. I also show how this is negatively skewed in favour of Arabised groups, leading to a conflict situation.

In this section, I begin by using the words and the phrases of my respondents to highlight areas which they believed they are under-developed — these also serve a dual purpose as indicators of development. In discussing the issues surrounding development from the perspective of my respondents, I follow the *United Nations* matrices allowing me to look at development from four different dimensions. These matrices classify development into social, economic, human and political categories. These four developmental areas are measured using several parameters known as ‘indicators’ (*UNDP*, 2011). Consequently, I will discuss development along these indicators. I thereafter show how different aspects of the development matrices are inter-related and how performance in one area could positively or negatively affect the other(s). For clarity, this chapter does not delve into the political category, as this has been dealt with extensively in chapter five. I also discuss the social and economic categories together under the sub-heading of socio-economic development, as they have been shown to inter-link.

## 6.2. Socio-Economic Development

The first set of development indicators to be discussed in this section is the social development indicators, as seen from the standpoint of my respondents. These are usually linked with economic indicators. Some of the social indicators fall under the realms of the indicators, as highlighted by the *United Nations Statistics Division* (2011). For example, one of my respondents, **Omogo**, highlighted the discrepancy in the level of development along identity lines:

*“In some areas in Khartoum, there are good basic infrastructural facilities; but for an area which is dominated by people of African origin, it is usually not good facilities. And, generally, the social development indicators are very low. For example, education, transport because the Arabs decide the distribution of those services.”* (Lawyer: Sudan).

She further expressed how Darfurians try to raise their social status by gaining access to basic facilities like education: *“Our interest as Darfurians other than peace-building is also to high our social status by education, basic infrastructures”*.

The issue of a missing or inadequate basic infrastructural facility does not exist in isolation. It has been shown to be in high correlation with bad economic situations. This adheres to the findings of Cohen & House (1994), where they assert the underlying cause of lack or inadequate basic social amenities is strongly attributed to the under-developed nature of the economy, institutions and the stock of human resources. They also assert that, in this kind of under-developed state, government revenues are not sufficient to provide the essential public goods and services highlighted by my respondents, including health, education and transport. In my view, the insufficient revenue problem faced by governments in underdeveloped states stems from the problem that there is lack of or inefficient

institutions to actually help in generating the revenue needed to provide health, educational and transport facilities in places like Darfur.

Historically, given the focus of this research, most of the development efforts were concentrated in the arid and semi-arid regions of northern Sudan, which are mainly occupied by the Arabised groups. Conversely, some steps have been taken to reduce the disparity in development between the different identity groups. For example, in order to achieve a more equal level of development across regions in the country, the government enacted the '*Regional Government Act of 1980*' and the '*People's Local Government Act of 1981*'. These acts were implemented to provide a framework to allow small-scale development projects to grow out of local initiatives. The sole aim was to improve the living standards of the more disadvantaged regions of the country, such as Darfur, South Sudan, and Kordofan. These acts failed, however, to achieve their aims and objectives, as they eventually became ethnically politicised through favouritism for Arabised groups (El-Harizi et al, 2007).

The politicisation of these acts was first observed when policy makers and implementers (mainly Arabised elites) chose to concentrate development projects in areas not too far from Khartoum where they occupied. The reason for this was to reduce logistical difficulties to minimum and for ease of control (Davies, 1986). A direct result of these acts was to form an enabling environment which would create employment for its populace and also reduce the migration of people from less developed areas into more developed communities. This, would therefore, have increased the social status of Darfurian citizens, as desired by respondent **Omogo**. The failure of these acts on the social status of citizens in places like Darfur can be correlated to Schumpeter's (1950) class-conflict argument. This approach emphasises that one of the core products of the Western capitalist process is the evolution of modern democracy. Schumpeter (1950) believes that high level social development should translate to high economic growth and development, which, in turn, stimulates the development of social classes of entrepreneurs, workers, and intellectuals. He

further explained that these classes challenge the established social groups, demanding civil rights and inclusion in the political decision making process.

Drawing upon the class-conflict argument (Schumpeter, 1950), I will examine some of the *United Nations* indices for measuring socio-economic development. This first index I outline is the Gross National Product (GNP)<sup>29</sup>. Given the situation in Sudan, productive capital lies mainly in the hands of Arabised groups located in and around Khartoum. So, it is not surprising that they would be in a better position to contribute to the total produce of the country. The productive capability of the Arabised groups also puts them in a position to achieve higher income and benefits, in comparison to groups from the peripheries. On the contrary, periphery groups have little or no productive capital to meaningfully contribute to the overall productivity of the country. This inability limits their productive capacity and negatively affects their income generation capability; thereby, they are left relatively impoverished when it comes to income distribution. The income and benefits accrued to good GNP results are normally distributed based on the most productive areas of the country, which, in this case, are the Arabised regions of northern Sudan (Imran, 2009).

These unequal productive and income capabilities have roots in the historical antecedents of colonialism in Sudan. For example, the 'Closed District Ordinance' of 1922 ensured that economic development was limited to the Arabised groups of the North, by preventing them from going into the closed districts of Darfur, Kordofan, Southern Blue Nile and the Nuba mountains. The restriction hindered the transfer of economic activities to the closed districts and henceforth limited the closed groups' accesses to money economy, trade and productive capability (*Justice Africa*, n.d). Despite this, post-independent Sudan did not witness any change from the colonial policy of uneven development. This led to the concentration of resources and income in the Northern region of the country (*Justice Africa*,

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<sup>29</sup> This is the total of what the citizens of a country produce both home and abroad. It reflects the average income of a country's citizens and is used in measuring the standard of living of citizens in a country (*World Bank Group*, 2001).

n.d). Considering the post-independent situation in view of the GNP argument, it is known that one of the direct effects of a positive GNP is economic growth (*World Bank Group*, 2001). While growth has been high in post-independent Sudan, its pattern has been disjointed and not enough to help mitigate the conflict between non-Arabised groups who see Arabised groups excessively benefitting because of their identity (*JAM Report*, 2005). The *JAM* report (2005, p.59) also found that ‘growth has been geographically concentrated in Central states around Khartoum, boosting their tax base thus allowing for much higher expenditure on services than the rest of the country’. Overall, a good contributor to the level of GNP/GDP in recent years — which benefits mainly the Arabised groups — has been linked to the growth of the oil industry. This has been found to contribute to the overall growth in the construction and manufacturing industries, with positive spin-offs for transport and communication sectors<sup>30</sup> which are dominated by Northern Arabised elites (*ECA*, 2012).

The capital intensive nature of these sectors centrally located in Khartoum give rise to sectoral dualism along regional and group lines. In this case study, the dualism arose from the kind of economy operated by the opposing identities, with one being typically subsistence agriculture and the other being oil and manufacturing, leading to greater income inequality. This is a result of income differences between traditional and modern sectors of labour intensive and capital intensive sectors of the economy respectively (Nielsen, 1994, Ballmer-Cao, 2009). According to Huang (1995), sectoral dualism has an adverse effect on economic development, educational enrolment, crude death rate, child mortality and a summary index of human development. Considering this, the impact of sectoral dualism will be seen in the ability of members of different regional groups to be able to afford good education and medical care, as a result of their access to varying levels of economic

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<sup>30</sup> The industrial sector was boosted as a result of oil production, accounting for 20.3 percent of the GDP figure for 2011. Process industries attached to the oil industry were also boosted, due to an increase in production capability. With the independence of the South, however, direct revenue from oil is reduced by up to 75 percent and the tax base reduced; thus, shrinking the economy and revenue base of Northern Sudan. This led it to take drastic austerity measures, which, in turn, resulted in protests in several towns and cities. These measures have led to a rise in price of sugar, pump price of fuel and some other staple commodities.



activities. Accordingly, one group (mainly Arabised) is put at an advantage because of its location and connection to political power; the reverse scenario is the case for mainly non-Arabised group members.

Given this state of affairs, agriculture accounts for a greater percentage of GDP: two in three people living in the north of Sudan are involved in agriculture related economy. That is 33.1 percent of the GDP, compared to a 10.1 percent contribution from oil related economic activities (*ECA*, 2012). That said, even in the agricultural sector, it is known that economic activities relating to agricultural output favour those with a huge capital base. Despite their overall contribution to the agricultural sector, this does not really benefit the poor, given the people used to generate the income are mainly rural farmers (*UN Report*, 2011). In effect, rural dwellers (mainly non-Arabised groups) believe they are been marginalised by Arabised groups, who, historically, have the financial ability to buy goods from the rural areas at very meagre prices. The Arabised groups' financial advantage stemmed from them being the first group to be introduced to money economics in Sudan, henceforth putting them in a position to manipulate prices to their own advantage and keep their economic interest intact (El-Tom, 2006, El- Fatih, 1989). The result of this inequality is that poverty rates remain high, with significant regional disparity in growth and development. This could be said to be largely caused by a lack of access to services and income earning opportunities, which would otherwise be possible if the areas had relatively equal levels of basic social and economic facilities (*Justice Africa*, n.d).

Given the GNP Per Capita, Sudan moved up to 5.2 percent in 2010, an increase from 4.2 percent the previous year. This was still below the 10 percent growth rate Sudan experienced prior to the global financial crisis in 2007 and 2008 (*CIA FactBook*, 2012). To clarify, I discuss some of the basic infrastructures which largely determine and contribute to a citizen's standard of living. According to data gathered from Sudan's *Ministry of Works and Infrastructure* (2010), it is estimated that electricity can be accessed by only 15 percent

of the population. Moreover, transport infrastructure has worsened due to the lengthy conflict and the loss of funding for developmental purposes: the roads, railways, bridges, river transport and commercial sea transport. This happens to be the case even in urban centres occupied predominantly by Arabised elites. In the case of rural dwellers and the peripheries like Darfur, most of these infrastructures are virtually non-existent. This, notably, cuts them off from the main economic points; thereby, reducing or completely eradicating their income generation capability (El-Hassan, 2008).

In my view, to a large extent, there will be a huge difference in the level of economic activities which could possibly take place in the different regions. This potentially creates an income disparity based on the geographical location of the groups: the Arabised groups occupy a much favourable position, due to their geographical location and political influence. Buhaug (2011) linked geographical disparity in income with outbreak of conflicts: areas with a much lower income than the national average are seen to be more susceptible to this.

In the transport sector, the infrastructural links between regions serve commercial and economic purposes; they also act as units to boost national integration and unity (Buhaug, 2011). The absence of transport links between the regions further widens the gap between the urban and rural areas, which are typified by the categories of identities under consideration. This gap could potentially create a sense of 'subject versus citizen' for the non-Arabised and Arabised groups respectively. This not only strengthens the perceived differences between the groups under consideration; it also widens the gap between the government and a section of its citizenry, since the government is seen as supporting the Arabised groups in Darfur (Idris, 2005). In this study, there will be a wide gap between the Arabised and non-Arabised groups which are settled in the predominantly urban and rural areas respectively; thus, fuelling resentment of an intense nature towards the Arabised elites.

Another important social development indicator considered by one of my respondents is access to water, and water resources. In the north of Sudan, it was estimated that nearly 40 percent and 60 percent of the urban and rural population respectively cannot access the minimum amount of twenty litres of water per individual a day. Moreover, the differential between access in rural and urban areas has continuously grown (*JAM Report*, 2005). In addition, another report commissioned by the Sudanese Government and the Darfur Region *Transitional Authority* in 2009 found two out of three primary schools were still without water supply — this invariably takes a toll on the sanitation of facilities. This situation has a consequent negative impact on attendance, especially for girls, given most of them in rural primary schools were of puberty age: the unavailability of water made it difficult for them to attend school during their menstrual period. The *Joint Assessment Report* (2005, p.21) also found that in the North:

*‘Many rural and peri-urban inhabitants pay as much as 50 percent of the family income for water, often of dubious quality. At the same time, the lack of baseline information complicates planning for infrastructure expansion, and most publicly operated supply utilities are functioning neither efficiently nor sustainably due to poor maintenance and inappropriate pricing’.*

This finding, to an extent, is in agreement with one of my respondent’s, **Irawo**, thoughts:

*‘Just to give a simple example: for the last ten years, they have used seventy percent of the money allocated for development of water resources in to building the Merowe dam, knowing our share of the Nile waters is only about 18 billion cubic metres. If you compare that to the billion cubic*

*metres that we receive as rain, you will realise that had they utilised that money building small dams across the country, we would have retained thousand billion cubic metres. Not only so that would have helped sixty-five percent of Sudanese population that are dependent on rain water, (i.e. rain dependent economy out of poverty). If you look at the map that is exactly where the war and famine are taking place.’ (Director, NGO: Sudan).*

My respondent’s narrative emphasised the ill planning and misplacement of priority by the GoS. This inefficiency was reflected in the government’s decision to build a massive dam whose only source of water was the Nile River. This decision, he believed, was not hugely beneficial to the entire populace but mainly served big corporations in the North. On the other hand, my respondent suggested that the government could have built smaller dams in different regions of the country, given the level of rainfall obtained in those regions. These constructions he believed would have yielded more benefits for the people of Sudan especially for the predominantly agricultural rural areas whose main economy depends on the rainfall. The smaller dams, in turn, would have led to the availability of more portable water for drinking, agriculture and other daily chores. In addition, they would have saved the most vulnerable a better part of their income which is spent on purchasing water from vendors; thus, allowing for the provision of other daily basic necessities. In light of the above, water has potentially become a very important source of conflict, given the beneficiaries of the large water projects are mainly located in urban areas containing people perceived to be Arabised who happen to govern the country and implement policies to their advantage. This skewed implementation of projects for the benefit of the Arabised groups also tilts the income distribution in their favour hence widening and sharpening the identity divide.

In developmental research, income distribution is normally seen as a proxy to the social wellbeing of citizens in a particular country (Giovanni *et al.*, n.d). In the case of Sudan, national income distribution, as opposed to cash income distribution, has been observed to be negatively skewed in favour of Arabised groups. This is explained by the ability of the Jallabas (Northern traders) to own major businesses and their investments in lucrative aspects of the economy. This, in effect, means more income for the Jallabas, compared to those involved in subsistence farming that live in the rural areas. The ability of rural farmers to earn a meaningful income is often determined by local/urban Arab dwellers, which have the ability to purchase the farm produce at a very low price in return for a higher profit margin in the urban centres and export trade (El-Tom, 2006).

To a large extent, the issue of under-pricing correlates with the lack of institutional/infrastructural development: this would have enabled the average farmer to transport his/her goods to semi-urban or urban centres in order to achieve a fair price for their commodities. In addition, the presence of institutions like the marketing boards will increase the farmers' chances of getting a fair deal for their produce and, at the same time, reduce the need for them to transport their goods to urban centres (El-Rufai, 2007). Researchers have shown that, in developing countries, the investment-output ratio in the agricultural sector is near half that of the non-agricultural sector. This is partly due to the fact that the agricultural sector in developing countries is still primarily involved in traditional, labour intensive techniques (El-Dukheri *et al.*, 2004).

On the other hand, the non-agricultural sector makes use of capital intensive modern technology. A consequence of the disparity between the two sectors is that the domestic market is limited and the developed sectors find it very difficult to use output from the traditional sectors (Lipton, 1977; Marshall & Schwartz, 1984; Stokes & Anderson, 1990). Marshall and Schwartz (1984) also showed that a far-reaching impact of the disparity in economic sectors is the distortion of domestic purchasing power, arising from the income

being concentrated into a small number of urban people. This kind of sectoral inequality in developing countries has been correlated with acute rural-urban income disparity, which is deemed to be responsible for the low social wellbeing level of the majority of the rural people (Wickrama & Mulford, 1996).

In this case study, the people considered to be rural and disadvantaged are predominantly non-Arabised groups. This does not suggest that the Arabised constituencies of the rural areas are at an advantage; rather, they are seen to be favoured by the government when certain projects are to be carried out in the rural areas. These projects include the construction of new health facilities, road network, electrification of villages and/or agricultural programmes; usually located in Arabised communities, especially in times of conflict. For instance, in November 2003, the governor of South Darfur state ordered the vaccination of herds of cattle, the building of classrooms, a health care centre and the installation of twenty-four water pumps in eight villages. This was to gain the support of Arabised tribal leaders to recruit their community members into the Janjaweed (*Human Rights Watch*, 2004). This leveraged situation not only intensified the already existing tension among the groups, it also created an atmosphere, where non-Arabised groups saw themselves as being treated as subjects whilst Arabised groups were treated as citizens. This subject/citizen divide is in line with the findings of Idris (2005) that, historically, the Sudanese population have always been divided along two categories: citizens and subjects. Idris (2005, p.56) also said in the process of State formation, 'instead of mobilizing different groups around the notion of citizenship and equal rights, nationalists instead advocated an exclusive vision of a nation that divides its people into two categories- citizens and subjects'.

The under-development level's attendant effect on the economies of the majority of the rural populace led one of my respondents, **Samba**, to advocate what he termed '*positive affirmative action*'. His prescriptive proposal was a sincere government must formulate and implement developmental policies devoting more resources to under-developed areas:

*'Our aim is also to have our share in the economic development equal to percentage of the population. But now it has to be more, because of the damage in the past that has made us under-developed; and if it has to reach others, there has to be some sort of positive affirmative action to give us extra resources in order to give us a chance to develop.'* (Engineer: Sudan).

In the pursuit of the affirmative action stance, another respondent, **Ayele**, suggested:

*'The new strategy for Darfur, as articulated by negotiators from Darfur, is stressed upon the Internally Displaced People (IDPs), refugees, the development of Darfur and the provision of security. The government, as a matter of priority, has allotted more than five billion dollars to Darfur for the development of electricity, schools, hospitals, police stations and other social infrastructures. And now work is running very speedily to constructing villages in time. Certain small scale and large scale projects are being put in place to allow those refugees and internally displaced people to return voluntarily without compelling them, so they can practice their normal lives. This strategy will allow us achieve peace, stability and development in Darfur.'*  
(Officer: Information Ministry, Sudan).

In line with the affirmative action arguments, **Ayele**, a government official tended to agree that there is a need for more action in the levels of funding available for developmental projects in Darfur. He promoted the government's term 'progress on ground', by talking

about the amount of money the government has allocated to developmental projects. Of particular note is that the narratives of **Samba** and **Ayele** are in line with the requirements of the ‘*Darfur Peace Agreement*’ (DPA) under Articles (19), (145), and (148). These sections of the agreement recognised and stipulated:

*‘The parties agree that national development policy shall be based on the premise that all parts of Sudan are entitled to equitable development and that such policies shall give special priority to the most disadvantaged states including Darfur states’ (DPA, 2006, p.28).*

These sections highlighted the need for preferential developmental policies for Darfur, given the historic nature of depravity in sectors like education, health, water and the economy (DPA, 2006). Personally, I believe improvements in these areas will lead to an atmosphere conducive to more economic activities favouring the equitable distribution of income and, consequently, alleviates poverty. The reduction in the rate of poverty would have an overall effect of reducing tensions between groups which will now see themselves as equals instead of subjects and citizens. The areas where affirmative action has being recommended include health and electricity.

Further corroborating the need for positive affirmative action are reports by the *Federal Ministry of Health* about health facilities. One of these reports showed that the long periods of wars and conflicts have created inequality in the provision of health care. This was demonstrated to be especially true when it came to the level of funding allocated to the conflict areas: inequalities were not just between states in the North or South but also existed within states (FMOH, 2007). One of the reports claimed that a strategy needed by the government was to ‘identify and encourage the potential partners to enter into partnerships at the national level and all States, placing more emphasis on the war-affected areas (Darfur



states) and the post-conflict areas (South Kordofan and Blue Nile States)' (FMOH, 2007, p.10). In light of the identity dynamics under consideration, however, it would be insurmountable to suggest that the Arabised groups will have better access to health facilities when compared to the non-Arabised groups. This is because of the level of support granted the Arabised groups by the Central government, hence giving them a higher standard of living when compared to their non-Arabised counterparts. The health care system has also been shown to be negatively affected by the non-provision of electricity (El-Khalid, 2010).

Another socio-economic development issue discussed by one respondent, **Irawo**, was the need for electricity. This, he said, was an issue because most parts of the country are either without electricity or there are consistent power outages:

*'If you look at the infrastructure and examine how many places have electricity, and how much services and benefits this would have helped to provide for the affected regions. It is not comparable to what can be seen in areas occupied by this Arab oligarchy.'* (Director, NGO: Sudan).

In view of this narrative, the benefits of having access to electricity and how this can be seen to be beneficial to one identity group need to be considered. A positive impact of access to electricity is its ability to keep businesses open for longer periods due to better lighting. It also encourages the use of more capital intensive modern technology in the production line, therefore increasing output. Consequently, a greater number of people can be employed and it increases the number of small scale business opportunities (Maleko, 2005). In this case study, however, the advantages accrued to the productive and economic sector from good supply of electricity are negatively skewed in favour of Arabised groups residing mainly in Khartoum. Even in the rural areas, this situation exists, as highlighted by **Timbi**:

*'About services on the ground in rural villages, it is very clear, the provisions are in Arab areas. That means electricity and communications to encourage them to make business and living; but, in mainly African settings, there is no electricity or facilities'.* (Ex-Rebel: Sudan).

In this narrative, my respondent suggested most of the benefits are linked with access to a good and steady supply of electricity, which will, conversely, elude the non-Arabised groups. Additionally, an independent study revealed that, in terms of power distribution, the Fur and Zaghawa (non-Arabised) communities were usually in perpetual darkness, with electricity being available only in areas close to administrative buildings. On the other hand, the Rezeigat and the Baggara (Arabised) communities had relatively better electricity supply, enabling the communities to access better economies and health services, in comparison to the former communities (El-Khalid, 2010), thereby widening the perceived identity difference.

The preceding state of affairs is a function of issues discussed in chapters four and five, including: the politicisation of ethnicity; perceived marginalisation on the part of the ruling class; ethnicised policy making and implementation bias. These issues, I have argued, create a widening gap between the groups under consideration in terms of their perceptions of each. Furthermore, discriminatory service provisions will strengthen the belief amongst the groups that they are different from one another. It will also further alienate these groups, with one group seeing itself as citizens having rights to social and economic benefits, whilst the other views itself as subjects with little or no right to basic amenities.

Aside from businesses, the development of electricity infrastructure has a positive effect on other sectors of the society. Such effects could be seen in education, which, in the case of Darfur, has also been affected by its lengthy conflicts. The availability of light will

encourage children who are unable to read at night to study late. Electricity provision would also reduce the health risks attached to studying with kerosene lamps, as well as reduce environmental pollution (Mumini, 2009). Access to electricity further allows schools to remain open for longer periods of time. This increases the chance for education authorities to create a system structured on a shift pattern, where some pupils can study in the morning to afternoon, whilst the rest study from afternoon to late evening. This scenario would help to cope with the shortage of educational facilities, which would otherwise have left some school aged children unable to attend school (Mumini, 2009). In all, a *World Bank* (2008) study revealed that children who live in households with electricity achieve higher education levels than those without. The positive impact of electrification on education was mentioned by another respondent, **Jorin**:

*'The provision of education by these non-governmental organizations in Darfur would have been much easier if there was massive investment in electrification of that region. At least, this would encourage teachers and volunteers to live among the people in the communities; and they do not have to travel for hundreds of miles like they do now to impart knowledge'. (Practitioner, UNHCR: Sudan).*

The positive impact of electricity is not limited to the educational sector; it has also been shown to have positive effects in the health sector. One of these is that health centres are able to provide more services and open for longer hours. In addition, it has been shown to improve health knowledge through increased access to audio/visual technology. The provision of electricity increases the efficiency in catering for local needs, such as the delivery of vaccination and medicines which need constant refrigeration. These could now be stored locally with a constant supply of electricity, as opposed to being transported for

hundreds of miles which could possibly render the vaccines useless at the point of delivery (*World Bank Report*, 2008).

According to another *World Bank* (2010) Report on rural households, electricity was indirectly implicated in health improvement. This connection was made because people had access to more and improved health information, especially in the area of killer diseases, such as malaria, yellow fever, and typhoid. This information is made possible with increased access to communications technologies, such as the internet and other audio/visual devices (Eng, *et al.*, 1998); having said that, these require electricity to function, without which they become useless. Given the poverty level of most people from the region of my case study, it becomes almost impossible to get access to these communication technologies. The people who would normally have access to these facilities are Arabised urban elites/groups residing predominantly in the North. Furthermore, relating it to my case study, it is known that there are differences in income between rural and urban areas: ‘The incidence of poverty ranges from a little over a quarter of the population in the Capital to more than two-thirds of the population in northern Darfur’ (*UNDP*, 2012, p.2). In view of these statistics, the availability and affordability of communications technology will be skewed in favour of Arabised groups living in Khartoum and its environ. This state of affairs further widens the gap between the different identity groups.

In the preceding section, I discussed the different indicators which largely show and predict socio-economic development in any country. It is suggested that in the case of Darfur within the context of Sudan, most of the developmental indicators used in measuring social wellbeing and development are either lacking or virtually non-existent. Looking at it from the identity divide — which serves as the core of this research — it is important to highlight most of the socio-economic development has been disproportionately beneficial to Arabised groups because of: the political power they wield, their location (urban Khartoum), education, and financial capability for investments.

Taking this argument further, of note are the strategic posts occupied by the Arabised elites within and outside the polity. These posts are used in determining and influencing policies to the benefit of their group members. This leaves the mainly non-Arabised groups in a position where they are unable to foster as a community with better-quality socio-economic development. This situation, shown in chapter five, flourishes with the kind of political representation which exists at all levels of government (the legislature, executive and the judiciary). This creates a situation which separates the government from peripheries such as Darfur; it further enables the government to seek support from groups determined fit, by giving support to groups like the Baggara, Rezeigat, Misiriya (Flint & De Waal, 2005, Deng, 1994). It also further strengthens the belief between the groups that they are different; thereby, strengthening Idris's (2005) 'citizen/subject' phenomenon. This situation then goes to explain why it would be difficult for Sudan to achieve its Human Development goals, in the short, medium, and long term.

### **6.3. Human Development**

With Sudan falling short in the achievement of good socio-economic development indicators, it becomes almost impossible to achieve any meaningful Human Development<sup>31</sup> record. The development of social and economic aspects has been shown to be vital for the attainment of any significant Human Development result (UNDP, 2011). In general terms, Sudan's Human Development Indicator for 2012, according to *United Nations Human Development Report*, stands at 0.414, which falls among the lowest in the Human

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<sup>31</sup> Human development is seen as the summary measure for evaluating long-term progress in three basic dimensions of human life as enumerated by the United Nations Development Programme in the Human Development Report of 2010. The three measurement dimensions include: long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living. Each of these dimensions also has criterions through which they are measured. Long and healthy life is usually measured by the life expectancy. Access to knowledge is determined by the mean years of adult education in the life-time of people of age 25 and older, and the expected years of schooling for pupils of school entrance age, which is the total years of schooling a child of school-entrance age can expect to receive if prevailing patterns of age-specific enrolment rates stay the same throughout the life span of the child. Finally, standard of living is determined by the Gross National Income (GNI) per capita which is expressed in United States dollars in terms of the purchasing power parity (UNDP, 2011).

Development category<sup>32</sup>. This also positions the country at 171 out of the 187 ranked countries and territories for which data was available in that same report; hence, making it one of the least developed countries in the world (HDR, 2013). On a more positive note, when compared to past years (i.e. 1980-2011 as a baseline), Sudan's Human Development Index (HDI) rose from 0.264 to 0.408, meaning an increase of 54.5 percent or an annual average increase of 1.4 percent (UNDP, 2012). Furthermore, in recent years, the average Human Development Index for countries in the low Human Development category is 0.456; Sudan still falls below this level, showing the extent of its poor performance among the committee of nations (UNDP, 2011, p.129).

Another comparison to be made is looking at the regional dynamics, i.e. comparing Sudan with other countries in the league of Arab States. The Arab states had an increase in their HDI from 0.444 in 1980 to 0.641 in 2011; while Sudan only had an increase of 0.264 in 1980 to just 0.408 in 2011. This places Sudan below the regional average for the Arab States (as it prefers to be seen) (UNDP, 2011). Other countries from the Arab States close to Sudan in the HDI ranking (2013) and population size are Yemen and Djibouti which ranked at 160 and 164 respectively (UNDP, 2013). A very important use of the HDI is it shows the huge gaps in wellbeing and life chances at both the regional and national levels. The low performance of Sudan on the international stage reflects the situation in the country, cutting across the different facades of the society — this was partially explained in the preceding sections and chapters four and five.

In addition, this section considers data from different sources to stress my point. One of my respondents, **Alhaji**, said:

*'How can we achieve Human Development of our people,  
when there is no development in the country and the only*

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<sup>32</sup> HDR- Human Development Report

*kind of development you have in the country is colonised by only certain groups of people who find themselves to be ruling for a very long time. No roads, hospitals, schools; and we say want to achieve Human Development’.*

(Technician: Sudan).

Furthermore, **Irawo**, largely agreed with **Alhaji** on the need for development in the areas mentioned above:

*‘If you look at the infrastructural facilities in terms of the building of roads, schools, hospital, electricity and all sorts of social services, you cannot say there is any improvement in terms of how this would help people to achieve socio-economic stability; so, to talk less of meeting the United Nations Millennium Agenda for Human Development’.*

(Director, NGO: Sudan).

These two narratives show the extent to which it would be difficult for Sudan to achieve the *United Nations* target for Human development because of its developmental pace. **Alhaji** also stressed that most of the developmental projects are located in areas occupied by the Arabised elites who find themselves in power; as a result, they continue to dominate the polity. This not only leaves developmental policy making at their behest; the implementation of policy would also be negatively skewed in their favour, thus increasing the poverty level and developmental gap across the country.

The ‘National Baseline Household Survey’ carried out by the Sudanese *Central Bureau of Statistics* in 2009 showed that 46.5 percent of the population in northern Sudan

lived below the national poverty line of 1366 Sudanese Pounds PPPA<sup>33</sup>. The most affected were people living in the rural areas, in particular women and Internally Displaced Persons. The survey also found out, in Darfur, the level of poverty is 62 percent, compared to an urban North state like Khartoum which has a 26 percent poverty rate, less than half of the situation in the rural areas (CBS, 2009). The poverty level in the report was deemed to be the most influential determinant of long and healthy life: if the level of poverty is brought to a minimum, then it positively affects the outcome of a lifespan and health record. Looking at the poverty level, considering the rural-urban dichotomy with regards to Darfur and in view of the identity dynamics, I agree with the findings of the survey study:

*'Economic growth in the country has not been broad-based, with investments and services concentrated in and around Khartoum state for obvious reasons of logistics and control. Outside Khartoum state, roads, railways, power and water services are at best under-developed and at worse non-existent' (CBS, 2009, p. 24).*

Considering the identity and socio-economic development arguments previously examined, it is suggested that the discrepancy in the level of development in and around Khartoum occupied by the mainly urban Arabised elites account for their ability to earn a better living. Their income generation capability increases their chances to afford good health care and better education for their children, which invariably contributes to long and healthy life as measured by the life expectancy. The life expectancy at birth for Sudan is 61.8, according to the 'Human Development Report' of 2013 (UNDP, 2013). Given there are no comparative figures for different regions within Sudan, I am unable to make regional or state comparisons. Of key importance though is it would be expected that people who live in

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<sup>33</sup> Per Person Per Annum



less conflict prone areas with access to better socio-economic development would be expected to achieve a higher life expectancy rate, compared to their counterparts in conflict regions. In this case, it is suggested that Arabised groups would be in a much better position to achieve a higher life expectancy rate given the skewedness of the polity, policies and socio-economic development indicators which are in their favour.

In hindsight, I want to refer the argument of Huang (1995) in his work on structural disarticulation, showing that dualism has a negative effect on economic development, which, in turn, has a ripple effect on the life expectancy of a person. Given the discrepancy between the different groups both socially and economically, it could be said that life expectancy will be higher within the Arabised groups based on their access to more and better socio-economic capital, in comparison to the non-Arabised groups. Also, given that most conflicts have occurred in periphery areas occupied mainly by non-Arabised groups, it might be easy to suggest, due to violence, these groups are more susceptible to shorter life expectancy, when compared to the Arabised groups. Another issue to consider is the support given by the government to groups it considers part of the national identity framework. It could be suggested that given the level of support in terms of infrastructural facilities, Arabised groups in Darfur should expect a higher life expectancy than non-Arabised groups.

Closely linked to the issue of a long and healthy life is access to knowledge: the second factor to be considered when talking about human development. This is determined by: the mean years of adult education in the life-time of people aged twenty-five and older, as well as the expected years of schooling for pupils of school entrance age (*UNDP*, 2011). In my view, this definition is rather narrow, as it is only indicative of knowledge acquired through formal and institutional arrangements like primary, post-primary and post-secondary education. From my perspective, given technological advancement and ease of access to information, the definition of access should be expanded to be more inclusive. This should accommodate knowledge obtained from other informal sources, such as the internet, peers,

billboards, hospitals and several other sources providing sometimes basic and/or comprehensive information which is useful in everyday life. As mentioned earlier, however, access to information through mediums like the internet and electronic billboards might be hampered by inaccessibility to electricity and the technology required for their set up. Examples of informal knowledge which will be most useful are issues relating to reproductive and sexual health. Given the kind of society that Sudan projects itself to be, the teaching of such topics is hugely discouraged within formal educational settings.

One of the reasons proffered is that such topics excite the pupils and encourage them to experiment. Also, given the cultural disposition towards Arabism in the society, it is largely considered a taboo for children of school age to know or learn anything about reproductive or sexual health. The teaching of these topics is considered the duty of husbands when females get married. This thinking considerably shows the place and value of a woman in the Sudanese society and how they are often treated as commodities (Khalid, 2001). The above notion fits in well with what **Omogo** said:

*'We need to change the focus of education from just what children learn in school and focus more on the entire thing called inclusive education. By this, I mean education that does not discriminate against any gender and race or against any person who wishes to learn certain things about themselves'. (Lawyer: Sudan).*

Drawing upon the definition of the *United Nations*, access to knowledge is considered one of the main pillars of development; as a result, its achievement is seriously targeted by countries seeking the upward mobility of their citizens. Another germane reason for the importance of access to knowledge is its relationship with most of the Millennium

Development Goals (MDGs)<sup>34</sup>. Six out of the eight goals are directly related to education (UNDP, 2008). In sub-Saharan Africa, which includes Sudan, the low level of education is said to be aggravated by regional disparities in achievement, with respect to gender, rural-urban dwelling, and intra-state unevenness (UNESCO Report, 2011).

With regards to access in the North, the net primary school enrolment ranges above 85 percent in Khartoum to 48 percent in Darfur. This creates a massive regional disparity, resulting in inequality in outcomes and access to educational services (MDG Report, 2012). In light of the politics employed in the educational sector — which was discussed in chapter five — it could be suggested that the disparate level of enrolment in both regions will likely lead to less elite and political representation in the polity and decision making bodies on a rural/urban basis. This politics also considerably determines the level of budgetary allocation and expenditure other regions attract; thereby, limiting their ability to access knowledge. The level of budgetary allocation leads me to consider the national expenditure level on education.

### **6.3.1. National Expenditure Level and Development**

In this section, I attempt to look at trends and patterns in the national expenditure on education at the Federal and State levels. This is necessary to highlight the extent to which the government sought access to knowledge for its citizens in Sudan. This examination will also demonstrate the level of discrepancy between the different regions that, to a large extent, represent the groups under consideration. The commitment of the government to the budgetary allocation levels for developmental goals was highlighted by **Kura**:

*‘The government has refused to put in enough funds  
towards development even though the government says that*

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<sup>34</sup> The millennium developments goals are to: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability and develop a global partnership for development (UNDP, 2008).

*development is crucial to solving the problem in Darfur. But without any commitment towards this goal, by way of allocating and disbursing enough funds meant for this purpose, how could it be achieved?’ (Development Officer: Sudan).*

This narrative shows the need for the government to allocate and disburse timely funds for developmental purposes, including education to groups and regions that require it. It also highlights the need for good planning to know what should be allocated and when it needs to be disbursed. In light of the Darfur conflict and the ‘positive affirmative action’ argument agreed to by all parties in the DPA of 2006, it is highly imperative for the government to take seriously the issue of budgetary allocation and disbursements of funds to conflict areas. Moreover, more resources should be specifically allocated to those areas, which have suffered years of neglect and under-development partially due to the conflict (DPA, 2006).

This narrative also creates a need to look quantitatively at the level of expenditure on education in order to understand how the discrepancy could lead to conflict. Overall, the impact of education has been shown by several authors (such as Aghion *et al.*, 1998; Barro 1997) to be a requisite for rapid economic development. Barro (1997) showed education increased efficiency of the labour force by encouraging democracy; therefore, creating an environment for good governance. In addition, Aghion *et al.*, (1998) found that education helped in improving health quality through access and equality enhancement.

In Sudan, education is generally seen from two perspectives: general and higher education.<sup>35</sup> Table 9 (see page 276) is split into two to represent the expenditure level for each category. In order to achieve the aims set out in this section, I use the secondary data

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<sup>35</sup> In Sudan, education is generally seen from two perspectives : general, which refers to primary and secondary school educational achievements; tertiary education, which refers to educational achievements at university or any other recognised post-secondary educational achievements.

gathered from the Sudanese *Ministry of Finance and National Economy* during my fieldwork. This data shows the trends in Federal expenditure on education at both the general and tertiary levels.

**Table 9: National Expenditure on Education (in million Sudanese pounds) 2003-2010**

Items	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>Wages and Salaries</b>	<b>84.2</b>	<b>107.8</b>	<b>175.4</b>	<b>218.7</b>	<b>261.7</b>	<b>108.5</b>	<b>181.2</b>	<b>235.6</b>
<i>General Education</i>	2.2	4.4	5.4	6.0	6.5	4.0	10.8	14.0
<i>Higher Education, Scientific Research and Technology</i>	82.0	103.4	170.0	212.7	255.2	104.5	170.4	221.5
<b>Goods &amp; Services</b>	<b>51.1</b>	<b>42.3</b>	<b>49.6</b>	<b>58.6</b>	<b>82.0</b>	<b>66.9</b>	<b>84.4</b>	<b>89.0</b>
<i>General Education</i>	7.8	7.7	8.5	9.8	17.2	10.8	15.7	16.6
<i>Higher Education, Scientific Research and Technology</i>	43.2	34.6	41.1	48.7	64.8	56.1	68.5	72.4
<b>Recurrent Educational Expenditure</b>	<b>135.3</b>	<b>150.1</b>	<b>225.0</b>	<b>277.3</b>	<b>343.7</b>	<b>175.4</b>	<b>265.6</b>	<b>324.6</b>
<i>General Expenditure</i>	10.1	12.1	13.9	15.9	23.7	14.8	26.5	30.6
<i>Higher Education, Scientific Research and Technology</i>	125.2	138.0	211.1	261.4	319.9	115.5	239.1	294.0
<b>Federal Development Projects</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>43.5</b>	<b>43.3</b>	<b>22.1</b>	<b>40.9</b>
<i>General Education</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.8	5.8	8.3	0.0
<i>Higher Education</i>	2.7	5.0	0.5	13.3	38.7	37.5	13.8	40.9
<b>Science and Technology Projects</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>0.4</b>
<b>Transfers-Development and General Education</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>22.2</b>
<b>National Fund for Students Care</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>15.4</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>31.5</b>	<b>60.3</b>	<b>63.1</b>	<b>55.4</b>	<b>99.6</b>
<b>Total Federal Education Expenditure</b>	<b>143.8</b>	<b>170.5</b>	<b>240.9</b>	<b>324.9</b>	<b>449.5</b>	<b>285.5</b>	<b>357.6</b>	<b>487.7</b>

*Source: Ministry of Finance and National Economy (MoFNE, 2010)*

Table 9 shows the impact of government expenditure on education on access to knowledge as a Human Development Indicator. Through examining and comparing different sections and figures in Table 9, I am able to elaborate how the expenditure level will positively or

negatively impact access to knowledge as a developmental goal in Sudan and across the different identity divides. The first section in Table 9 looks at the expenditure on wages, salaries, goods and services. The second section shows the expenditure on educational development projects. The first two categories of expenditure are discussed from the perspective of the kind of educational arrangement in Sudan. Finally, the third section examines expenditure on funds disbursed for student care as the end users.

From the figures in Table 9, it is evident there has been a significant rise in the amount of expenditure incurred by the government for the years under consideration. This shows 158.6 percentage increase over the years and an average annual increase of 22.60 percent in federal expenditure for 2003-2010 (*MoFNE*, 2010). In monetary terms, there is a yearly increase in the amount of money budgeted for educational expenditure, except for the year 2008 which saw a slump and thereafter a further rise in 2009. The slump in 2008 can be attributed to two events: first was the flawed national census to which resources were diverted; secondly, the intense fighting which broke out between the GoS and the SPLA over the disputed oil-rich town of Abyei. This led to the stepping up of military expenditure at the expense of other areas of development (Sudan Tribune, 2009).

Despite this, the main issue should not be about the amount of money budgeted, invested or spent on education. It should instead be about: how the money was spent; what it was spent on; who it was spent on; if any group benefitted more from the expenditure to the disadvantage of other groups; how does Sudan compete favourably with international standards in its attainment of access to knowledge as a criterion for Human Development. Given the scope of this research, I use Table 9 to show the extent to which real access to knowledge is impeded by the inability of the budgetary expenditure to address certain issues. Going back to the three categories I wish to discuss in this section, the first category was wages and salaries then goods and services. It is evident from Table 9 that despite the huge budgetary allocations, a significant part of that allocation was spent on recurrent expenditure.

These significant amounts of monies were spent on paying all categories of staff (i.e. lecturers, teachers, administrative staff, cleaners and other ancillary staffs) (*MoFNE*, 2010).

Over the years, the recurrent expenditure has grown significantly because of the increase in wages and salaries: this is related to promotions and retention of experienced staff, not necessarily to more jobs being created. In fact, Sudan has experienced more professional emigrants to the Gulf States from the universities and technical colleges (Ataalsid, 2011). In addition, Table 9 shows the amount of money spent on recurrent expenditure has more than doubled in the years under consideration. Specifically, the level of expenditure on wages and salaries for 2010 is now almost three times what it was in 2003 with actual figures of 235.6 and 84.2 million (Sudanese Pounds) respectively. The questions needing to be asked here are: Has there been an increase in staff employed; why does the level of allocation increase, without there being a corresponding level of achievement in education. To some extent, I will be able to answer this question at the end of this section using inferences from my analysis of Table 9 and relating them to the central theme of this thesis: identity.

Table 9 shows the amount of money spent on goods and services also increased at a less than astronomical rate when compared to wages and salaries. Goods and services in the educational sector include items like books, teaching boards, IT equipment, white and coloured chalks, as still used in most African countries (Asante, 2009). Increased spending in this area could be partly attributed to rising inflation rates and unstable economic conditions. That said, increased cost could also be attributed to the amount of corruption in a country like Sudan, where public officials are hardly ever held accountable and there is a complete lack of transparency (Martini, 2012). These practices allow officials to embezzle funds; thus, putting a strain on resources that could be readily available for other educational purposes. *Transparency International* (2012, p.2) also found that:

*‘The international community perceive Sudan as extremely corrupt and all available data and country reports indicate persistent, widespread and endemic forms of corruption permeating all levels of society’.*

This is seen in the forms of bureaucratic corruption, embezzlement and political corruption. This ranked Sudan 173 out of the 176 assessed countries on the *Transparency International’s* Corruption Perception Index for 2012 (*Transparency International, 2012*).

In order to get a clearer idea of why Sudan might not achieve its target for HDI, I will now discuss the issue of expenditure on wages and salaries, and goods and services at the levels of general and higher education. I also link this with the main issue of identity and how some groups will be left marginalised when it comes to access to knowledge, leading to the non-fulfilment of the primary education objective<sup>36</sup> set out by the GoS. With regards to general education, it is evident from Table 9 that the overall spending was significantly lower than higher education. It would be tempting to argue that such spending could be justified given the professional qualification of academic staff in higher institutions. With the country’s literacy level, however, more needs to be spent at the general level. This would at least give more people access to learn the basic rudiments of reading and writing, thus giving them the option of moving to higher education if they choose.

Looking at figures for the years under consideration, there was a rise in the level of recurrent expenditure for general education; however, it could not be attributed to any corresponding accomplishment in the level of achievement in general education. Comparing the wages and salaries of both educational sectors finds for general education, there was only slight increases with figures from 2.2 to 14 million (Sudanese Pounds) between 2003-2010; by contrast, in higher education, there was a significant expenditure level reflected in a

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<sup>36</sup> ‘Preparing the youngsters for effective participation in socio-economic and political life’ (*MoE, 2009*).



percentage difference of 170 percent translating into figures to 82 and 221.5 million (Sudanese Pounds) respectively for the first and the last years (*MoFNE*, 2010). These expenditures, to an extent, suggest either there are very few workers to be paid, hence relating to the amount of people who are left uneducated; or that the workers in general education are so poorly paid, which serves as a disincentive for prospective workers to take up jobs in general education. The disparity in expenditure level creates concern for the level of academic achievement within the different identity groups under consideration; it also creates a situation where general and higher education will be skewed in favour of Arabised groups. This inequality can occur both at the centre and periphery regions, evincing the core/periphery argument.

The skewedness is possible because most of the institutions are located in areas occupied mainly by Arabised elites in Central Sudan and Khartoum. As a result, the spending is done in these places; thereby, keeping peripheries like Darfur at a disadvantage. Likewise, the government's Arabisation and Islamisation policies further exclude non-Arabised groups in the peripheries from gaining any meaningful access to knowledge. The dynamics of Darfur mean that the support given to Arabised groups in Darfur will leave the non-Arabised groups feeling estranged and less than a citizen, when compared to their Arabised counterparts.

Notable is the amount spent on goods and services at the general education level which tends to be more than the amount spent on remuneration of staff. It is tempting to question who uses the vast amount of goods and services being purchased at this level. This could also be linked back to the issue of corruption mentioned earlier. This was evident in the Blue Nile state in 2010, when the money allocated to buy books for primary schools was misappropriated by the 'Commissioner for Education' in the State. Following investigation, the evidence showed that a huge part of the money was used in the re-election bid of the State governor (Hassan, 2010).

Also, from the general and higher education dichotomy, it is evident that most of the expenditure incurred on goods and services are consumed at the higher education level, which has fewer pupils than general education. As a result, this poses the question of whether the government is able to prioritise its educational aims towards the achievements of its targets. This point resonated with **Sango**'s statement:

*'One of the problems in Sudan is prioritising our developmental plans and goals; and this is closely related to instability in government. As a result, no stability in policies on how to develop the country'. (National Expert: Humanitarian Affairs, Sudan).*

**Sango**'s narrative questions the government's ability to plan ahead for the development of sectors of the State, due to changes in government with little or no continuation in policy implementation. It also questions the manner in which developmental policies are prioritised, which resulted in Sudan to lagging behind in the achievement of its developmental goals. In the case of this government that has been in power since 1989, I would not think that stability in governance is the problem; rather, it is the prioritisation of its domestic policies to fit into the developmental goals of the State. For example, the current GoS chose to prioritise military engagement against dissenting voices/groups (mainly non-Arabised groups) instead of pursuing political and developmental approach to resolve their grievances (Idris, 2005; Deng, 1998; Mamdani, 2009). This lack of developmental priority ties in closely with **Juju**'s claim: *'The awareness of been grossly under-developed is the root cause of the fight in Darfur'*.

The bureaucratic priority pursued by the government strengthened the resolve of these periphery groups to take up arms to address their grievances. It also created a violent conflict environment, which is not conducive for developmental plans (if any) to come into

fruition; thereby, exacerbating the level of developmental disparity across the regions and groups. The impact of the non-development of conflict areas was highlighted by a *DFID*<sup>37</sup> report, which found that conflict destroyed schools and this, in turn, had a negative impact on the development of social capital and human development. The report also found that ‘the resulting large numbers of young uneducated men create the ideal circumstance to sustain conflict’ (*DFID*, 2003, p.9).

In my opinion, more attention and spending should be given to general education, for this will enable more people access to basic education. This would, invariably, lift them out of poverty, as well as enable the government to achieve its educational goals much faster and also elevate them to what **Juju** termed ‘*modern economy*’. It has also been found that not only is a lack of education due to conflict to the detriment of an individual; it also results in ‘a loss of social capital and capacity to recover from the conflict’ (*DFID*, 2003, p.10). In terms of the identity dynamics in Darfur, the reluctance of the government to pursue a more equitable level of developmental spending across groups only serves to increase tensions between the groups. It will also further lead to clear disparities among the groups in Darfur, due to the level of support given to the Arabised communities in terms of bursary, scholarships, subsistence allowance and infrastructural development (El- Tom & Salih, 2003).

Similarly, expenditures on educational development projects have been seen to be positively skewed in favour of higher education. At the Federal level, development projects include: the erection of new school buildings; refurbishment of dilapidating infrastructures; purchase of laboratory equipment; provision of recreational facilities within the school environment; the provision of information and communications technology facilities (*MoFNE*, 2010). From Table 9, it can be seen that there are years when the government does

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<sup>37</sup> *DFID- United Kingdom Department for International Development.*

not allocate or spend any amount on development projects in general education. For the years under consideration, almost three quarters of them do not have any allocation for spending on development in general education. In the case of higher education, there is very little contribution towards this kind of spending, except between 2006 to 2008 when there is a significant contribution, followed by a decrease in 2009 and another increase in 2010.

On this note, I would like to add that, following observations during my visit, most of the educational facilities under the control of government in Khartoum were more or less derelict. To clarify, most of it had been neglected; the only spaces which could be called functional were the administrative blocks and offices where most of the allocations are spent. My observation fits in with the findings of Sidahmad (2007) that the North suffered from insufficient number of teachers, infrastructures, and also that the facilities were deplorable and not fit for purpose. As mentioned earlier, evident in the outskirts is a dire situation, where there are few or no educational facilities, compared to Khartoum, which is predominantly occupied by Arabised groups. This situation correlates with the colonial administration developmental policies which concentrated development in Khartoum and the centre of Sudan (De Waal, 2005; Prunier, 2005).

The unequal development was also assisted by the post-independence governments' continuation of colonial education policies, which were 'designed more to provide civil servants and professionals to serve the colonial administration than to educate the Sudanese' (Ataalsid, 2011). The situation increased the disparities between the Arabised and non-Arabised groups in Sudan, with the former benefitting from the state of affairs and building on their opportunistic access to power and State apparatus after independence (El-Tom, 2006). With the level of political and economic power, the Arabised government is then able to coerce support from groups perceived to adhere to its definition of the State identity. This, thereby, creates a perception of difference among groups in the peripheries like Darfur; henceforth, dividing those groups into Arabised and non-Arabised.

Finally, a very important element in achieving a healthy and good education is the ability of the students to have a means of livelihood. This is reflected in Table 9, under the section for National Fund for Student Care: this is allocated to students in the form of scholarships, bursaries and weekly tokens. Such financial incentives are mainly for students from poor and/or under-privileged backgrounds. Despite this, most of these supports are instead mainly given to students from Arabised groups through the government's well-structured patronage system attracting 'support for careerist reasons by providing scholarships to study abroad, financial credit to establish businesses, and employment for university graduates in Islamic banks and firms' (Lesch, 1998, p.143).

As discussed in chapter five under the section about people perceived to be Arabised dominating most governmental institutions, it is not insurmountable to suggest that the disbursement of allocated funds will become ethnicised; therefore, giving the Arabised population an upper-hand in accessing these kinds of funds. This will help to further the government's 'ethnic patronage system' (Adebanwi & Obadare, 2013). For the years under consideration, there is no distinction between what is spent on general education or higher education for student care. It is evident, however, that there was an increase over the years with 2009 witnessing a decrease in expenditure. In addition, with the level of poverty in this country, it should be the case that the under-privileged should get the most financial incentives to help with their education. In the case of Sudan, however, this is not obtainable, as a result of the government's Arabisation policies that politicises educational policies to suit its own purpose and partially due to the government's ethnic patronage system.

Personally, from my observation in Khartoum, I found the people who dominate the higher institutions were mainly people who would be considered Arabised; conversely, there were with very few people that would be considered non-Arabised. This observation correlates with the *Ministry of Education's* study survey carried out in 2009. That study showed there was a 3:1 ratio of students considered to be from Arabised groups, when

compared to non-Arabised groups respectively (MoE, 2009). Also, another scenario I observed regarding identity dynamics was with the issue of accommodation on campus. I discovered that the best of the sub-standard student accommodation were occupied by students of Arabised origins. On the other hand, students of the non-Arabised groups were living in sometimes less than humane conditions. One of the students I spoke with said:

*“I would rather sleep outside on the street — which is where I sleep anyway — because my small room is shared by up to 20 students of my origin, always smelling, and the only thing I do in the room is to just keep my small property. I cannot wait to finish this university to punish these people who made me suffer, even with all the money that we have; but look at those Egyptians, they are enjoying more than me”.*

This statement not only shows the deplorable state of the student accommodation; it also demonstrates how students of the same country perceive others like them. That kind of perception, to a degree, resulted in animosity between the perceived identities involved. The student’s statement largely confirms the level of support that groups considered Arabised receive in order to encourage them to study. Consequently, this leads to a feeling of subject versus citizen dichotomy, shaped by the government **vis-à-vis** the perceived ethnic divide (Idris, 2005).

Furthermore, depending on which side of the course divide one falls, it determines whether one is better placed both in the university and after graduation. For example, on my visit to the Faculty of Medicine, which houses departments like medicine, surgery, pharmacy, pharmacology and most biomedical subjects, I witnessed a state of the art faculty. On that visit, it was observed that most of the students were of Arabised origin and received

more privileges in the form of: study environment, library stock, student accommodation and the level of support received from government bodies. Corroborating this observation was data from the *University of Khartoum Registry*, requiring students to state their ethnic identity. It was discovered that students in biological and physical sciences faculties were of mainly Arabised origin, representing the three main Arabised groups in Khartoum and Central Sudan; this afforded them the opportunity to study in a favourable environment (*The Registry, U of K, 2009*). This demonstrates the extent of potential support Arabised students can get from the government; moreover, it creates a clear cut disparity between the students in terms of the kind of educational achievement relating to course choice and the profession they could aspire to achieve.

Of particular note were the parental backgrounds of students in biological and physical science related courses in most of the universities I visited: these were mainly children of wealthy to middle-class Arabised parents who were able to support their children without any official State support. Conversely, most of those students had at least one form of financial support from the State coffers. This takes me back to the influence of identity in disbursing monies for the welfare of students and how this disbursement is politically ethnicised in favour of those Arabised groups which are well connected to the bodies responsible for such allocations. Considering this, the Arabised students stand a better chance of completing their education, compared to their contemporaries from the non-Arabised groups. This potentially places them in much better political and professional positions in future. As a result, the status quo remains unchanged, as perceived Arabised groups continue to dominate the polity, economy and education. This leaves the non-Arabised groups, which are already in disadvantaged positions to be consistently seen as unequal and backward subjects rather than citizens.

Concluding on the issue of access to knowledge as a HDI, I reiterate that, given the level of expenditure incurred, it has been demonstrated that this is negatively skewed in

favour of Arabised groups because of their positions in the polity and location of the educational institutions. It was also argued that the level of expenditure incurred is not commensurate to the result produced in the educational sector. This is partly associated with the level of recurrent expenditure, leaving no room for infrastructural development that would otherwise give more people access to knowledge. A combination of these factors not only keeps non-Arabised groups educationally disadvantaged, it also creates a need to prioritise their educational needs, especially needed in conflict areas. This could be achieved via the means of: infrastructural development, scholarships, bursaries and other incentives — these would encourage the non-Arabised groups to catch up with other groups in the country.

On the question of Sudan meeting its Millennium Development Goals in education, this might be difficult to achieve, given the level of sincere commitment from the government. This commitment is seen in terms of resource allocation and expenditure in general education (primary and secondary education). This serves as the basic foundation of learning how to read and write and further allows for a decision to be made about whether an individual wants to further their education by going to post-secondary institutions. To achieve this, greater resource commitments are needed. The result of these would be that people are able to marshal their knowledge into daily activities, henceforth allowing for the achievement of the governments' educational goals. In addition, if more resources can be allocated and prioritised for training and development in general education, access to knowledge will be much more achievable and less of a daunting task to overcome. Conversely, citizens do not trust commitments made by the government on paper. This lack of trust was reflected in the words of **Bukky**:

*'Even if the agreements are adaptable, are they implemented in a good way? Is the will there to implement the agreements by the government or authorities in charge? One very important thing that has been hampering progress*



*is the unwillingness of the government to implement the statutes or agreements they have made with other parties to the conflict'. (Women Rights Activist: Sudan).*

This view was also shared by **Kura**:

*'We have signed agreements in the last four years, but there does not seem to be the willingness on the part of the government to implement the agreements despite compromises reached in every part of the agreement'.*  
(Development Officer: Sudan).

These narratives show the needs for both commitment as well as trust among the parties. It is not enough to have agreements on paper, as the parties in the agreement have to be trusted to commit to whatever they have signed. Considering this, the aggrieved groups do not usually trust whatever the government says, due to past experience of non-fulfilment. For example, in November 2002, the government pledged to build roads of up to one hundred kilometres and also to triple the budget for water connection in Darfur; however, none of those promises were kept. This led to attacks on government installations weeks later in Southern Darfur (Prunier, 2007). Even when the government committed to carrying out projects in Darfur, they were often placed in the hands of corrupt bureaucratic officials within the relevant Ministries; this, henceforth, meant they often led to failure. An example of such failure was the environment conservation project, intended to improve livestock production between Nyala and Daen. The project failed once it was handed over to bureaucrats from the *Ministry of Agriculture*, who were not subjected to any form of accountability or transparency (Suliman, 2011). In order for the government to meet its developmental goals, genuine commitments are required both in terms of funding and

ensuring the disbursements are subjected to proper accountability and transparency measures.

Finally, on the issue of Human Development is the question of access to a decent standard of living measured by GNI Per Capita (Human Development Report, 2011). Access to a decent standard of living, however, does not exist in isolation of the two indicators discussed earlier: socio-economic factors and access to knowledge. The GDP and GNI Per Capita are the two most important means through which a country's standard of living is measured. The GDP and GNI calculations are the best determinants of a citizen's personal disposable income) (*World Bank*, 2010).

Referring back to the earlier discussion about both the GDP and GNI being negatively skewed in favour of Arabised groups, this leaves them predisposed to a higher standard of living than other groups (Mamdani, 2009; Deng, 1998, 2005). This is a direct result of their engagement in more gainful employment types and business ventures, which opens them up to better income generation capability and hence an improved standard of living. This is further reflected in their ability to gain access to a better level of education, improved health facilities, good water, electricity and healthy food (Lesch, 1998). On the other side of the identity divide are groups perceived to be non-Arabised, who find themselves at a disadvantage: this is partially a result of their geographical location, which is often in remote rural areas. As a result, there is little or no access to basic education, health services, water or sometimes food. This limits their access to tangible amounts of socio-economic capital, which would otherwise increase their income generation capability. They are, therefore, limited in accessing facilities that would enable them to achieve a higher standard of living (Suliman, 2011).

The kind of scenario demonstrating the disparity among the different groups regarding access to basic facilities, which would improve their income capacity, skewed in favour of the Arabised groups was reflected in **Omogo**'s narrative:

*“In some areas in Khartoum, there are good basic infrastructural facilities. But [in] areas dominated by people of African origin, there [are] usually no facilities or not good facilities and, generally, the development indicators are very low. For example, low wages, education, transport, because the Arabs decide the distribution of everything”.* (Lawyer: Sudan).

This is also supported by several arguments made earlier about the influence of colonial developmental policies and how post-independent governments concentrated developmental projects in the Centre and Khartoum to the detriment of places like Darfur. This explanation firstly looks at the discrepancy of the personal income distribution in Sudan in relation to identity, which is usually a derivative of the GDP Per Capita. It also shows how this is skewed in favour of Arabised groups, culminating in a feeling of marginalisation and under-development by non-Arabised groups. This feeling was further exacerbated by the Arabised government's refusal to fully acknowledge the problem and deal with such issues; hence, resulting in developmental concerns.

In conclusion, the three indicators for measuring Human Development, I suggest, are complementary and not mutually exclusive of each other. For example, in order to achieve high life expectancy, it would be expected to have good access to knowledge about dealing with basic health issues and how to improve on them. In addition, good access to knowledge would potentially stimulate citizens' ability to strive for higher standards of living once they have the enabling environment. Higher life expectancy is partially determined by access to

good health and further facilitated by higher living standards: these are achievable by accessing better socio-economic capital. In sum, there appears to be a striking need for education.

In my view, access to knowledge is the single most important Human Development Indicator which is lacking in Sudan. This is exacerbated by regional disparity which tends to dichotomise by identity; thus, creating an unequal situation of the marginalisation and under-development of one group, which is then translated into conflict. These problems do not exist in isolation and several factors were identified by my respondents as reasons why the problem of under-development still persists: a number of social factors and barriers working separately and in unity.

#### **6.4. Factors Promoting and Strengthening Under-Development**

In this section, I consider these problems from the point of view of my respondents. The three main factors identified by my respondents on what they believed affects the development process in Sudan were: funding, planning and colonialism — these were repeatedly highlighted by my respondents and were also prominent during my analyses.

##### **6.4.1. Funding**

Considering the first factor of funding, important to any developmental project is the issue of how it will be funded and how to efficiently use the allocated funds. With regards to funding in Darfur, the problem is not about where the money will be coming from, given there is a clear source of funding from government sources, particularly revenues from the sale of crude oil. The problem, conversely, arises out of the governments' unwillingness to disburse much needed funds for various projects intended to benefit the people. This was reflected in **Kura's** narrative:

*'Like I said before, the government agrees that development should be [a] priority in resolving the Darfur problem. But this same government has refused to commit the much needed resources in terms of the funds required for developmental projects, like building schools, boreholes, villages and even roads. If these funds are not there, how can we do our work in this body?'* (Development Officer: Sudan).

The problem of funding towards developmental projects limits the development of certain areas of the country; it, furthermore, contributes to what some of my respondents considered to be a lack of trust among conflicting parties. This notion was explicated by **Sidika**:

*'The interests of the people are very clear: the government cheat people and deny them the opportunity to fulfil the demands of the people that they have agreed to'.* (Cleric: Sudan).

A combination of lack of access to funds or insufficient funding and the already existing mistrust for the government's promises tends to provoke conflict. The mainly non-Arabised groups see the Arabised government as part of a conspiracy to keep them under Arabised control and under-developed. This perception of the government further strengthens already existing misperceptions between the groups under consideration. The unsolicited control exercised by several government policies espoused by its Arabisation and Islamisation agenda tends to discriminate against non-Arabised groups. The pursuit of this discriminatory, ideologically-inclined political identity not only further leads to groups seeing themselves differently; it also breeds mistrust between the groups perceived to be non-Arabised and the

Arabised government. Taking this argument further, Dunn (1988) asserted that the core of the relationship between citizens and government is trust. He further said that once this trust is breached the outcome is often disobedience which could result in violent conflict. Also, some of my respondents consider the situation to be a deliberate policy attempt by the government to keep the conflict going to the advantage of some elites (Ministers, Parliamentarians), both from the conflict region and in the Capital, as discussed in chapter five. This further erodes the trust which should exist between government and its citizens. The unwillingness to adopt and implement the agreements reached means it becomes almost impossible for any of the parties to make any concrete plans for execution.

#### **6.4.2. Planning**

The next factor impeding development in Sudan is, to an extent, related to funding. This is in the area of planning and instability in government, which was partially discussed earlier in this chapter. It has been shown that priorities are often misplaced when it comes to developmental issues, in terms of which areas and developmental projects should get appropriate funding and when this should be allocated. Closely related to the problem of planning is the level of instability in government, which discourages continuity and stability in policy making and implementation. This point was echoed by one of my respondents

**Sango:**

*'One of the problems in the Sudan is that of planning and closely related to this is instability in government; as a result, [there is] no stability in policies on how to develop the country'. (National Expert, Humanitarian Affairs: Sudan).*

Considering this statement, the problem of planning is reflected in the government's inability to plan due to its instable nature. Putting this into perspective, the eleven

governments in power since the 1956 independence have always failed to follow up on the developmental plans of their predecessor, regardless of how strong the policies were and/or how much work went into formulating those plans (Ataalsid, 2011). This is mainly because successive governments always have different visions and missions about the direction they feel the country should move in. As a result, they devised policy blueprints to achieve their preferred goals (Idris, 2005). Given the dispensation of the current government, which has been in power since 1989, the inability to plan should not be the problem; rather, this falls to its inability to prioritise developmental goals, especially after the discovery and exploration of oil. For instance, instead of the government using its oil revenue to full benefit of its citizens by providing accessible basic amenities, it concentrated spending on its military industrial complex, using an estimated three percent of its GDP. This ranked Sudan at number 41 out of 171 countries assessed on military expenditure as a percentage of their GDP, despite the level of poverty in the country (CIA FactBook, 2012). Rone (2003, p. 508) asserted that:

*'By 2002, the government had apparently reached a strategic balance point. It was able to generate enough income from the oil concession (some \$500m a year or 20-40 percent of government revenues) to purchase more helicopter gunships and armaments that enabled it to target, clear population and secure the next oil concession area with roads and garrisons'.*

In addition, as receipts from the 'oil rose from zero in 1998 to almost 42 percent of total government revenue in 2001', [it had] a huge impact on military spending to the detriment of other sectors in the society (Rone, 2003, p.508). In fact, in 2000, the President announced that Sudan was going to embark on a local military arms industry from the oil receipts. This proclamation led to 60 percent of that year's oil revenue being dedicated to

military spending. Between 1999 and 2001, cash military expenditure, excluding domestic security expenditures, officially rose by 45 percent (Rone, 2003).

These findings show that the government was more preoccupied with developing its military arsenal, rather than building or refurbishing dilapidated infrastructures which would have otherwise created jobs and economic prosperity for its citizens. The government's military spending was used in perpetuating conflict, mainly against mostly people who view themselves as targets and victims because they share a different identity from the Arabised polity. The conflict perpetuated contributed to the displacement of part of the population; thus, creating a humanitarian situation to which the government continually ignores. This has resulted in Sudan, over the last few decades, having the highest level of involuntary movements, both within and around its borders, in the world (Suliman, 2011). Similarly, *UNHCR* (2008) estimated that there were over 700,000 Sudanese refugees living outside the country. In addition, *UNEP* (2007) estimated that close to two million IDP's were living in greater Darfur alone.

In my opinion, planning or lack thereof is not exactly the problem; rather, it is the government's inability or unwillingness to prioritise its developmental goals/plans for the benefit of the entire citizenry. Moreover, the government's priority should be the implementation of agreements reached with conflicting parties and the devotion of more resources to those conflict regions rather than military expenditure. These measures are necessary to bridge the trust divide and to bring those conflict zones to parity with other regions of the country. The amount of money the government expended on its military industrial complex could have instead gone a long way in ameliorating the living and developmental concerns of its citizens, especially those in places like Darfur. This, to a large extent, could have helped prevent the outbreak of the Darfur civil war in 2003, as this was partially an outcome of what **Juju** called "*the awareness of being grossly under-developed*".



The under-development has been attributed to some colonial policies and the effect they had in blocking or stunting the development of some regions in the country.

#### 6.4.3. (Neo)Colonialism

Also linked to the factors already discussed is the impact of (neo)colonialism on the developmental prospects of Sudan: this is seen in all facets of the state. Such a view was expressed by several respondents. For instance, **Maput** said:

*“During the colonial period, the North — particularly the Central part — was given [a] much greater level of development. At independence, it meant that the Centre in the North, which was more developed, assumed the position of the colonial powers and, in a sense, became the kind of dominant group”.* (Darfurian Expatriate: New York).

In view of this narrative, during the time of independence, the lack of infrastructure in vast parts of Africa did ‘little to encourage internal exchange or development’. In the health and education sector, little or no investment in the indigenous population left post-colonial governments with huge social expenditures (Stein, 2000). In Sudan, the Anglo-Egyptian condominium government spent five times more on White and Arab bureaucratic officials and their dependants than the indigenous people (El-Fatih, 1989). This kind of treatment was reminiscent of most colonial states. For example, in the French West Africa, containing over sixteen million people, there were only 152 health centres, 253 dispensers, 170 non-African doctors and just 15 African doctors (Nafziger, 1988).

The involvement of indigenous populations in commerce and business was largely discouraged. For example, it was against the law to lend credit to African businessmen in countries like Tanganyika (Circular no.31, 1919). This law was supposedly aimed at protecting Africans from the lenders; in reality, it only had the adverse effect of restricting

the businessman's access to capital. There was the sentiment that Africans needed to be protected from international trade (Stein, 2000). In the case of Sudan, this led to the passing of extensive laws like the 'Closed District Ordinance Act' (1922). This act noticeably restricted free movement of people and goods between the North and South provinces of Sudan; hence, prohibiting commercial economic activities of the indigenous population (El-Battahani, 2004). Commercial and economic activities were restricted to foreign groups, such as the Egyptian and Turkish Arab groups (Nafziger, 1988).

Little investments were seen in the area of agriculture, which meant a reliance on small scale producers that used little or no technology. Agricultural programmes in most African countries were structured in a way that encouraged only the production of cash crops: this benefitted the Capitals of the colonial powers (Stein, 2000). For instance, in Sudan, the major colonial agricultural programme (the Gezira Scheme) was aimed at ensuring farmers grew cotton, usually on a large scale, to feed the British textile industry; accordingly, the lands used were normally rented to them and supervised by managers of the scheme. This supervision left the farmers with little or no option than to do what was requested by the managers; otherwise, they could be stripped of the land (Ellis, 1979). A quote from one British Colonial Governor evinces the level of colonial interest:

*'Our first objective is to induce the native in producing something more than the crop of local food stuffs that he requires for the sustenance of himself and his family'*  
(Cameron, 1925)

Most of these programmes and schemes continued after independence. This meant small scale producers were incorporated into the world markets, subjecting them to the instabilities of global prices. Post-independent Sudan was not immune to what most other African nations experienced. The high world prices for export cash crops, as set by colonial

powers to suit their respective Capitals, led to a relative decline in the terms of trade for Sudan. The reduction in export prices were also connected to the shifting nature of global production (Gaitskell, 1952). This is in line with what Stein (2003, p.156) argued:

*'The emphasis on raw material and primary product exports is very problematic in an era which knowledge becomes a larger proportion of the value added of commodities. Advances in biotechnology and material sciences led to synthetic substitutes for primary products. Products such as cotton are also being challenged by Western firms as they undertake genetic research to develop outright synthetic substitutes or alternative methods of production'.*

Additionally, process industries which would otherwise have created job opportunities for African societies were stifled by tariffs and other forms of cost barriers: these tended to be at higher levels than the crude commodities (Adesida, 1998). Another colonial legacy which inhibited post-independence development was excessive State control of commerce, including agricultural marketing boards, due to pressure on independent states to become financially self-sufficient. This led to the appointment of officials on a tribal and non- merit basis, resulting in the inefficient management of such entities. The resulting gross inefficiency placed the sales and marketing of locally produced goods at a disadvantage in the world market (Stein, 2000). Also, in manufacturing, no attempt was made to develop the manufacturing industry; instead, governments focused on mining the commodities which had a very peripheral linkage with the economy of the country. Moreover, manufacturing was discouraged, to a large degree, by the foreign monopolies that dominated the import-export trade: they had a strong lobby against calls for the introduction of plans that would encourage domestic production (Kilby, 1975).

In Sudan, from 1930 to independence, eighty percent of all export and import activities were controlled by just two companies: Unilever and John Holt (Kilby, 1975). By contrast, attempts by post-independent governments to bolster their base by encouraging manufacturing for import substitution and agricultural processing were usually disastrous. The main reason for this was most project investment used foreign aid from former colonial masters who usually tied conditions to the aid: this further promoted and protected their interests. For example, the aid are usually dependent on the receiving country agreeing to import capital intensive technology from the donor country and signing long term contracts for the importation of spare parts and expertise from the donor country (*World Bank*, 1989).

In general, the governments inherited states with low levels of education, poor infrastructural facilities, few entrepreneurs, a massive gap in technological advancement in the agricultural sector and an undiversified economy with very small manufacturing or processing industrial capability (Stein, 2000, 2003). With all the deficiencies inherited by the post-independent government and the high expectations of their citizens, there was hostile pressure from all parties for a better standard of living. These expectations were especially high within the so-called African groups, who perceived themselves to have been marginalised in all aspects of the society (Deng, 2008). To some degree, the pressure and expectations, coupled with the little investments made by the colonial state in Sudan, could explain some of the poor policy choices made by the governments. These problems and the large administrative/political vacuum left the State open to a patron-client relationship (Stein, 2000, Nafziger, 2006, Adebani & Obadare, 2013). Overall, at the time of independence, Sudan had a very narrow set of policy options to adopt. The insufficient policy options, combined with a high level of under-development unable to deal with the diversity which existed, complicated the creation and cementing of imagined identities.

## 6.5. Conclusion

This chapter examined the connection between identity and issues of development, by considering the different categories of development and how they are measured. The discussion showed a significant skewedness in favour of Arabised groups for the development indicators examined. I also showed how the different development indicators complement each other and how the (non)achievement of one could have a positive or negative impact on the others. The three main developmental criteria discussed in this Chapter were: social, economic and human development, adopted from the *United Nations Development Program Handbook*. As mentioned in my introduction, however, the fourth criteria of political development was discussed in detail in chapter five accounting for its absence in this chapter.

Of all the development indicators discussed, it was observed that access to knowledge play a crucial role in the attainment of any country's developmental goals: this created a need to delve into the Sudanese educational priorities. Even according to the *United Nations*, access to knowledge is closely related to six of the eight '*Millennium Development Goals*' (UNDP, 2011). The relevance of knowledge was demonstrated in its ability to enhance life expectancy through information which improves health care and maintenance: this enables the acquisition of a relatively strong socio-economic base, which should then translate into a good standard of living. This, in essence, shows that the developmental goals are not mutually exclusive of another; rather, they are overlapping and connected in different ways. In view of the overall objective of this study, I have demonstrated and suggested how development is perceived to be skewed in favour of perceived Arabised groups. This situation has been attributed to the geographical location of these groups having a higher concentration of developmental projects; thus, providing them with better socio-economic and Human Development indicators.

More significant are the political, administrative and technical fortresses controlled by the perceived Arabised group, leaving them in a position to determine, formulate and implement development policies to the advantage of their own group and, conversely, the disadvantages of others. The political advantages discussed in chapter five allow for the Arabised elites to implement discriminatory developmental policies, which are championed through the government's Arabisation and Islamisation policies. These have been shown to suggest how non-Arabised groups will remain under-developed and marginalised if current arrangements persist.

Accordingly, to reduce the disproportionate level of discrepancy in regional development, it was suggested that the government should consistently allocate more resources to the conflict regions/groups which are grossly under-developed for a certain period of time. This, in turn, would at least allow those regions to at least catch up with other considerably developed areas. Such an arrangement is documented in the '*Darfur Peace Agreement*' (2006), signed by the Government of Sudan and the political movements which agreed to sign the accord.

Furthermore, factors limiting the achievement of government's developmental goals, as identified by my respondents, are: insincerity and non-committal of resources on the part of the government; planning and prioritisation; the effects of colonialism. Within current literature, corruption and bureaucratic inefficiencies were identified as factors limiting the achievement of developmental goals. In order to do so within Sudan's identity divides, would require: striking a fine balance between the issues of under-development and perceived marginalisation; maintaining a neutral stance when it comes to dealing with perceived ethnic divides in the country. This measure is particularly essential for dealing with identity groups in peripheries like Darfur, which consider themselves extremely marginalised and under-developed because of their concretely politicised and imagined identities. Maintaining neutrality will not only foster an environment of peaceful co-

existence between the groups that perceive themselves differently; it will also create an environment allowing for more developmental works to be carried out. This outcome will, undeniably, give all Darfurians a sense of civic national identity and the opportunity to reap the benefits of citizenship; this is in direct comparison to the current state of affairs of unequal relations.

## Chapter Seven

### 7.1. Conclusions and Suggestions

In this chapter, I give a summary of my findings discussed in my data chapters and show the relevance of the New War theory in explaining the situation in Darfur/Sudan. This is done in view of the overall aim and objectives of this thesis, which allow me to demonstrate my original contribution to knowledge; thereby, highlighting the gap filled by this work and within the current literature in this subject area. This study argues that the Darfur conflict does not pitch two distinct and mutually exclusive groups against another. Its findings challenge the primordial/essentialist identity depiction of the conflict as Arabs versus Africans, provided by many studies (for instance, De Waal, 1989, 2005; Deng, 1995, 2008; Lesch, 1998; Flint & De Waal, 2005, 2008; Prunier, 2005, 2007, Salih, 2005; Sharkey, 2008; O’Fahey & Tubiana, n.d; O’Fahey, 1996); by contrast, this thesis considers identities to be constructed through perception and largely imagined. Overall, the study, to some degree, negates essentialist notions of identity in relation to Darfur. This was rejected on the basis that any claim to biology, race, and genealogy could not be substantiated by any objective evidence and, further, that forced historical genealogy were more or less wishful thinking.

The essentialised nature of identities was highlighted by my respondents’ use of phrases like ‘*consider themselves*’, ‘*so-called*’, and ‘*seeing themselves as Arabs*’. These, thereby, depicted the falseness of those rigid identities. The highly essentialised discourse of identities in Darfur was also, to a large extent, refuted by the study’s findings that a long history of transmigration across the Darfur region does not allow for ethnically distinct groups. This was suggested to be impossible due to there being a long history of inter-marriages between the different migrant groups and even the ‘so-called’ indigenous people. The study suggests that the religious and cultural homogeneity of Darfur, especially in terms of spoken language, also makes it highly unlikely, if not impossible, that an essentialist conceptualisation of identity is applicable to Darfur: these are people who practice the same



religion and speak the same language. In spite of this, they do have local dialects across the 'so-called' ethnic divide. The lingua franca is Arabic, which also serves as the language of the state; this, thereby, puts all groups in equal standing of cultural homogeneity.

Furthermore, what this study does indicate is the instrumental use of constructed ethnicities in solidifying perceived differences amongst the different groups under consideration, allowing some groups to be diametrically favoured for higher socio-economic and political status to the detriment of other groups. The study also suggests that this state of affairs is a result of the government's vision of identity, which, to a large extent, is at variance with many groups' identity vision for the country.

In the case of Darfur, ethnic identity has become a tool for the government to gather support for its proffered and preferred vision of identity. As a result, the Arabisation and Islamisation policies of the State were implicated and became a potent factor in the government's ability to concretise the idea of opposing identities within an 'Us versus Them' aggregate (Horowitz, 1985). These policies were not only shown to strengthen these constructed and imagined dichotomies; it also strengthened the instrumental paradigm of ethnicity, by gaining and giving support to groups believed to fall under its vision of identity (Irobi, 2005). At the micro-level, these policies have helped to strengthen the perception of differences among the groups and, furthermore, to concretise that belief. The findings of this study suggest that the Darfur conflict has been internationalised, as a result of the domestic policies adopted by the government of Sudan, which essentially categorises the country as Arab-Islamic. Also, the internationalised nature of the conflict affects the level of engagement by the international community in relation to the support it receives in the conflict resolution process. Within the frontiers of Darfur, this study posits the use of Darfur as a war proxy by neighbouring countries like Libya and Chad served both a regional domestic purpose and an instrumental one. The domestication of these regional issues forced

identity groups within Darfur to choose sides; thereby, heightening a sense of difference between the groups under consideration.

In this study, the malleability and reconstruction of identity was suggested by experiences of travel. This is synonymous to the findings of Deng (2005) and Idris (2005) in their respective studies on *'travelling identities'* and *'Sudanese in exile'*. This thesis posits that the competing visions of identities have domestic, national, regional and international implications; it, furthermore, helps solidify the perception of differences amongst the groups under consideration. This perception of difference is not only solidified by inter-group dynamics, where group members essentialised their ethnic identities along African/Arab subtleties; it is also strengthened by various governments' implementations of several Arabisation and Islamisation policies. In this sense, I was not able to treat the issue of Darfur in isolation from the politics of larger Sudan and the attendant impact of government policies on several issues, like marginalisation and development of different regions in the country.

Culture was discussed as one of the important aspects of the daily lives of the Darfurian people, which they implied has been intentionally neglected and its side-lining is hugely political to the detriment of daily existence. An aspect of inter-group relations, this study observed, contributing to this conflict is the abolition of the 'Native Administration Provision' of 1970, which was replaced by the 'Local Governments Act' (1970). This Act was largely politicised in favour of certain groups, when considering the level of political representation from the groups under consideration. This, to a large extent, not only strengthened the belief in perceived differences; it also limited the decision making capability of groups which are not well represented politically, as the micro-level conflict resolution mechanism was eradicated. This part of the project supported the findings of Suliman (2011), blaming the abolition of the Native Administration System and the non-replacement of that system with a more democratically viable system as part of the problem that led to the outbreak of full blown war in 2003.

Educational marginalisation was also strongly implicated in the problem which created the perceived differences among the groups under consideration. Educational marginalisation was mainly viewed via the location of educational facilities, mainly in certain parts of the country favouring certain groups which eventually used it to their advantage. The location of these facilities is also, to a large extent, linked to the kind of developmental goals pursued by the colonial administration and built upon by post-colonial regimes. In specific cases like Darfur, the government's Arabisation policies have lent support to groups that are seen to adhere to their vision of identity, by locating educational infrastructures in those communities and sponsoring the education of pupils. It has also helped in strengthening the level of perceived differences between the Darfur groups, by creating a huge gap in terms of the level of educational achievement; this was closely linked to the amount of elites that could be produced from various groups, hence affecting political representation.

Closely related to educational policies in Sudan is the language of instruction. This was shown to be an important element in government policies that helped limit education access to some Darfurian groups; as a result, there are less professionals and elites produced from those groups. These identified sources of marginalisation are closely linked to the third marginalisation issue discussed in this study: political marginalisation. It was shown that the level of political representation in the polity and decision making apparatus determines the level of education and governance accorded to the different groups. These situations help shape and strengthen groups' belief in their constructed and perceived differences, due to the disproportionate level of representation to the benefit of Arabised groups. All these are done in relation to the government's Arabisation and Islamisation policies that seeks to promote an imposed form of identity amongst a homogenous group; thereby, politicising the perceived ethnic divide in the Darfur region. The level of marginalisation across board has

been shown to have a significant impact on the level of development in the different regions of the country harbouring the different ethnic groups inclusive of Darfur.

The discussion of developmental issues and the level of under-development, especially in Darfur, suggest that educational under-development ranks highly when considering why Sudan might not be able to achieve its MDGs in the key four areas outlined by the *United Nations (UNDP, 2011)*. In the case of Sudan, this thesis suggests that educational under-development is a derivative of colonial developmental policies, whilst the government's Arabisation policies are often misinformed and misguided by politics (Ataalsid, 2011). These policies have been shown to be negatively skewed in favour of certain groups: Arabised groups in the Centre and Khartoum, and Arabised groups in Darfur supported by the government. This, henceforth, strengthens the belief of differences among groups in periphery Darfur.

The level of marginalisation has also been shown to have an impact on the provision of basic infrastructural facilities which could have a significant impact on the socio-economic, human and political development of Darfurians and Sudanese in general. Overall, this study suggests that competing visions of identity in Sudan at the macro-level contribute immensely to issues of marginalisation and development at the micro-level. Recognising that Darfur cannot be treated in isolation of the larger Sudanese crises of identity, marginalisation and development, I will briefly summarise these below — I also propose some policy recommendations at a later stage in this chapter.

Projecting into the future, in Sudan, violent conflicts erupt because of the inability of different groups to surpass the idea of ethnic identities in all daily endeavours and politics. Post-colonial Sudan have played a significant role in the rigidification of constructed identities instead of their deconstruction. Both ethnic groups under consideration in this study have further been rigidified with the dominance of the states' Arabisation policies,

which does not help to move the discourse of identity beyond the fiction of antagonistic, static and fixed socio-cultural sets. In this study, ethnicity is not understood as units grounded in essentialism amongst the groups under consideration; rather, it is seen as imbalance of interactions between micro/macro politically constructed identity groups. These are characterised by citizen and subject power relations, which are strengthened by complex forms of patron-client relationship and power within the socio-economic and political structure of the state.

The implication of this study is that the Arabised and non-Arabised identity discourse in Sudan contributes overwhelmingly to the discourse on marginalisation and development especially as it relates to Darfur. This study challenges the validity of identity notions of '*being African*' or '*being Arab*' in the Darfurian context. By contrast, I suggest that these notions of identity are shaped by group members and largely solidified by state policies. I further suggest that these identities are grounded in pre-post-colonial debates on identity in Sudan. These identity representations '*Arab*' and '*African*' exist in the colonial framework, as espoused in several colonies for ease of administration and governance (Horowitz, 1985). Furthermore, it was also intentionally reinvented and built upon in the post-colonial Sudanese context in an attempt solidifying the identity discourse. This study permeates the rigid discourse of ethnic groups in Darfur along a strict African and Arab divide. Its findings suggest that that rigidity cannot be substantiated by any objective proof or fact. Conversely, the groups under consideration are instead homogenous entities divided by imagined criteria.

This study also showed that the construction of ethnic or regional identities is intricately linked to the processes of State formation by examining the ethnic groups within the discourse they have been located: colonialism, migration, marriage, peaceful co-existence along occupational lines, and the post-colonial Arabised State. These constructed identities gave power, wealth and privileges to some groups; it, furthermore contributed to

the subjugation of certain groups through political exclusion and several forms of socio-economic discrimination. State formation created unequal social relations between ethnic groups in Sudan and, most importantly, a dysfunctional patron-client system institutionalising ethnic identity as a criterion for citizenship entitlement; this, henceforth, excludes subjugated and discriminated groups considered to be subjects (Idris, 2005).

The institutionalised form of ethnicity in Sudan leading to the level of marginalisation and its attendant effect on development has been shown by this study to be caused by corruption, colonisation, lack of transparency and mismanagement. This study further suggests that the geographical location of Darfur has, to a large extent, contributed to its problem, by discouraging expenditure on infrastructure during the colonial period. This was taken further by post-colonial governments which adopted policies that were anti-developmental to certain groups in peripheries like Darfur. This notion once again supports the position of Suliman (2011) that geographical location and institutional failure are to be blamed for the level of marginalisation and developmental issues in peripheries like Darfur. The cultural homogeneity of Darfur is why I depicted the identities under consideration as Arabised and non-Arabised rather than Arab and African. I also suggest the identity crises persisting in Sudan portend a bleak future for improvement in terms of reducing the level of marginalisation and development across the country including Darfur; unless certain steps are taken to mend the gaps that exist. With this in mind, I will make policy recommendations, considered in the next section.

In this study, the New War theory, given its features especially as it relates to identity politics— which is played out in nationalist, particularist and exclusivist policies— is very reminiscent of Darfur/Sudan context. Given the different arguments in this thesis, I suggest that these kinds of particularist, nationalist and exclusivist policies/actions are implicit and clear in the Arabisation and Islamisation policies of the Sudanese governments which translate into socio-economic injustices. This led to the mobilisation of groups under

consideration and eventual conflict with the aim of correcting the perceived anomalies. In all, the ethnic politics played around these identities in line with the nationalist Arabisation policies of the government of Sudan is what led to mobilisation against the state. The conflict that emanates from the ethnic politics is espoused through discriminatory and unhealthy competition for power, politics and resources (Kaldor, 1998, 2007). All of these features are consistent with the arguments of the New War theory—this I believe, again, make this theoretical underpinning well suited for this thesis. Finally, arguments in this thesis surrounding ethnic politics and its strong relationship with nationalist, particularist and exclusivist policies in Sudan contribute to the relevance of the New War theory in explaining conflicts in the global South as Kaldor’s arguments were mainly focused on issues in Eastern and Western Europe. In all, the ethnic politics in Darfur/Sudan which is inherently linked to state policies that leads to massive socio-economic injustices with conflictual consequences are all reminiscent of the New War arguments, thereby making it very relevant in African conflicts.

## **7.2. Policy Recommendations**

The discourses on the rigid Darfur identity constructed by an African and Arab dichotomy have been examined in this study to help understand the cause of conflict in Darfur. These identities have been discussed in past literature along an Arab versus African dynamic. This study challenges these over-simplistic and journalistic assumptions. This study posits a belief in perceived differences across the constructed identities is the cause of the conflict, with implications for marginalisation and development.

Given the general belief in the existence of these two strict identities, several policy implications could be suggested to address the identity issues at both the micro and macro levels in Darfur and Sudan respectively. Full acceptance of Africanism, Arabism and/or Afro-Arabism are policy recommendations which could be advanced to accommodate unity,

provided there is the willingness to conform by all groups; having said that, these forms of identity frameworks are not devoid of further conflicts. The findings in this study suggest that identities in Darfur are imagined than rigid, given all the factors and policies discussed. The different visions of identity solidify the already perceived differences amongst the various groups under consideration; thereby, contributing to marginalisation and under-development in different regions.

For the sake of peace among the competing micro and macro identity groups and to avoid forceful conformity, I recommend a more robust and an all-encompassing civic Sudanese identity framework allowing pluralist identity recognition. This kind of framework recognises and embraces diversity under the framework of unity; thus, reducing the need to identify with a particular ethnic group in order to reap the benefits of citizenship (Madibbo, 2012). This framework, to a large extent, should be accommodative of multiculturalism which allows people with differences to live together (Fleras & Elliot, 2002). This kind of framework will reduce the notion that divergent groups' opinions and antagonistic tendencies are considered irreconcilable with national interests. This proposed framework should embrace fairness as its hallmark; thereby, allowing for some positive affirmative action mandated by some of my respondents to be of great use in reaching the level of equality needed. Discrimination should be brought to non-existence under this framework and political representation reflecting groups' population should be encouraged in this arrangement (Madibbo, 2012).

The successful adoption and application of this model will require strong political will from the ruling elites, combined with an accountable and transparent State apparatus going beyond any ethnic, regional and State identity dynamics currently obtainable. As seen in this study, the constructed identities are perceptual and imagined, as opposed to real, fixed and static. As a result, a civic Sudanese identity should be easy to achieve via promoting the national interest, for it benefits the citizens and focusing on symbols and values that unite,



instead of those that stoke up differences across the country as espoused by the government's Arabisation and Islamisation policies (Madibbo, 2012). Several issues which could unite people and groups under the civic Sudanese identity were raised by my respondents when asked about how they feel their interests are being taken care of and what they thought the way forward is for the country. Most of my respondents, regardless of their identity category, talked about the level of marginalisation and under-development in the country, and maintained that everything should be done by all parties involved to bring about peace in the country. The arrival of peace, they all believed, will come with a reduction in the level of marginalisation and development of all the regions. This peace dividend, they believe, eludes them because of the violent attacks on infrastructure and government spending on its military industrial complex.

In view of policies required to reduce marginalisation and aid development, policy formulations should take into account the interests of the citizens, as opposed to the interests of the rebel leaders. In that regards, I recommend a bottom-up approach allowing citizens to influence policy decisions, by taking into account the needs of the citizens on the ground. A good example of this kind of approach was adopted by Young *et al.* (2005) in their work '*Darfur-Livelihood under Siege*'. This study by Young and colleagues investigated the effects of the conflict on the livelihoods of the communities in Darfur, by going into the communities to question residents, as opposed to just acting on the basis of what they have been told by the government, rebels and/or NGO's. That particular study helped to refine the strategic humanitarian intervention which would otherwise have taken a top-down approach of policy formulation and, therefore, created a win-win outcome. I strongly advocate this kind of bottom-up approach for any developmental plan for the country.

Nevertheless, I do understand that this system might be expensive given the level of human and material resources required for this kind of approach. Despite this, I still highly recommend it, for it takes into full account the needs of the people rather than the assumed

needs presented by the movements and government officials which sometimes do not necessarily reflect the situation on ground. An example of such misplaced top-down approach was witnessed during negotiations of several peace agreements, like the '*Darfur Peace Agreement*' (DPA, 2006) and the '*Doha Accord*' (2011). The negotiators from the movements were more pre-occupied with the kind of posts to hold in government and neglected the real issues of marginalisation and under-development which affected the everyday existence of the victims and citizens at large (Suliman, 2011).

For conflict managers and practitioners, I recommend that an overall approach to the conflict situation should be considered when formulating and adopting any policy framework. Considering this work, given the themes discussed, to a large extent, harbour deep emotional feelings, the full extent of these feelings should be explored in order to understand deep seated animosities influencing disagreements. An assumed one-fits-all approach will not be useful in situations like Darfur, which pitches groups that perceive themselves differently against one another. This study, to an extent, has been able to explore the origins of those feelings embedded in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial historical antecedents; therefore, bringing pre-colonial and colonial history to meet the post-colonial history, demonstrating a greater understanding of group relations in state formation. In conclusion, the policy recommendations arising from this work include:

- Adoption of a civic Sudanese identity;
- Embracing a Bottom-Up approach to the formulation and implementation of policies which reduce marginalisation and encourage development;
- Adoption of a comprehensive conflict resolution approach for conflict managers and practitioners;
- Building trust, accountability and transparency in government.

### **7.3. Contribution to knowledge**

Although I have discussed the findings and implications from this study, I still need to distinguish precisely how this study transcends other studies on Darfur. I dedicate this section to highlight my contribution(s) to knowledge. My thesis is different from other studies on identity issues in Sudan which have mainly concentrated on the identity dynamics of the North/South divide. In that sense, most of the literature has always treated identity issues solely along the divides of Arabs in the North and Africans in the South, under the assumption that all groups in the North belong to the same category of essentialised identity. With the almost certain independence of South Sudan after the CPA in 2005, the attention shifted to the dynamics of groups in the North within which my case study lies. The same sort of issues affecting the North/South relationship was present in the North; however, little or no attention was paid to that.

This study tried to consider the identity relations in the North, by concentrating on ethnic groups in Darfur, particularly with the onset of the conflict in 2003 depicted as a war between Arabs and Africans. Studies have considered what it means to be African or Arab in the Sudanese context, which is the closest to talking about the identity dynamics of northern Sudan. My study, however, goes beyond just looking at what might be considered Arab or African, by considering Darfur identities in the context of larger Sudan. Furthermore, it actually suggests that there are no objective criteria for defining an African or an Arab and that the depiction of a distinction between those groups is perceived and mainly imagined rather than real or objective. Overall, perceptions play an important role in the construction of an African or Arab identity in Darfur; a point or factor which is hardly emphasised by any other study. My thesis also transcends other studies by suggesting linkages between certain state policies and the manner in which perceived differential gap between the groups and the

concretisation of those differences created and fostered in Darfur. Although studies have shown that state policies have an influence on intra/inter-group relations. They also have treated those policies in isolation, mainly along the North/South divide, and not shown how they actually create and stifle peaceful group relations in Darfur. This study transcends that limitation and isolated treatment of issues, by showing that those isolated policies actually work together to hinder peaceful co-existence to the benefit of certain groups in Darfur and Sudan in general.

With relation to marginalisation and development, past studies have shown how these levels in the country relating to all regions coincide with the State policies. What was lacking, however, was an in-depth, direct and concrete analysis of: how these policies exacerbate huge differences among groups; how the status-quo has been maintained; how this contributes to the perception of differences among the Darfurian groups. My thesis has largely provided that link, showing a concrete connection between the identity discourse and issues of marginalisation and developmental in Darfur.

#### **7.4. Prospects for Future Research**

I would like to pursue further research in this area of study, by looking separately at the different tribes constituting the groups that were classified as either as Arabised or non-Arabised in this study. This will give me the opportunity to identify if there are several dynamics along tribal lines within the so-called ethnic groups, as opposed to homogenous ethnic divisions. This will also show if any solution proffered to the problem will stop intra-ethnic disputes once the inter-ethnic issues are resolved. This, I believe, will create greater understanding of the region as a whole, rather than just the broadly categorised identity groups studied in this thesis. Also of interest are broader comparative studies of periphery groups in northern Sudan and their relationship to the macro politics. This will create an opportunity to appreciate the identity dynamics of the wider population to thereby foster a

greater understanding of Sudan's uniqueness. Finally, an area of interest would be a comparative study of groups between the Sudan and South Sudan in order to seek out any similarities between groups in both countries and to further discover if any solidarity factors exist across the border of South Sudan and Sudan.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1**

#### **United Nations officials/ Academics**

- a. To what extent has international response to the Darfur crisis been successful?
- b. How has the peculiarity of the Sudanese state influenced the pattern of international engagement?
- c. What are the political and humanitarian constraints that have faced international response to the Darfur conflict?
- d. Do you think identity has any impact on the current Darfur crisis?
- e. What are the prospects of peace in Darfur and how can sustainable peace be achieved?

## **Appendix 2**

### **Displaced people: so-called African/Arab/Neutrals**

- a. How do you evaluate the Arab dominated Khartoum government?
- b. To what extent do you see your ethnicity play a role in the current conflict?
- c. Is there a feeling of insecurity when dealing with other ethnic groups?
- d. Would you say marginalisation has a role in the current conflict?
- e. How would you describe your identity and its impact in this conflict?
- f. How can peace be achieved in Darfur?

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Public officials in Khartoum**

- a. How have national movements like the SPLM influenced the outcome of the Darfur conflict?
- b. Does identity play any role in the distribution of state resources? Has it been on principles of equality or fairness?
- c. How would you describe the level of representation in government given the Arab leaning of the government?
- d. What are the channels being pursued locally to achieve sustainable peace?
- e. What are the roles of the ethnically divided political elites in influencing government decisions?

## Appendix 4

### List of Anonymised Interviewees, Venues, Cities and Length of Individual Interviews

Anonymised Interviewees	Venue of Interview	Role	Location	Interview Length
Arin	Office	Director: Darfur Region Transition Authority	Khartoum	45.32mins
Ben	Office	Field staff: UNDPKO	New York	45.39mins
Mada	Residence	Teacher	Khartoum	42.56mins
Alhaji	Residence	Technician: Development Studies Institute.	Omdurman	25.45mins
Jorin	Residence	Practitioner: UNHCR, Sudan	Khartoum	32.23mins
Sango	Office	National Expert: Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs	Jebel Marra, Sudan	20.46mins
Coret	Restaurant	Field staff: UNOCHA	New York	46.42mins
Ekole	Office	Lecturer	Khartoum	1hr 8mins
Maput	Office	Sudanese Expatriate	Khartoum	40.54mins
Gbenga	Residence	Lecturer	Khartoum	36.39mins
Bukky	Office	Women Rights Activist	Khartoum	15.03mins
Julia	Office	Author	New York	40.52mins
Beth	Office	Director: Think Tank	Washington	32.33mins
Kura	Residence	Development Officer: DRTA	Khartoum	1hr 03mins
Omogo	Office	Lawyer: Sudan	Omdurman	51.44mins
Juju	Residence	Director: Peace Research Institute.	Khartoum	32.49mins
Irawo	Residence	Director: NGO/African	Khartoum	25.25mins
Owuro	Office	Doctor	Wad Madani	51.23mins
Ayele	Office	Pro: Ministry of Information	Khartoum	12.27mins
Sidika	Mosque	Cleric	Khartoum	36.57mins
Samba	Residence	Engineer	Khartoum	36.54mins
Jato	Office	Diplomat	Khartoum	45.57mins
Timbi	Restaurant	Rebel	Khartoum	43.19mins

## Appendix 5

### Participant Information Sheet

SCHOOL OF APPLIED SOCIAL SCIENCES



**Name of department:** *Geography and Sociology.*

**Title of study:** *Darfur Conflict: Problematising Identity Discourse in Relation to Marginalisation and Development.*

#### **Introduction**

My name is Olushola Bode-Kehinde and I am a PhD student looking at identity issues in Darfur, Sudan. My work is sponsored by the University Of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom.

#### **Purpose of this Investigation**

The aim of this PhD research is to offer a clearer and nuanced explanation of the Darfur conflict by problematising the issue of identity in the discourse on marginalisation and development in Darfur/Sudan; thus showing how competing visions of identity shape the processes of conflict. Further, the project will seek to examine the role of Sudanese governments' policies as a contributing factor to the Darfur crisis which further facilitates the identity discourse. Finally, the study will aim to provide a framework within which ethnic identity can be explored and understood as a mechanism for conflict escalation/resolution in Darfur, Sudan.

#### **How you can help**



It is my belief that your participation in this project will greatly help my understanding of the issues at stake. I humbly request that you participate as an interviewee/source of reference and/or source of primary and secondary data. Your participation is of great importance and is very relevant to this research. I would assure you that all information provided will be treated confidentially and you are free to withdraw from participation at any time without giving a reason.

**What will you do in the project?**

You will be involved in an interview, which will take between 30-45 minutes. I expect you to express your opinion as freely and plainly as you can on questions that I will be asking you. Do not hesitate to take a break if you want and clarify any question(s) that you do not understand.

**Why have you been invited to take part?**

You have been chosen to take part in this study because you are an adult who I believe can contribute meaningfully to this project.

**What happens to the information in the project?**

Information will be stored on voice recorder and notes. I will be getting a personal safe to secure all personal information and data gathered to ensure the confidentiality of the participants and data that might be of a sensitive nature. On final transcription and completion of research, all data will be destroyed by deletion of the voice recorder and shredding of notes.

**The University of Strathclyde is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office who implements the Data Protection Act 1998. All personal data on participants will be processed in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.**

**Thank you for reading this information – please ask any questions if you are unsure about what is written here.**

**What happens next?**

*Do you wish to participate in this study? Yes/no (delete as appropriate)*

*If yes, I would be providing you with a consent form to sign to show your acceptance of participation in the study.*

*If no, thank you for your time and attention.*

*If you do wish to receive to receive feedback after the final conduct of the investigation, kindly contact me at [olushola.bode-kehinde@strath.ac.uk](mailto:olushola.bode-kehinde@strath.ac.uk) .*

This investigation was granted ethical approval by the University of Strathclyde ethics committee.

If you have any questions/concerns, during or after the investigation, or wish to contact an independent person to whom any questions may be directed or further information may be sought from, please contact:

Secretary to the University Ethics Committee

University of Strathclyde

McCance Building

16 Richmond Street Glasgow

G1 1XQ

Telephone: 0141 548 2752; Email: [ethics@strath.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@strath.ac.uk)

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Glasgow, United Kingdom.  
[Colin.Clark@uws.ac.uk](mailto:Colin.Clark@uws.ac.uk)  
0141-848-3538

## Appendix 6

### Consent Form

**Name of department:** Geography and Sociology

**Title of study:** *Darfur Conflict: Problematizing Identity Discourse in Relation to Marginalisation and Development.*

My name is Olushola Bode-Kehinde and I am a PhD student, sponsored by the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom. I hereby seek your consent and authority for you, and your establishment, to participate in my research as an interviewee/source of reference and/or source of primary and secondary data.

- I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above Project and the researcher has answered any queries to my satisfaction.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, without having to give a reason and without any consequences.
- I understand that I can withdraw my data from the study at any time.
- I understand that any information recorded in the investigation will remain confidential and no information that identifies me will be made publicly available.
- I consent to being a participant in the project
  
- I consent to being audio and video recorded as part of the project [delete which is not being used]  
Yes/ No

I (PRINT NAME)	Hereby agree to take part in the above project
Signature of Participant:	Date

## Appendix 7

### Ethical Approval

The screenshot displays the Outlook Web Access interface for 'Ethical approval - Outlook Web Access Light'. The interface includes a search bar, navigation tabs for Mail, Calendar, and Contacts, and a folder list on the left. The main content area shows an email from Margaret Keoghan, dated 20 April 2010 at 12:40, sent to Olushola Bode-Kehinde and Cc: Colin Clark. The email body contains the following text:

You replied on 22/04/2010 06:49.

**Sent:** 20 April 2010 12:40  
**To:** Olushola Bode-Kehinde  
**Cc:** Colin Clark

Dear Olushola,  
We have had confirmation that your Ethics application can stay with DEC and David has now signed this off, however please let me know when you are officially going on your field work and that you have travel insurance in place.

Best wishes  
Margaret

Margaret Keoghan  
PG&Research Administrator  
Department of Geography and Sociology  
University of Strathclyde  
Tel 0141 548 2976

At the bottom of the interface, there is a status bar indicating 'Connected to Microsoft Exchange' and a small '1/1' indicator.

## Appendix 8

### Classification and Sources of Documents

Source	Classification	Type of Information	Contact Person
Ministry of Culture, Sudan Notes and Records. Sudan	Open-Archival	Socio-Political History of Sudan.	Librarian
Ministry of Education, Sudan	Open-Restricted	Institutional Figures on Primary Enrolment and Literacy Level	Director of Primary Education
Ministry of Finance and National Economy/ Economic and Budget Department	Open-Restricted	Ministerial Figures on Social and Physical Infrastructure and Development Indices	Public Relations Officer
United Nations Depository Library, New York	Open-Published	Human Development Reports	Deputy Librarian
Darfur Region Transition Authority	Open-Restricted	Darfur Transitional Programmes and Darfur peace Agreement Documents	MA- one of my Interviewees
Ministry of Works and Infrastructure	Open-Restricted	Statistics on Infrastructural Facilities	Director of Information