

WAS SEPARATISM A VIABLE SOLUTION FOR THE SUDAN – SOUTH SUDAN CONFLICT?

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Abstract. *The following article is part of our special issue concerning the separatism solution for the African conflicts. This article is focused on the prolonged conflict between North and South Sudan in order to prove that, at least for this particular conflict, separatism was a viable solution in order to stop the conflict. At the same time, this article links the prolonged violence to the bad governance of the central authorities in Sudan after the independence, rather than accusing the British colonial legacy.*

Keywords: *separatism, Sudan, South Sudan, independence, self-determination, federalism, autonomy, state partitioning, SPLM/A, CPA.*

State partitioning has been employed as a remedy to intractable conflicts over territory and statehood since the emergence of nationalist ideology as a dominant force in world politics. Over the last two hundred years, some 70 de jure and de facto states have been created through secession (Gebreluel & Tronvoll, 2014). After the advent of decolonization and the creation of the present political borders in Africa, there were a significant number of secessionist movements that used violent means to get their independence. From Katanga in Congo to Biafra in Nigeria, some of them came very close to success (Chereji, 2014, manuscript). Considering the unique history of colonialism in Africa, the incidences of secession have been surprisingly few. All cases of state-partitioning are, furthermore, geographically concentrated in North Eastern Africa, which is home to the only de jure

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secessionist states in post-colonial Africa – Eritrea and South Sudan – as well as the unrecognized but de facto secessionist state of Somaliland.

Separatism refers to the advocacy of separation or secession by a group of people from a larger political unit to which they belong. In modern times, separatism is often inter-linked with self-determination, which is the act of a particular people or an ethnic group attempting to exercise their sovereign right to become an independent state and to decide on the form of state they wish to be under, including on its government system (Matsuno, 2014). Even if inter-linked, secession must be understood as a more far-reaching act of separation than the demand for self-determination that doesn't alter and modify the boundaries of the state such as federalism, decentralization or regional autonomy. The two concepts are interlinked and analyzed together because much of the expert literature tends to be normative rather than positive, focusing on the theoretical and legal foundations of the rights of groups to secede (Buchheit, 1978; Horowitz, 2003).

The birth of self-determination as a concept in international relations can be traced back to the "Fourteen Points" of Woodrow Wilson. Wilson had in mind to allow independence to the separate nations in the Balkans which had been victims of the politics of balance of power that dominated the European international relations; however, the concept extended further (Matsuno, 2014). For example, in the case of Aaland Island, the Commission of Rapoteurs in the League of Nations found that "separation of a minority from the state of which it forms part ... may only be considered as an altogether exceptional solution, a last resort when the state lacks either the will or the power to enact and apply just and effective guarantees" (The Aaland Islands Question: Report Submitted to the Council of the League of Nations by the Commission of Rapoteurs in 1921, cited in Matsuno, 2014). After World War II, the notion of self-determination developed into a right with the two international covenants on human rights in 1966, namely the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, both of which declared in Article 1 that all peoples have the right of self-determination.

The final step towards the conceptualization of self-determination in the area of international relations was the UN World Conference on Human Rights in 1993. The Declaration contains a provision, referred to as a "safeguard clause," that reiterates the principle of the territorial integrity of states, but places a number of conditions on that affirmation. The Declaration authorizes the violation of territorial integrity if states are not "in compliance with the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples as described and thus possessed of a government representing the whole people belonging to the territory without any kind of distinction". An elaborate interpretation of this provision suggests that if peoples cannot exercise their right to self-determination internally because their government oppresses them, or does not represent them, then they may exercise that right externally through secession (Roethke, 2011).

In order to prevent the proliferation of demands for secession, Article 6 of the “Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples” stipulate that “any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations”. Together with principles of non-interference between sovereign states in each other’s internal affairs and respect for (former) colonial borders, this article gave a strong foundation for not granting the right to self-determination to groups seeking to break away within already independent states; therefore, this was the way with which self-determination became limited to decolonizing states after World War II and paths to independence became foreclosed to groups within these newly independent states (Roethke, 2011).

There are a lot of theories about self-determination and separatism to discuss, but this is not the purpose or the subject of this article. Shortly, in order to better understand the drivers of a secessionist movement and, broadly, the secession of South Sudan, it must be said that most theories of separatism focus on the behavior of groups or, occasionally, of their leaders. They typically identify conditions which would either hamper or fuel the desire of sub-national groups to leave the country, whereby groups and their leaders weigh the costs and benefits of exit against those of remaining within the state (Bartkus 1999; Sorens, 2005). This decision is influenced by several important drivers, like political, economic, and cultural factors.

Among the political factors that influence the secessionist movement, Boyle & Englebert discuss about the level of democratization, discrimination, state failure and changes in the international environment (Boyle & Englebert, 2008). The politics of neighboring states and their willingness to support insurgencies would also alter the costs and benefits of separatist activism. Finally, having once had a separate existence as a state, or currently being a separate administrative unit (state, province, etc.), may well promote a distinct identity and a desire to secede.

Democracy can theoretically affect separatism in two ways. On the one hand, democratic regimes offer minorities the possibility to make their voice heard through vote and presumably some protection, thereby generating loyalty, and making it less likely that they will seek to secede (Hirschman 1970). On the other hand, democratic transitions can exacerbate existing ethnic dynamics and tensions and favor state disintegration as happened in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, or former Yugoslavia (Saideman 1998). Rather than the nature of the regime, the extent and intensity of political change may matter a lot for separatism. Political transitions often make states vulnerable and can create climates that fuel the separatist movements (Laitin 2001). Saideman observed that periods of democratization and economic transition led to intensified ethnic identities and security dilemmas, which ultimately triggered secessionism (Saideman, 1998).

Groups will also seek to secede when they face eradication or they fear they would be “culturally annihilated” (Bartkus 1999). Furthermore, when the central state is weakened, overthrown or collapsed, its ability to resist and prevent a secessionist drive is of course greatly reduced. Saideman notes, for example, that periods of democratization and economic transition impact internal ethnic dynamics, leading to intensified ethnic identities and security dilemmas which ultimately “drive” secessionism (Saideman, 1995).

Ethnic Diasporas may also contribute to a secessionist sentiment as they tend to keep grievances alive, offer rebel support and provide funding to local organizations (Collier & Hoeffler, 2002). Similarly, Laitin argues that the existence of a new state with a rebellious ethnic minority which has a national homeland elsewhere may provide sufficient conditions for this minority to seek independence (Laitin, 2001).

Although the ethnic factors are the most commonly cited causes and drivers of secessionist movements, more recent studies highlighted the impact of economy and other variables like per capita income and availability of natural resources for a separatist movement (Boyle & Englebert, 2008). As an intrinsic part of the recent literature on civil conflicts, many theories of separatism have a substantial economic component (Englebert, 2003). Separatist regions are usually believed to differ from the rest of the country in terms of wealth or available natural resources. Discriminatory economic policies from the central state toward its regions may also affect the costs and benefits of allegiance or exit.

There seems to be no consensus, however, on what aspects of income may be most strongly associated with secessionist tendencies, with some authors stressing that poorer regions are more likely to break up (Bookman, 1992) and others that secessionist sentiments develop in regions that are wealthier than the rest of the state (Hale, 2000). No matter the inequality, secessions seem to arise from a perception of economic injustice, which leads a region to re-evaluate the costs or benefits of belonging to a national union (Bookman, 1992). The question of the relationship between separatism and gross income levels is somewhat more complex as Collier and Hoeffler provide empirical evidence that overall low per capita income and slow growth rates are major secessionist risk factors, because they exacerbate the grievances of various groups and reduce the opportunity costs of warfare (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002). Similarly, they linked the risk of secession to the lack of education, as lesser educated citizens tend more likely to embrace the nationalist ideas and to be recruited into secessionist movements for lack of better lifestyle alternatives, like the case of Anya Nya and SPLA in South Sudan.

The availability of natural resources, mainly oil, also appears to be an important factor in separatist conflicts. Collier and Hoeffler suggested that oil is particularly prevalent in secessionist civil wars (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002) and Michael Ross identified several case studies linking oil and other minerals to separatist conflicts, including Cabinda in

Angola, the Burma independence movements, Katanga in Congo, Aceh and West Papua in Indonesia, Bougainville in Papua New Guinea, and South Sudan (Ross, 2003). Ross drew a line between natural resources for which foreign investment was needed, and those that required little or no foreign investments. In the former case, he argued that the likelihood of secession is bigger “since locals can only attract this investment if their territory achieves recognition as a sovereign state”, this being the case of South Sudan (Ross, 2003). This statement looks very sharp and correct if we look at the foreign investments that were made before and after South Sudan’s independence, investments which will be presented during the second part of this article.

The last of the three major factors which can influence separatist movements, and the most perceived as main source of civil conflicts, is represented by the cultural issues. Ethnic, linguistic, and religious heterogeneity are frequently invoked to promote secessions. Government repression of certain cultural groups, even in relatively homogeneous national environments, is also believed to encourage them to seek their own political fortunes (Boyle & Englebert, 2008). Whether ethnic, linguistic, or religious, numerous scholars have posited that cultural pluralism within a country will increase the number of secessionist claims. But heterogeneity is not the only dimension of identity that may matter. Sambanis suggested that the size of the ethnic groups also mattered, as larger ethnic groups may be better able to overcome the problems associated with mounting a rebellion and better able to defend their territory (Sambanis, 2000). “The presence of a few large groups, rather than one dominant one or a multitude of small ones, may also increase the level of social polarization and competition for political control, encouraging some groups to opt out of the system”. Horowitz offered a more complex approach to the effects of ethnicity on secessionism, focusing primarily on the relationship between ethnic groups and regions, and looking at the different combinations of backward or advanced groups in backward or advanced regions. For him, the “relative group position” combined with the “relative regional position” determines the conditions for secessionist movements (Horowitz, 1985). For him it is the issue of ethnic polarization in relation to territorial dynamics that provides the context for secessionist tensions, with ethnic anxieties as the key drivers. Horowitz argues that secessionist movements are triggered by the regional dynamics of different groups in relation to the state, and that backward groups in backward regions are the most prone to secessionist movements (Horowitz, 1985).

Another important theory on conflict and conflict management is John Burton’s human needs theory. This approach claims that ethnic groups fight because they are denied both their biological and psychological needs in relation to growth and development. These include people’s need for identity, security, recognition, participation, and autonomy. This theory provides a plausible explanation of ethnic conflicts in Africa, where such needs are not easily met by undemocratic regimes (Burton, 1997).

Those were the three major factors that can influence a group desire to secede, but there are some others as important, like the structure of a country, meaning age, size, and geographical features. African states are very young to begin with. With newly independent countries less integrated than their predecessors, youth may be a factor predisposing to separatism. Intuitively, the younger a country, the less likely it is to have already passed through the growing pains of nation-building and national integration and the more vulnerable it may be to dismemberment (Boyle & Englebert, 2006).

Regarding the size of the country, Sambanis, for example, found a positive correlation between population size multiplied by ethnic heterogeneity and state partitions. He concluded that the larger a country and its population, the greater its potential for breakup. Also, following Collier and Hoeffler's argument, the greater a country's population, the more young men it will have (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002). Finally, Laitin suggested that rough terrain, and particularly hills or mountains at the perimeter of the state should favor all types of insurgencies by improving rebels' military prospects (again a statement which can be verified in Sudan with the rebels in the Nuba Mountains).

After this short literature review about secessionism and its drivers, I want to answer the question of this article. The answer is a clear YES. Why? The answer is quite simple: because all the other methods failed or were not implemented by the central government (like federalism, autonomy) and all the factors presented above were present before the eruption of the two civil wars.

North-South tensions go back decades, even before Sudan's independence in 1956, with deep roots in the ancient and medieval history of the zone. Missionaries converted the region to Christianity in the 6th century, but the influx of Muslim Arabs eventually controlled the area and replaced Christianity with Islam. During the 16th century, a people called the Funj conquered much of Sudan, and several other black African groups settled in the South, including the Dinka, Nuer, and Azande. The historical contact between the North and the South incidentally happened to be a racial contact between Arabs and the Africans. It also happened to be a bitter and bloody contact for the southerners. In 1821 -81, the Arab North was conquered and ruled by Egypt until it was overthrown by Mahdi. It was during this era (1821-98) that the North came into direct contact with the South. The North was in search of ivory and slaves. There was no government to control law and order so every slave trader from the North was free to do whatever they wanted. They raided villages for slaves, stole and raided cattle, and imposed their customs on the Southern tribes. It was during this period when the British administration was established in Sudan with its seat of Government in Khartoum. Egyptians conquered Sudan in 1874, and after Britain occupied Egypt in 1882, it took over Sudan in 1898, ruling the country in conjunction with Egypt.

Britain and Egypt jointly administered Sudan from 1899 until its independence in 1956. The British found an overwhelmingly Muslim society in the North. Wealth, power, and

high social status were concentrated in the hands of the Arabs, who were primarily located around the Nile Valley and centered in Khartoum, and whose identity was marked not only by the fluency in Arabic and immersion in Arab culture, but also by their affiliation to Arab lineages, clans, and tribes. British authorities treated the south provinces as a separate region, and barred northern Sudanese from entering or working in the South. In the early 1920's, the British passed the Closed Districts Ordinances, which stipulated that passports were required for travel between the two zones, and permits were required to conduct business from one area into the other. In the South, English, Dinka, Bari, Nuer, and Azande were official languages, while in the north, Arabic and English were used as official languages. The British justified this „closed door“ policy by claiming that the South was not ready for exposure to the modern world, but in fact the plan was to create a buffer zone in Southern Sudan against any Islamic expansion into Africa's inland. As a result, the South remained isolated under British rule (Deng, 1994). In 1930 they introduced what they named the Southern Policy aimed at erecting and enforcing barriers to the penetration of Northerners into the South not only through religion but also through commerce. This condominium policy for Southern Sudan in 1930 stated that „[...] the approved policy is to act upon the fact that the peoples of the Southern Sudan are distinctively African and Negroid, and that our obvious duty is therefore to push ahead as fast as we can with their economic and educational development on African and Negroid line and not upon the Middle-eastern and Arab lines of progress which are suitable for the Northern Sudan. It is only by economic and educational development that these people can be equipped to stand up for themselves in the future, whether their lot can be eventually cast with the Northern Sudan or with East Africa or partly with each“ (Deng, 1994).

In the South, the administration aimed to build up a series of self-contained tribal units with structure and organization based upon indigenous customs, traditional practices, and beliefs, by isolating the South from Northern economic development and cultural influence, with the intention of integrating the South with British East Africa. The vast majority of infrastructure developments, such as the „Gezira“ irrigation scheme, the cotton industry, and most of the modern railways, were all built in the North. Consequently, the preponderance of commercial activity was concentrated in the Northern region. By contrast, the South remained in total poverty. The South had only one role to play: that of producer of raw materials. They became the workers, and even slaves, of the Northerners. As a result, the South remained isolated under British rule.

The situation was the same even after 1946, when North and South Sudan were merged, the majority of political and administrative power was allocated to the North, leaving many in the South resentful. Southern Sudanese believed they were not part of the North. It was only unfortunate for them that the colonizing powers reversed this policy in 1945 as follows: „[...] The policy of the Sudanese government regarding Southern Sudan is to

act upon the fact that the peoples of the Southern Sudan are distinctively African and Negroid, but that geography and economics combine (so far as can be foreseen at the present time) to render them inextricably bound for future development to the Middle Eastern and Arabized Northern Sudan, and therefore to ensure that their educational and economic development will equip them to stand up for themselves in the future as socially and economically the equals of their partners of Northern Sudan in the Sudan of the future" (Deng, 1994). A lot of people say that the most important reason for which ethnic groups want and try to secede in Africa is due to the colonial legacy left by the European powers. Until this point of Sudan's history I am inclined to say this is true because, as shown above, the entire situation was created by the British authorities, leading to a single result – the South remained isolated under British rule. But in the following pages we will see that all the policies implemented in the area after the end of the British rule failed to improve the situation in the South. Agreements were signed and broken by the North, Islam was imposed on the Christian and Animist South, different arrangements on autonomy or federalism failed from the start, all in all leading to a prolonged war of nearly half a century.

In the lead up to independence, in 1956, the South initiated a rebellion motivated by fears of further marginalization. The civil war began in 1955 before the Sudan became officially independent, while the transfer of power from the British to the Northern administrators was in transit. Due to the political uncertainty, Southern insurgents from the Equatoria Corps mutinied at Torit (a district in East Equator) and this sparked off the separatist movement Land Freedom Army, or better known as the Anya-Nya guerrilla movement, which later emerged to form the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SSLM/A) (Poggo, 2009). When the Anya-Nya escalated their attacks, a low intensity civil war started against the newly formed Government of Sudan, with the aim of achieving autonomy for the South. The guerrillas began to burn villages and arrest and torture Northern administrators in the South, as a symbol of increased opposition to the government. This was met with further repressive action by the North, which only added fuel to the conflict (Johnson, 2003; DeRouen, 2007). Regarding this timing, right before and after the independence, Horowitz presented empirical evidence that suggested that the largest number of secessionist movements emerged from backward groups in backward areas. Such movements mostly developed shortly after independence due to the fact that members of the group or region felt that they would not benefit from the post-independence political and economic arrangements. In relation to the position of advanced groups or/and parts, backward groups in backward regions perceive themselves to be at a severe disadvantage and that their best chance for being able to pursue a secure and decent quality of life would be to secede (Horowitz, 1985).

In November, 1958, the political leaders of the North decided to hand over power to a military junta after a bloodless army coup led by General Ibrahim Abboud. On his as-

suming power, General Abboud declared that he would rule through a thirteen member army junta and that democracy was being suspended in Sudan in the name of “honesty and integrity”. It was intended and hoped that military brutality would silence the South. Instead of doing this, it hardened the determination of the South to fight tooth and nail for their self-determination. Between 1960-1964, the Arabization and Islamization programs took shape in the South. Over thirty missionaries were expelled from the South and their centers turned into government schools where Arabic became the main subject of learning: Arab history books and religious books were introduced into the schools. Arab teachers from the North were brought to the southern schools to teach Arabic and other subjects including Islamic religion. Many more Islamic schools known as “Khalwas” were built in the south to Arabize and Islamize the southern children.

Similarly, the southern workers in the government institutions were forced to either become Muslims or lose their jobs. They were given Islamic names and jallabia gowns (Yokwe, 1997). Mosques built by the government sprang up here and there throughout the southern towns for Islamic prayers and conversion of southerners into Islam. Friday was declared the public holiday of the week instead of Sunday. Nyombe explains that General Abboud’s great sense of nationalism, religious, and ethnic prejudice blinded him with regard to Sudan’s religious and ethnic diversities, and to the strong psychological barriers that had long existed between North and South. He perceived that the way to achieving national cohesion was by clearing Sudan from any colonial footprints and creating a homogeneous Arab nation; a nation with one language (Arabic), one religion (Islam), one culture (Arab-Muslim culture), and most importantly, one race (Arab).

Unfortunately for the North, the reaction of the southerners has always been contrary. The southerners became more hardened and more determined in their resistance against the Arabization and Islamization program (Nyombe, 1994). Muhammad Gaafar al-Numeri, who came to power through a bloodless military coup d’état in 1969, ended the war by granting the South a degree of local autonomy which often was considered a compromise between a minority aiming at self-determination and a state protecting its territorial integrity. In February 1972, The Addis Ababa Agreement was signed between the North and the South after Numeri had declared openly after taking over government that the South is indeed different from the North geographically, historically, socio culturally and economically. The Addis Ababa Agreement represented a series of compromises aimed at appeasing the SSLM/A leaders after the first civil war proved costly to the Government of Sudan. The SSLM/A wanted a full federal structure; however, after long lasting negotiations, the South were pleased that the government granted them autonomy for their Southern region composed of the three provinces of Equatoria, Bahr al Ghazal, and Upper Nile. This autonomy was under a regional president, appointed by the national president who would be responsible for all aspects of the government in the area except areas of significant importance such as defense,

foreign affairs, currency and finance, economic and social planning, and interregional concerns which remained under the Government of Sudan control (Collins, 2008).

The agreement also recognized Arabic as Sudan's official language, and English as the South's principal language, which would be used in administration and would be taught in schools. However, the agreement did not reach an effective compromise between North and South for long-term stable peace. After a decade of relative peace, in 1983 the agreement was cut-off by the then-president of Sudan, Gaafar Nimeriy, who imposed the Sharia law in the South as part of his commitment to the spread of Islam. A variety of factors, the most important one being the discovery of oil in the Upper Nile region of Sudan, led Numeiri to dissolve the Southern Regional Government in 1981 and to abandon many of the principles of the Ababa agreement. The South's economic significance to the North was the main drive that led Nimeiri to infringe the Addis Ababa agreement causing civil war to escalate once again but on a larger scale. Ismail al-Azhari made it clear as early as 1940 that the South's agricultural land was of great importance to the economic prosperity of the North, upon which they needed to build and maintain their regime power, identity and prosperity. This therefore could be sufficient reason to the North's long resistance the South secession and their determination to create a united state. Furthermore, with the oil development in the South and linking this to the fact that the Southern government was entitled to funds received from its natural resources under the Addis Agreement, they quickly let foreign oil companies to explore the region. Indeed United States oil company Chevron Incorporated agreed to explore Southern Sudan in 1974 and in 1978 and discovered significant oil reserves, especially in Heglig area, that would generate high revenues for the development of the Southern region (Amnesty International, 2000) and maybe forge a threat to the prosperity of the North. The Heglig find created an especially dangerous situation, because it was located in an area where the boundary was particularly ill-defined and was thus claimed, then and now, by both North and South.

Numeri decreed the country to be an Islamic country to be ruled by the Islamic Sharia Law. He suspended the Southern Executive Council, divided the Southern provinces into separate regions, tampered with the political boundaries to annex the oil rich Bentiu southern county to the North, transferred the Southern military command to the North without prior consultation with the Southern Sudanese Government and the senior officers. Such actions from a Northern leader like Numeri meant a lot to the southerners. They took it as a betrayal and violation of the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972.

The second war then broke out again in 1983 with the SPLM/A as a main actor to affirm the right to self-determination of the South. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) adopted a revolutionary discourse, proclaiming as its primary goal the building of a new united Sudan, which would ensure justice and equality for all regions and citizens (Berghof Foundation for Peace Support, 2006). The South's grievances were

treated within a national framework of underdevelopment and un-equal development, though the marginalization of the South was singled out as comparatively more intense in degree and form. This speech appealed to non-Arab population groups of other marginalized areas in the North and became yet more appealing after the Nimeiri regime took repressive Islamization policies in September 1983. Therefore, the SPLM/A found fertile ground for its revolutionary actions and pushed its military operations into the Southern Blue Nile, Southern Kordofan, and the Nuba Mountains. Instability in the North increased after Nimeiri was overthrown in 1985. His deposition was followed by a period of civilian rule and another coup d'état in 1993 that brought to power an alliance of military leaders and Islamist extremists under the presidency of Omar al-Bashir. Under al-Bashir's leadership, the new military government suspended political parties and introduced the Sharia code at a national level. Sudan had a difficult relationship with many of its neighbors and with much of the international community, because of its radical Islamic position. Consequently, the majority of Sudan's neighbors accused President Bashir for supporting Islamic rebels in Egypt (the assassination attempt against Hosni Mubarak), Eritrea, Uganda or Chad (on December 23, 2005, Chad declared war on Sudan and accused the country of being the „common enemy of the nation“). As it considered it a safe haven for terrorism, the U.S. began to list Sudan on its famous list of State Sponsors of Terrorism (Berghof Foundation for Peace Support, 2006).

The signing of the CPA in 2005 put an end to open North-South warfare, but all the other problems continued to exist. The CPA proposed some major changes like democratization of government, de-centralization of decision-making, wealth-sharing between different regions and the recognition of Sudan's socio-cultural diversity (Copnall, 2014). In the same time, the CPA offered a „Plan B“, in case these transformations would fail. Southern Sudan was given a final option: at the end of a six-year interim period, a referendum would be held over the question of self-determination. The fact that an overwhelming majority of southerners opted for independence in 2011 vote was testament both to the failure of the CPA in fundamentally changing the nature of the Sudanese state and to the festering wounds caused by the decades of injustice and violence that had preceded the peace agreement.

Part of the challenge posed by the CPA implementation stems from the way in which the agreement has been structured as a tool for achieving conditional unity on the basis of certain tasks to be fulfilled to enable the building of trust between the two parts of the country. The CPA was envisaged as a tool for the democratic transformation of the system of governance in the country (Deng & El-Affendy, 2010). It was also seen as providing a framework and basic principles for resolving other regional conflicts. While compromises have been made by the parties that have introduced notable changes to the national governance system, the CPA has not yet fulfilled its promise of radical democratic change (Idris, 2006).

While the agreement devolves responsibilities and offers opportunities to all parties, it also poses immense risks, precisely because it is an open arrangement, having left many things contingent on the development of mutual trust (Deng & El-Affendi, 2010). Although the CPA stipulates that unity is a priority, it has indirectly favored separation as a possible easy solution if and when it proves too difficult to reconcile the two contrasting systems for the North and the South. The “One Country, Two Systems” formula (which endorsed the NCP Islamic-oriented system in the North while enshrining a secular system for the South) was intended to combine the two systems in a framework of unity in diversity. Paradoxically, however, it entrenched the differences, with an asymmetrical form of unity at the national level that is inherently unattractive to the South (Deng & El-Affendi, 2010). It is now fair to say, after almost ten years since the signing of the CPA that all parties, including the international community, have underestimated the magnitude of the tasks that needed to be tackled and overestimated the existing capacities to deal with them. The CPA has set all parties monumental tasks of legal, political and economic transformation which would have taxed the most advanced and harmonious political system, even if the political will and a spirit of cooperation existed (Deng & El-Affendi, 2010).

On top of that, all parties did not reckon with the “Darfur Factor”. The severe and complicated Darfur crisis sapped the energy of the central government and distracted the international community, with the result that the CPA was almost entirely neglected. Related to this, and more important, the Darfur crisis and its aftermath meant that the peace dividend was slow to materialize, given that the international community continues to hold back on the massive reconstruction aid promised (Esposito & Crocker, 2004).

In spite of its obvious strengths of offering unprecedented opportunities for the Sudanese people to attain a lasting peace, the CPA also has several weaknesses, which must be resolved in order to achieve the long awaited goal. The most important strong point is that the CPA brought an end to the war. The agreement attempted to deal with the root causes of the conflict, especially those related to the system of governance by ensuring the right of self-determination for the South. By agreement on equitable sharing of power and wealth, the CPA has been a catalyst for other marginalized regions to continue their armed struggle to achieve their long denied rights. On the other hand, the most important CPA weakness is that it leaves all the doors open for a power struggle, not only between the two signatories, but also among all the political factions all over the country, possibly by a polarization along an Arab – Islamic axis as opposed to a national – secular one.

As the CPA was mainly an accord between the two parties at war, it neither considered other actors in the political sphere, nor attempted to deal with all the major issues in the special areas at the border. Very few people in North, as yet, feel that the CPA is really owned by the Sudanese nation as a whole because it mainly addresses the issues

pertaining to South Sudan, with little, if any, reference to those of North Sudan (Berghof Foundation for Peace Support, 2006). The vote, however, failed to address many issues which remain unresolved even today. Border demarcation is particularly problematic, as 20% of the new border has not yet been agreed upon. Tens of thousands of refugees have fled conflict areas, and post-independence citizenship complications have become a major issue with an estimated 2 million South Sudanese living in the North. Moreover, the logistics of splitting oil revenues and the 38 billion dollars national debt have yet to be worked out.

In the same time, the state failing in dealing with its own internal problems is shown in the political, economic, and cultural problems arisen after the independence in 1956. As revealed at the beginning of the article, these problems represent drivers for the secessionist movements. Sudan inherited a highly centralized authoritarian governance system and a pattern of uneven development from colonialism. These structural elements shaped the later development of the modern Sudanese state and contributed to the economic, social, and cultural marginalization of the regions. The operating principle of this structure is exploitative centre-periphery relations, expressed in urban biased economic policies, which have instigated conflicts that threaten national unity.

The emergence of the national level conflicts was closely related to the creation of the modern Sudanese nation-state after the independence. The political elite to whom the British-Egyptian colonial rule left control of the state came from a narrow elite, which mobilized political support along sectarian lines. This elite institutionalized traditional racism against black people and confronted the issues of Sudan's diversity and unequal development by attempting to build a national identity based on the principles of Arab culture and the religion of Islam. The centralized authoritarian governance system is constituted of two components or sub-systems, which interact and reinforce each other. They are, firstly, the centralized hereditary religious sectarian political parties; secondly, the vertically and horizontally highly-centralized state power in the executive branch dominates the legislature and judiciary. In this system, the localities are completely marginalized. The religious-sectarian parties lack democratic structures and representatives of women, youth, and marginalized groups in their leadership. The centrism of the government structure and power characterizes all the three types of government system, with which Sudan has experimented, namely the local government system, the regional government system, and a federal system in the whole of Sudan.

Since the regional and federal systems were established by authoritarian military regimes under one party rule and the domination of the security organs, the autonomy of the regions was null (Berghof Foundation for Peace Support, 2006).

No subunits were able to execute their duties because of the lack of funding and the fact that governors, administrators, and political decision-makers in the subunits were in practice imposed by the central government and the ruling party. In this order, the

President combines the offices of Head of State and Leader of the Ruling Party. In this top-down governance system, lower government units can be instituted, overridden, have their powers withdrawn, or even abolished by the central government. Periodic promises of federalism to the South have never been honored by the Northern ruling elites.

Internal and external interests in Sudan's natural resources (especially oil, water, land, gold, timber, and livestock) are a core issue of the conflict in Sudan. Both access to, and control over these resources, have been key motivational factors for actors at all levels to stay involved in the violent conflicts. Northern Sudan is dependent on the more fertile areas of the South. Furthermore, internal and external interests in Sudan's oil resources and Egypt's dependence on water from the Nile (running through Southern Sudan) are key factors influencing national level politics. This dependence on natural resources from the Southern parts of Sudan is the main reason why the centre has always opposed Southern self-governance and independence. Land is a central issue to all rural peoples in Sudan. It is a source of basic survival, as well as a source of individual and tribal pride. The government's policies of land expropriation for substantial investment in mechanized schemes and oil areas took place in the name of development, but had devastating consequences for the agrarian and pastoral population in the affected areas in places like Renk in Northern Upper Nile, Unity state in Western Upper Nile region, and the Nuba Mountains (Berghof Foundation for Peace Support, 2006).

The racial and religious distinctions between Arabs and Africans or Blacks and between Muslims and Christians or non-Muslims are perceived as synonymous with the distinction between friend and enemy in the overall civil war. The radical positions and racism experienced on all sides today are the results of the deliberate exploitation and manipulations of communal loyalties by those who have an interest in promoting conflict. This has been evident in the national level conflicts, in the factional warfare within the South and the conflicts at grass-root level. The Government of Sudan (GoS) and the SPLM/A have assembled along communal lines and have contributed to strengthening communal antagonisms. For instance, the GoS mobilized Northern Muslims for the jihad against the Dinka, Nuba and others who have been portrayed as threats to Islam.

At the beginning of this article, I said that the South secession was the only way to end the conflict with the North. All the history presented in the past pages and all the factors which influenced the partition show that the South secession was inevitable, but the most important aspect of my answer is the present situation between the two countries. The two nations agreed, in March 2013, to resume cross-border oil flows and take steps to defuse tension that has plagued them since South Sudan seceded from Sudan in July. The two sides subsequently agreed to restart oil shipments, grant each other's' citizens residency, increase border trade, and encourage close cooperation between their central banks. Both nations also withdrew their troops from border areas as agreed in a

deal brokered by the African Union in September. And most importantly, the fighting stop and there are no more victims due to the armed conflict between the two nations.

However, even with this good news about the improved relationship with Sudan, the South's secession raises a lot of internal problems in the world's newest state. On December 15, 2013, fighting broke out in the capital city of Juba between soldiers loyal to President Salva Kiir on the one hand and former Vice-President Riek Machar on the other. The conflict quickly spread across the country and has now displaced approximately 800,000 people and claimed more than ten thousand lives (Gebreluel & Tronvoll, 2014). Independent South Sudan furthermore came to existence through international diplomacy, and has so far mostly operated through petrodollars. The experiences of Eritrea and Somaliland, presented by Gebreluel & Tronvoll illustrated that state-building is a national political exercise, a process where less external interference might be better. Access to foreign money created few incentives to deal with the lack of organizational cohesion or create accountable relationships with the local population – thus paving the way for the break-out of conflict between the two factions in the SPLA (Gebreluel & Tronvoll, 2014).

I started this article with the question if separatism was the right solution for the SudanSouth Sudan conflict, and the answer was „yes“. I used the bloody history between the two nations in order to continue with my answer, in trying to find out if the source of the problem was the British colonial legacy, which separated the North from the South, or if it was more a problem of internal affairs and the failure of the central government to address and resolve the problems that drove the conflict forward. Again, the answer was simple because of the local realities. Even if the British rule and its condominium with Egypt shaped different identities and ideologies between North and South, after 1956, the central government from Kartoum had the power to change things. But most importantly, after this article we can conclude that tribes or religions are not our real problems. The real problem in Sudan was corruption and bad governance, which led the central authorities to see that the only way for peace to endure was to make sure that there was sense of belonging, fairness, and justice for all.

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