Reframing Narratives of State Building in Africa: Lessons from South Sudan.

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DRAFT Report

Contents

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Overview

The Sudan peace process and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement/CPA/ of 2005 did not realize viable state and sustainable peace in south Sudan. South Sudan is a deeply divided state under a divided and politically immature ruling party and instead of reducing conflict, independence served to intensify the internal divisions as the SPLM elite competed over control of the state. Four years after becoming an independent state, South Sudan is experiencing a multifaceted crisis that has its epicentre in the SPLM led government, but finds reflection in all spheres of governance and the SPLA.

From its origins in the *Derg* dominated Ethiopia to its rise to power the SPLM/A pursued political objectives at odds with the sentiment of South Sudanese which has defined, for better or worse, the trajectory of peace and state building. The analysis in this research argues that the political conditions for durable state and peace building have not existed and do not appear imminent. It is not happenstance that peace and state building have become problematic and the country had entered another phase of a violent conflict. Torn between conflicting ideologies and weak institutional base the SPLM/A chose to ignore, often suppress, the dominant popular narratives of statehood in South Sudan and ended up only holding power without an overarching peace and state building agenda. The results of this were all too apparent in the recent eruption of a violent conflict. This study is about exploring these relationships and their mutually reinforcing attributes in the context of the ever changing security and political landscape in the newly declared African country. The anticipated outcome is a researched, deep and an advanced analysis of the challenges of peace and state building in South Sudan.

Approach and methodology

This research in the first instance is evidently based on years of engagement with South Sudan. However, accessing written sources and documents from recent years about the views of South Sudanese on state and peace building will form an integral part of the methodology. As a result, while referring to the limited relevant literature, this study will be largely based on discussions and conversations with a range of people, mostly

political leaders and activists carried out in recent years. The research will make use of the wealth of data compiled from South Sudanese, at all levels in the ten states of South Sudan, which served as inputs for the development of a National Security Strategy for the Republic of South Sudan. The relevant documents point to the competing narratives and trajectories of peace and state building in the youngest African state.

The outbreak of fighting in Juba and beyond in December 2013 makes the preparation of this paper considerably more difficult because a follow-on field research is not probable though this could be compensated by the author's eye witness account weeks before the latest conflict began and a couple of visits to Juba afterwards. As a result this research will be submitted in two parts: the first and major portion will be based on the historical background that had defined trajectories of state and peace building, particularly the origin and political development of the SPLM/A, and the second and shorter submission will attempt to bring together some of the major themes of the post-independence political and governance issues with the background research and construct an over-reaching analysis and conclusions. The challenge of a paper of this nature is to appreciate the significance of the flurry of events, but not be overwhelmed by them and keep the analysis geared to the big picture and processes.

Theoretical starting points.

In this section the narratives of statehood in south Sudan will be analysed through the prism of Sudan as one of the conquest states in Africa, the origin and political development of the SPLM/A,and the broader context of liberation movements in Africa.

Sudan as one of the conquest states in Africa

The war of liberation in South Sudan, the Anyanya movement of the 1960s and the emergence of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM/A) is largely influenced by the peculiar history of the Sudan as one of the **Conquest States** (besides Ethiopia) in Africa. The process of state formation is compounded by expansion, repression, marginalization and even racism. Ethiopia and Sudan emerged as a conquest states in the 19th century, their boundaries and ethnic makeup marked by where their respective armies had reached at the time the scramble for Africa. There are structural reasons for why the liberation movements in Sudan came to be driven by a particular narrative including the militarization of governance prominent among which is the

relationship between centre and periphery and the contested legitimacy of states. To this effect the civil wars in Sudan have all been primarily between historic centre and marginalized peripheries and statehood in has been associated with the exploitation of peripheries by the centre. Sometimes that exploitation has been extremely rapacious and violent glued with racist and religious undertones. A point to highlight is that centre-periphery relations have been determined by the ethnic and religious character of the group that controls the state. No wonder the survival of the state was ensured through the imposition of imperial power over peoples to the South and West of its Centre in Khartoum which resulted in a deeply unequal political structure in which power was derived from the Muslim-Arab riverine elite.

Conversely, the specific contours of state formation also ensured the peculiar contradiction of the Sudanese state which came to be violently resisted and challenged by armed ethnic organizations. The Sudan expanded as an extension of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium on the regions numerous ethnic groups, many of which had previously had little if any association with the imperial regime. This defined the identity of the state as perceived by and eventually challenged by ethno-nationalist forces. It easily became the basis for the differing experiences and contrasting narratives of the state and a harbinger to violent wars of liberation.

Probably an extension of this is the prevalence of 'divide and rule' militarized strategies for control in the Horn's frontier regions which has implications for interstate relations and repercussions for domestic state and peace building agendas. Hence, a long detected characteristic of state and peace building processes in the Horn of Africa is the doctrine of mutual proxy destabilization, or the practice of governmental or other forces supporting opposition groups in neighbouring states. [1]Peace and state building in south Sudan, particularly in the post-independence era, cannot be fully documented without considering the nature of 'mutual interventions'. And the Sudan has been the nadir of this strategy in Africa, much beyond the adjacent areas. Sudanese strategy of proxy destabilization in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda, Chad, the Central Africa Republic/CAR/ and as far as Libya is a good case in point.

The SPLM/A within the Broader Context of Liberation Movements in Africa

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[1] Cliffe, 1999.

The second most important starting point which is linked with the above is the SPLM as an African Liberation Movement. Although not engaged in a struggle against colonialism, the twenty-two year long war of the SPLM/A resembles the liberation movements that Africa gave birth to a generation earlier than the post-independence ones. But unlike the earlier ones, which had a strong political component, it quickly mutated into a largely military organization. The SPLM/A is different construct, definitely in eastern Africa. While its focus on armed struggle distances itself from other liberation movements like the African National Congress its failure to link its struggle with a strong political agenda distances it from other liberation movements in Uganda, Ethiopia and Eritrea. The SPLM/A is in its own category as a liberation movement in between those in Southern (and many parts of) Africa and the Horn of Africa.[2] This had impacted on its weak organizational and political character and made it less prepared to mobilize the Southern population for a political project.

Again, the SPLM/A remains distinct because the other movements in the Horn won decisive military victories, while the SPLM/A came to power through international pressure and a negotiated settlement which continued to complicate peace and state building agenda in South Sudan after 2005. Not to mention the fact that this provided a lee way for the north to implement its destabilization strategy. The political weakness and organizational fitness of the SPLM/A can be another starting point to analyze the trajectory of state and peace building in south Sudan. This level of analysis might take as to a different set of theoretical assumptions about what is referred to as 'bandit rationality'. I am tempted to argue that the origin and development of the SPLM might be closer to the 'roving bandits' and 'stationery bandits' analysis that to other liberation movements in power.[3] One would argue that the warlords of the SPLM/A have transitioned to stationery bandits by stealing all the resources of the emerging state. Commensurate to historical experiences the warlords had to claim legitimacy through the CPA and their thefts were distinguished from those of roving bandits only because

[2]The SPLM/A is in a different category in the Horn of African region. Unlike the TPLF and the EPLF, but in line with the practice in Uganda, the rebels of Southern Sudan drew the distinction between the SPLM and the SPLA

[3] The expression was forged by Mancur Olson in his analysis of the transition from anarchy to dictatorship.
Embezzled oil revenues here replace the taxes leveled by the stationary bandits in Olson's analysis. See Mancur Olson, "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development," The American Political Science Review 87, no. 3, September 1993, p. 567.

they took the form of continuing taxation rather than occasional plunder.[4] The relative comfort of this scenario would have been that the possible monopolization of theft and the protection of the tax-generating subjects would thereby eliminate anarchy and provide a fertile ground for peace and state building. The tragedy of the SPLM/A is however that it failed to achieve the monopolization of theft and avert anarchy.

The preoccupation of the new masters of south Sudan with greed and corruption must seem to outsiders like an accidental obsession. For as long as the SPLM/A has existed in the picture war making and profiteering were the norm and not the exception. Part of the reason may be that the group had to deal with how southern society is organized and cannot resist the temptation to make the most of it. But in all fairness there is more to it than that. The role of leadership coupled with external influence had a heavy toll on the nature of the organization as well. Leadership theory might give us a clue to what it meant to be a liberation movement in Sudan within the context of the Horn of African region. To the extent that a societal analysis is required the traditional and factional character of southern Sudanese society must be considered as well. Equally informative would be the attempt to impose liberal formulas of state and peace building into a traditional and deeply illiberal society and social base.

Once the theoretical assumptions and framework of analysis listed above and the origin and development of the SPLM/A are understood, one can begin to see the problems and complexities involved in state and peace building in south Sudan. Compounding this is the brief political history of south Sudan as an entity and the specific origins of the SPLM/A.

A short history of south Sudan

The history of south Sudan as a distinct geographic and political entity is a recent phenomenon. It was in the early 19th century that the Turko-Egyptian Administration began to mould the region known as "Bilad al Soda's"- the country of the blacks- into a modern state. The singular focus of foreign invaders to the present day south Sudan has been plunder of human (slavery) and natural resources. The Turks have set the standard that has been followed to some degree by the British and successive governments in Sudan which defined centre-periphery relations and the nature of

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[4] Ibid.P. 568.

liberation wars all over the country. A major aspect of analysis in the political economy of conflict is therefore the fact that Statehood throughout northeast Africa has been associated with the exploitation of peripheries by the centre. As hinted above often that exploitation has been, and remains to be, extremely rapacious and violent. However it was in the 20th century that the British began to treat the north and the south as two different entities. As a result the origins of separate political consciousness began to develop in the early 1920s. A contributing factor was the so-called southern policy of the British aimed at getting rid of Islamic-Arabic influence in the south.[5]

The political activism of the 1930s coupled with regional events such as the 1952 Egyptian Revolution led by Gemal Abdel Naser heightened political consciousness all over Sudan which culminated in the Torit uprising of August 18 1955 by southern soldiers. This is the precursor to the first phase of war of liberation in south Sudan, the Ananya I movement with the sole objective of liberating south Sudan from the yoke of Arab domination. The first civil war led to the Addis Ababa Agreement of February 27 1972 and a period of self-rule in south Sudan. It was also during this period that a common ground between the south and other marginalized peoples of Sudan began to take shape. This is critical due to the fact the struggle of the SPLM/A has been part and parcel of all the marginalized peoples in the Sudan with a significant impact on the framing of narratives of statehood.

The decade of self-rule (1973-1983) could be considered as the most important experience of the southern political elite in self-government and notions of liberal democracy. The period had also revealed the political divisions within the south with ethnic and regional undertones. Many shocked due to the call by some for the practical division of the South. Although there has always been a façade of unity, ethnic and sectorial tendencies overwhelmed the so-called the Kokora movement of the late 1970s, a harbinger of the quest by Equatorians for self-determination and strong federal system. According to the Equatorian political elite greater regionalization would remove what they referred to as 'Nilotic Influence' from Equatorian politics. Such a view is very much present in the emerging political discourse in south Sudan.[6] At the end of self-rule

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[5] Arp Madut-Arop.The Genesis of Political Consciousness in South Sudan.2012.
[6] A view led by the Equatorians such as the Equatoria Intellectuals Central Committee is prevalent to this day and constitutes a a category of its own in the political narratives and violent conflicts of the post-independence era.

and shortly before the launch of the second liberation led by the SPLM/A the division of the south had become the most hotly contested issue and tensions were high in the capital Juba.

Interestingly it is in reaction to political and military pressures by external forces, as during the Turko-Egyptian period and the British before them, that many southerners met their own specific narratives that have translated to political positions on how to govern south Sudan. The largest communities of southern Sudan, such as the Dinka's and the Nuer had developed their own narratives in the war of resistance against the encroachment of the British from northern Sudan and later during the second civil war.

Many in Equatoria alleged they have seen the first tests and instincts' of Dinka hegemony during self-rule and began to entertain 'decentralization' to fend of themselves from the perceived domination of the Nilotic people, particularly the Dinka.[7] Some reports indicate that many from Equatoria initially refused to join the SPLM/A which is viewed to this day as a Dinka-dominated organisation. [8]This served as a strong narrative to many of the non-Dinka ethnic groups particularly the Equatorians and continued to shape contradictory political developments and affect the nature of conflict in independent south Sudan. The call by Riek Machar for a federal system of government in the recent negotiations-which led to the Compromise Peace Agreement of August 2015- is not only a reminder of the perceived notion of Dinka domination prevalent among the Nuer but it is also intended to be a rallying point to mobilise the Equatorians and other Bantu tribes in south Sudan to his cause. It is fair to say that the issue of federalism is the single most important sticking point in the search for peace and the reconstruction of state in south Sudan. It is not a surprise that the Dinka's prefer a unitary state, with a semblance of administrative decentralisation.[9] The identity and course of a south Sudan state is still a bone of contention.

Be this as it may it is the internal contradictions and contradictory positions of the SPLM/A that takes the lion's share in the problems of peace and state building after independence. One of the main reasons many political commentators were surprised by

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[7] Even Joseph Lagu,a popular leader of the Ananya Movement and late one of the Chief Executives of South Sudan during self rule is believed to have called for the various tribes in south Sudan to unite against Dinka domination. Such a concern is very much alive in post-independence south Sudan,the more so in the current conflict.
[8] P.Adwok;p.28
[9] P.Adwok;p.21

the failure of the south Sudanese political elite is the failure to appreciate the gap between appearance and content in the SPLM/A. Indeed, this is at the centre of the current crisis. Evidently, the historical experience of the SPLM during the Southern civil war will be drawn upon to explain why it never developed a viable political party, and then turn to the present period to make clear the challenges faced in the much sought state building process problematic.

The SPLM/A: Origin and Development

Any attempt to understand the political direction of the SPLM/A must start in 1983 with the twist of coincidence around John Garang and Megistu's Ethiopia. And most of the political ailments of the SPLM/A derive from this as[10] Garang was quick to appreciate that the military regime in Ethiopia would lend him support if he formulates a programme that suits the interests of the *Derg* and its leader, Mengistu Haile Mariam. The *Derg* was fighting against Eritrean separatists and abhorred the idea of separatist movements.[11] Garang's SPLM/A in a clear departure from the popular mood among the southern community and the separatist agenda that guided the Anyanya during the course of South Sudan's first civil war endorsed a programme based on a united Sudan. And the united Sudan should be a Socialist one and the SPLM/A had to take all as one package. In the words of one of south Sudanese political leaders 'it appears the SPLM Manifesto of 1983 was not intended for the people of south Sudan'.[12]Despite the fact that the southern sentiment favoured a war based on a clear commitment of separation from the north, the SPLM/A adopted unity stance largely to please external allies.[13]

Arguably, the political objective of liberation from northern Arab/Muslim domination and the sensibilities of the largely religious and traditional minded southerners had been dampened by Garang's desire to acquire badly needed weapons[14] through which he was able to defeat his Anyanya II opponents who supported southern separation. The political developments of the SPLM/A should then be assessed and this will demonstrate the movement's ideological weakness and failure to establish a party with roots in the southern community. The point to emphasize here is that the SPLM/A as an

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[10] P.Adwok;p.30
[11] Lesch.A. The Sudan-Contested National Identities. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998).
[12] Discussions with P.Adwok.
[13] Discussions with SPLM/A representatives in Addis.
[14] Rolandsen, Oystein. Guerrilla Government: Political Changes in the Southern Sudan During the 1990's. Nordiska Afrikainstitute,2005;Adwok,Peter. The Politics of Liberation in South Sudan: An insider's View. Kampala:Fountain Publishers,2000.

organisation is characterized by ideological contradiction and confusion. Torn between marxism and nationalism, pan-Arabism and African socialism, Islam and the quest for a secular state, united New Sudan and separation, and between south Sudan and the marginalized peoples of Sudan the SPLM/A failed to prepare for the political complexities of state building.

Between Self-determination and National Unity; Independent South Sudan and 'New Sudan'.

It might look a paradox but it is true that though the SPLM/A proclaimed a national vision and agenda in the form of a commitment to New Sudan, it ended up only holding power in the region from which it began its armed struggle, dipping a life-long commitment and agenda in a sudden and spontaneous way. Thus, while all of the liberation movements began from narrow ethnic bases, they were able-to a greater or lesser degree-to move beyond them to embrace sufficiently wide sections of the population to gain state power and proclaim a legitimising ideology to rule their respective countries. The same is true with the way and speed with which it dropped Marxism and joined the US camp. So a major difference to take into account is that while all of the other liberation movements in the Horn of African region were guided by Marxism-Leninism through much of their period of armed struggle, the SPLM/A only accepted Marxism-Leninism as a means to gain the support of the Ethiopian *Derg*.

Between Marxism and Nationalism

To the extent that the SPLM/A adopted Marxism and the creation of a socialist country as a mere slogan there has never been internal debate and social mobilisation and education around it. No wonder the group was caught between militarism and social revolution and the drawbacks of militarism without discipline and obedience was there to haunt civil-military relations. With the overthrow of Mengistu in 1991, which corresponded with the end of the Cold War, the SPLM/A increasingly drew closer to the US, making clear a pattern of dependence on foreign benefactors. If there was a plan to command a narrative and political project it has been taken over by events. The SPLM/A rapidly shifted gears, finding allies among Christian groups, and most significantly with those linked to the Republican Party in the US-a long-shot, one would assume, from one superficial ideology to another-not rooted in the Southern society. A sort of non-natural transition but the fundamental issue is that unlike other similar organisations ideology

and ideological divisions have never figured significantly in the SPLM/A's political development. Whatever the cosmetic changes this already had its toll on the confusing narratives and ideologies.[15]

Between Islam and the Quest for a Secular State

The incapability of the SPLM/A to articulate a dominant narrative and develop a coherent political project aside it would be wrong to dismiss either the legitimacy of the southern struggle, or the commitment of the southerners to the struggle. Indeed the dominant narrative among the southern population has been the war for freedom from Arab supremacy and Islamic domination by northerners, albeit not tediously captured by the SPLM. After all it was the unilateral imposition of the Islamic Sharia laws throughout the country by President Nimeri in 1983 that triggered the second liberation movement by the SPLM/A. In a way it has been the mistake of successive governments in Khartoum to conclude that the African south did not have strong ideals such as Islam and Arabism to underpin and sustain their opposition to northern hegemony. In other words the war of liberation could be characterized as against the Muslim/Arab domination but in favour of nothing else i.e. the end set is less clear than the cause of the war. And while Garang's rhetorical support at various times for state socialism and a new Sudan never had much resonance among Southern Sudanese, opposition to the forceful input of Arabism and Islam did.

The SPLM/A has always envisioned a secular Sudan. No doubt, for many southerners the struggle was clear and simple: liberate their territory from Arab-Muslim supremacy. These two conflicting visions of Sudan do not easily give way to compromise and indeed they shouldn't, but the CPA had to create a Sharia enclave in the north even if southerners had to opt for unity in the referendum.

The SPLM in the context of marginalized peoples in Sudan

Efforts by the SPLM/A under John Garang to link the different organisations of the marginalized peoples in Sudan to capture the state at the centre did not prove successful. Salva's project takes place against the background of the failure of the

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[15] By ideology it is meant 'an ethical set of ideas, principles, doctrines, myths or symbols. That explain how society should work, and offer some political and cultural blue print for a certain social order{and} largely concerns itself with how to allocate power and to what ends it should be used.http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ideology.

Garang and Abyei boys, together with their allies in the SPLM-N and Darfur, to realize the goals of New Sudan and overthrow the Khartoum regime. From its name to its membership and association the SPLM/A has always been at the center of the struggle by the marginalized populations of the Sudan in all geographical locations, for liberation and self-determination. This has shaped its identity and the meaning of its armed struggle for many years until it was dropped unceremoniously. Decade's old association with other Sudanese marginalized rebel groups-closely or remotely- is another axis of the confusing narratives and puzzling political projects.[16]

Authoritarian roots and regional Influences

The SPLM/A is characterized by lack of institutionalism. The few modicum of institutions created were decidedly made powerless. The SPLM/A's origins in Ethiopia had repercussions beyond ideology. John Garang had to embrace a regime which was rooted in military power, while the Workers' Party of Ethiopia was a mere instrument of that power and designed to give his regime legitimacy in the Eastern Bloc to whom he was dependent. Following that model and his own sensibilities Garang constructed ruthless institutions of internal security under the tutelage of the Eastern Bloc which were responsible for killing and eliminating opponents and rival groups. Like Nimeiri and Mengistu the SPLM party was designed to preclude independent political activity, gain legitimacy, and only assumed a genuine role late in the day. Real power, however, continued to rest with the military and security organs solely commanded by the Chairman. The SPLM was a late out-growth of the SPLA, which was dominated by the Bor Dinka of John Garang, has always assumed a militarist approach to resolving political problems, and more often than not was viewed as occupier, rather than liberator, by the people of South Sudan. It was only held together by the iron hand of John Garang who fought against party institutionalization that would ensure democratic accountability. With his death and independence, the party lost both its sense of direction and firm leadership, and only maintained unity through patronage and looting of state resources.

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[16] A reminder that the identity of the SPLM/A has not be settled to this day. Concluding that South Sudan could never be free of insecurity as long as the NCP ruled Sudan, the new government in Juba not only supported rebels in the north, but looked to the closure of the oil pipeline as a means to stimulate internal struggles in the north. Despite the assurances of SPLM-N leader, Malik Agar, and Secretary-General, Yasir Arman, that Bashir could be overthrown through insurgencies in Southern Blue Nile and the Nuba Mountains and a parallel civilian uprising in Khartoum, these plans have not come to fruition.

After initially following a conciliatory approach to government, Salva Kiir have become intent on assuming a similar hegemonic position as that held by his predecessor, Dr. John Garang, as evident in his attempt to neutralize the SPLM, expand his own powers, and post 15 December jailing his leading opponents. The slight difference is that Salva hails from Warrap and Northern Bahr Ghezal. The regional character and sociology, if not the ethnography, of political power might have but the authoritarian approach has remained intact. The authoritarian approach of both Garang and Salva has deep roots in the SPLM. The SPLM/A was influenced during its formative period by the governments of Jafar Nimeiri and Mengistu Haile Mariam.[17] Most influential on the SPLM, however, has been the NCP to which a number of members of the present government belonged and even more participated in the NCP-dominated Government of national Unity/GNU/ and the experience of the long peace negotiations.

The contagion effect of northern Sudanese intelligence agencies and the NCP which is dominated by the military-security nexus on the SPLM leadership and its organisational culture is a source of concern. Indeed, the current SPLM leadership seems to have acquired many of its approaches to governance from the NCP. [18]Against that background no one should be surprised that Salva is trying to construct an authoritarian in south Sudan with himself at the pinnacle but similar to the regime in Khartoum from which southerners paid enormously to disaffiliate. The impact of this resemblance and association on the narratives of statehood in south Sudan would be quite enormous and needs further interrogation.

Meso-level Narratives: Equatorians, the Dinka and the Nuer.

The narrative that the Dinka's want to replace northern Arab domination by their own in an independent south is as old as the genesis and early development of political consciousness in south Sudan. And the mythology that the Nuer aspire to snatch political influence and power from the Dinka is also powerful enough to determine the alliance in the new state. This is based on the legend that the Nuer prophet,Ngundeng,is

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[17] But probably most significantly by the National Congress Party/NCP/, the ruling party in north Sudan. Nimeiri's power was based on the military and security organs, while the Sudan Socialist Union (SSU) was designed to co-opt all political party activity and all politicians were required to join it.

[18] The influence ranges from the actual structure of the government, the role of the ruling party in the government, the pretense of parliamentary democracy under what is effectively a one-party state, the absorption of nominally opposition parties into the governing party, the role of presidential advisors, and the growing significance of the intelligence and security organs. Consistent with all of these parties was the opposition to other poles of power, including traditional authorities.

said to have prophesized that a leader of south Sudan would come from the descendants of Teny-Dhurgon,to which Riak Machar belongs. The authenticity of the legend aside it is difficult to underestimate its political impact in present day south Sudan. The perceptions and misperceptions associated with it continue to influence political and military actions of the leaders in the GoS.

The preoccupation of both Nuer and Dinka political elite with the concerns surrounding the prophesy must seem to outsiders like an obsession. Recent attempts at eliminating Riak Machar at any cost by the army allied to President Salva Kiir - and led by Paul Malong and the powerful body of the Jiyeng Council (Dinka Elders) - cannot not be totally delinked from the broader mythology. [19] Although other considerations of actual-potential balance of power are still critical to the violent contest the propensity to deal a final blow to an age old narrative is a strong component. Equally important is the collaboration of many Nuer, including Riak Machar, with Khartoum after the Nasir debacle of 1991 against the mainstream SPLM/A during the liberation war which serves as a powerful counter-narrative to undermine the chances of Nuer politician's rise to the top position of power in post-2005 south Sudan. Coupled with the Bor Massacre of the Dinka's in the hands of militias allied with Riek Machar in September 1991 the Danka's continued to use this narrative as a major disqualifying factor for Riak to occupy the top position and a rallying cry among die hard Danka's to control and monopolize power in the new state. Furthermore the Dinka's claim to have played the largest role in the liberation struggle particularly the one led by the SPLM/A, hence a sense of entitlement and corresponding responsibility to sustain the new political dispensation, a claim bitterly contested by rival elites. Achieving a monopoly on the liberation narrative is key to the on-going conflict and power struggle in the country.

A recent narrative that complicates the search for peace and confidence building among the various communities in south Sudan is the massacre of the Nuer in Juba in December 2013 which heralded the recent conflict. Addressing this head on will go a long way in the much needed reconciliation and peace building endeavours. Salva's claim of a Riek led coup does not seem to be credible, and even less that it was the cause of the ensuing conflict. Instead, the immediate stimulus to the revolt was the targeting

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[19] Paul Malong is former governor of Northern Bahr Ghazal and current Chief of Staff of the army is considered as a power behind the throne.

of Nuers in the streets of Juba by the Presidential Guards which in turn may have been the result of a plan to kill Riek that went astray. The high-profile atrocities perpetuated by both sides have contributed to cement the competing narratives and remain a challenge to create an inclusive society and a workable formula for peace and state building.[20]

To the extent that the prophesy of the Nuer prophet Mundeng that Nuer rule will eventually become a reality is relished and loathed by many it will continue to determine the nature of political power and the trajectory of conflicts. As a result there those who argue that the Nuer tribe collectively holds false assumptions prominent among which relates to their perceived superiority as fighters, and given the natural or creative chaos in south Sudan, they will be the ultimate victors and that the abysmal failure of the Dinka's in government to date makes them the only better alternative and uniquely qualified to rule South Sudan. And all of these notions are tied together under the prophesy of the Nuer prophet.[21] Equally critical is the oil factor which serves to reinforce the Nuer claim to have a visible power in south Sudan and definitely in the oil producing regions of Upper Nile and Unity states.

The fact that many Nuer had joined the SSDF and fought alongside Khartoum in the 'north-south' conflict is conditioned on both geography and oil. The epithets given to many Nuers by others, particularly the Dinka for their role in the war on the side of Khartoum is symptomatic of the level of difficulty faced by Nuer politicians in the on-going power struggle. It is often difficult to distinguish the Nuer agenda from the oil and the delicate balancing act they had to make during the liberation struggle. The failures of the present regime and subsequent turmoil do not mean that Dinka domination has ended, particularly in view of the international support for the regime. Whatever the outcome of the war and the diplomatic efforts at peace-making the political future of the Nuers is likely to be grim. The growing faith among Nuers in the supposed predictions of Mundeng is bound to lead to disillusion as Salva and the international community

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[20] In any case, the responsibility for those killings must be determined and the perpetuators – even if they include Salva Kiir as many believe – must be identified and turned over to the courts. Unless that is done, and be seen to be done fairly and openly, the Juba targeted killings of the Nuers will become as deeply a felt grievance among the Nuer as that of the Bor who still harken back as the attack by Riek and his followers on their community 23 years ago.

[21] A belief of many Nuers – and a belief that is being milked by Riek Macher – that the great Nuer prophet Mundeng's predictions of Nuer rule is in the process of being realized.

work to ensure the maintenance of a regime which will not address the concerns of the tribe.

Even if the approaches to conflict resolution pursued by the East African diplomats produces a measure of elite accommodation, it is unlikely to last long and will in any case not satisfy the Nuer who would consider anything less than the Nuer replacing the dominant position of the Dinka in government as both a defeat and a tribal humiliation. The line most often heard by the Nuer is 'if we lose the war we will be slaves of the Dinka.' Riek may be willing to compromise, but behind him are hard men who did not go to war just to see a shifting of chairs among the elite.

Sudan and South Sudan: A History of Political Agreements

This section will discuss the nature of the IGAD peace process from the Declaration of Principles/DOP/ to the Machakos protocol, from the CPA to the Juba Peace Agreement and their cumulative import in the competing narratives and antagonistic trajectories of state and peace building.

Framing Peace and Statehood: The DOP

Sudan had witnessed several peace agreements in its short of history of independent statehood to the extent that the country has literally become an amalgamation of peace accords, both active and doormat. It is not the concern of this study to focus on the peace processes in Sudan but by way of background it is suffice to highlight that the basis for the Comprehensive Peace Agreement/CPA/ in 2005 and the eventual independence of South Sudan is the Declaration of Principles/DOP/ of July 1994.[22] The Intergovernmental Authority for development/IGAD/ began to involve in the Sudan peace process in the early 1990s. However negotiations made headway only after the developing military pressure by IGAD member countries particularly Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda against Khartoum. Both the political and military preconditions for peace in the Sudan seem to have been provided by IGAD member states. This is important to understand the nature of southern Sudanese independence and the narratives associated with state and peace building. The regional aspects are critical to whatever successes achieved and challenges faced by the new African state.

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[22] Declaration of Principles.Nairobi,20th July,1994.

Beyond preparing the ground for the 'north-south' peace process the involvement of IGAD is believed to have shaped the narratives of statehood in south Sudan as stipulated in the DOP and follow-on security and foreign policy of the regional organisation particularly Ethiopia. Not only did Ethiopia's military involvement and the resultant balance of power sustain the CPA but its disappointment on the SPLM/A will complicate the nature of external support to the peace and state building process. Quite brilliantly the DOP consecrates the right to self-determination, the separation of state and religion and fair sharing of wealth, mainly oil that was meant to form new foundation of state and peace building. The political aspirations of the south were expected to be addressed within this broader framework and it was evidently clear that peace in Sudan and state building in south Sudan meant that these contentious issues had to be tackled realistically.[23]

The declaration stipulates that maintaining unity of the Sudan must be given priority by all parties provided that the principles are established in the political, legal, economic and social framework of the country. It is clear that neighbouring countries assumed the political aspirations of southern Sudanese and their own security interests will be best served by a united, democratic and secular Sudan. This was not going to happen which contributed to incompatible narratives at the national and regional levels. The argument expanded here is that the region's preferred narrative of statehood was much closer to what the SPLM/A officially adopted during John Garang which was tacitly abandoned and not conversant with the broader political aspirations of southern Sudanese. This raises a question about the CPA: *Leap Forward or Retreat?* Another problem facing the SPLM in the wake of Garang's death is therefore the need to redefine its role in international and regional affairs, as both the region and the US were caught off-guard by his sudden death.

Eventually, the SPLM/A will become heavily dependent on the US for almost all aspects of security and the conduct of foreign policy particularly as it relates to Khartoum. This heavy dependence will have its own toll on the trajectories of peace and state building. Heavy dependence on the US and being party to the CPA was taken as the fundamental basis of international legitimacy and the sole determinant of being a state actor in

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[23] Medhane Tadesse, Turning Conflicts to Cooperation: Towards an Energy-led Integration in the Horn of Africa.2003,

international relations. As well as its internal problems, it is no secret that the SPLM/A suffers from multi-faceted dependency i.e. economic, political and diplomatic. Meanwhile the CPA itself was largely the result of international pressure which in itself is problematic.

Compounding this was the fact that the peace process remained elitist and exclusionary and failed to address the underlying causes of the war. The level of exclusion is not limited to political and armed groups but also the sphere of competing narratives.

SPLM/A and SSDF: Rival Groups or Competing Narratives?

The exclusion of the GoS-supported SSDF, which was an armed southern force similar in size to the SPLA, in particular posed a major threat to the viability of the peace process and state building in south Sudan largely because it's membership is largely made up of Nuers,it controlled a significant amount of territory in the south with a measurable monopoly of violence, including much of the oil fields, which brings a tribal dimension to its conflict with the largely Dinka dominated SPLM/A. Khartoum continued to exploit the competing narratives and ethnic divisions in south Sudan. Indeed, at the core of the post-1991 security problems in south Sudan has been NCP's support of Other Organised Forces/OAGs/ in the south. Although Salva kiir managed to bring most of the SSDF membership into the SPLA and thus avert war through the Juba Declaration of January 8, 2015 this was done at a huge cost to state building. Indeed, state building process in south Sudan particularly the transformation of security institutions have become the victims of the Juba peace agreement. In the meantime, the Sudan People's Liberation Army was radically transformed after the 2006 Juba Declaration. Hence it is fair to raise the question about the agreement.

The Juba Peace Agreement: Asset or Liability?

The source of the problems of the south Sudan army as an arm of a new state have already been compromised by the nature of the SPLA but became aggravated when the SSDF became integrated which resulted in a ballooned, less professional and extortionist institution. But the deal had a short-term political impact: the weakening of Nuer insurgency and the dampening of leadership struggle infavor of Salva within the SPLM/A. This brings us to another critical aspect of peace and state building in south Sudan, i.e. the issue of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration/DDR/.

Failed Reconciliation or Failed Disarmament?

There is a sort of natural connection between Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration/DDR/ and peace and state building in countries emerging from conflict in Africa. Indeed a major variable in assessing the trajectory of state and peace building in south Sudan is the whole issue of DDR. The broader aspect of DDR which includes political, security and socio-economic components (or the lack of it) would clearly point the direction any country is going to take. And it is not surprising to find out that both forced and voluntary disarmament in south Sudan has been a complete failure and it bore heavy consequences. This multi-million project[24] was rigged with corruption and was exploited by the leadership as an opportunity to rid the army of its elderly, disabled and women. Furthermore, it was viewed as a great chance by the political elite to populate their extended kinship networks into government jobs. It is fair to assume that the crisis in south Sudan is the failure of demilitarization and state building.

By the same token it can be argued that the current war of South Sudan is symptomatic of the failure of the internationally sponsored state-building project, among which demilitarization figures prominently.[25] Initial disarmament among communities with which the SPLM/A had developed the closest relations during the armed struggle were generally positive. However, as far as the DDR process within the SPLA is concerned it is not an exaggeration to say that it targeted and rewarded the wrong people.[26] In actual fact and contrary to DDR end sets the army was not "integrated" and resembled a collection of ethnic militias as evidenced by the level of fragmentation in the eruption of the recent conflict. The whole process has been poorly managed it failed to help state and peace building and in fact it afflicted the broader and long term agenda. This coupled with the rival narratives that helped proliferate rival militia groups' remains to be a major roadblock against peaceful political order. Therefore, though the SPLA certainly grew in size thus protecting the future independent country from its northern foe, this growth also served the Southern elite's strategy of self-consolidation (or self-destruction) at the expense of state consolidation to the extent that one cannot clearly assert what is happening in south Sudan is state building or state destruction. The

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[24] South Sudan benefitted from one of the most expensive DDR packages in the world along Afghanistan'
[25] Clemence Pinaud,The War in South Sudan,Briefing Note 7.March 2015. Observatoire des Enjeux Politiques et Sécuritaires dans la Corne de l'Afrique.
[26] Many involved in the project openly admitted this process had been a disgraceful joke. 25, was by all accounts a sham.

whole transition has been further complicated by the nature of elite contest for power between the 'Garang and Salva boys'.

From Garang to Salva

Whatever the circumstances of Garang's death it was only a matter of time before Salva Kiir assumed the top leadership of the SPLM/A. The two had a history of tension and cooperation and less than a year ago Garang was believed to have flirted with the dismissal of his deputy from part and army positions which was averted in 2004 by what could otherwise be described as an odd congregation of the SPLM/A leadership in Rumbek.. Events took their own turn and Salva remained the sole legitimate replacement. Salva inherited the party and subsequent government leadership upon the death of John Garang on 31 July 2005, only seven months after the signing of the CPA. He had been the deputy leader under Garang, but had little power, was wholly unprepared to hold high office, and was largely unknown internationally. Nonetheless, given his seniority he was accepted as chairman of the party to stop a descent into a debilitating power struggle with the 'sons of Garang' who had dominated the party and army from its inception. Any internal conflicts could have wiped out the gains of the peace process and taken the country back to war.

Just as Salva assumed the top position, Dr. Riek Macher became his deputy and from the outset he had ambitions to replace Salva, just as he had earlier aspired to replace Garang. Indeed, this competition was highlighted at the 2008 SPLM Convention when Riek had to be persuaded not to run against Salva for the presidency of the party. [27] However, the most important internal challenge to Salava did not come from Riek and the Nuer but rather from the so-called 'Garang boys'. The ramifications of this are yet to be seen. But its impact on the conflict in Sudan and south Sudan, regional and international relations and peaceful and well-governed state is clearly enormous. Some of the repercussions are political and ideological in nature among which the whole issue of south Sudan and New Sudan figures prominently. This might have affected the need for internal cohesion, focus and mobilisation of resources for peace and state building as well. Having just come to power, Salva was looking for allies outside the Garangists and many came to fit the bill. This brings us to the continued infiltration of the SPLM by the NCP.

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[27] SPLM?A Meeting documents

The NCP and Salva's SPLM: Expediency or Hostile Takeover?

A critical development in the nature of political power and power relations in Juba in recent years is the progressive influence of the National Congress Party/NCP/. The import of Khartoum friendly ministers into the Juba government to replace its most vociferous opponents has been welcomed by the NCP and has already had a number of impacts. Beyond the non-entities appointed to the new government were ministers with strong ties to Sudan and even to the NCP. Many of them served in top positions in south Sudan under Khartoum and in several positions of the NCP branch in Juba. Salava's calculations are simple and belong to the realm of parochial political agendas. Arguably, south Sudanese who were formerly tied to the NCP could help him bolster his efforts to remove the Garangists who he concluded were out to displace him, and also he might be attracted by their political and administrative experience as well as their ethnic affiliations.

And this process is emerging at the expense of the Dinka's from Bor, the home area of John Garang, and the parallel consolidation of Dinka Bahr Ghazal. A number of the Garangists removed from the government who are perceived as being opposed to the president in the army are Bor Dinka, but politics and not ethnicity was the basis of Salva's decision, and indeed he is anxious not to lose the support of the community to Riek. Besides, the contagion effect of the NCP would affect the nature of the much needed political transformation and state building in south Sudan, and the region at large. Whatever the motive and the ethnic cards associated with it this particular development has the potential- it has already started, at least at the elite level- to turn the liberation mythology upside down.

A Synopsis of Political Narratives: Why the Recent War was Inevitable?

Based on the interviews conducted in all states of south Sudan and respondents' rankings of the most important security threats in the country, one would wonder if not determine whether some narratives are more important in some sections of south Sudanese society than others.[28] While corruption and lack of development (common to

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[28] Popular consultations on the development of the National Security Policy of the republic of South Sudan. Between March and May 2013 the Republic of South Sudan undertook state level consultations on the draft National Security Policy/NSP/. State level consultations have generated a lot of substantive ideas to the draft NSP document, triggered huge national interest on security issues and attracted attention of both the general public and political leaders at the Center.

all states and ethnic groups) is highly pronounced the issue of decentralization and federalism had come out strongly among the Equatorians as well as the Nuer and the Shiluk, in Upper Nile and Unity States. Decentralization and federalism are not a major concern for the states that has been part of the Greater Bahr Ghazal, largely inhabited by the Dinka partly due to the link between ethnicity, liberation struggle, demography and political power.

The public opinion in Western Bahr Ghazal state where an amalgamation of small non-Dinka tribes dominate is fully conversant with those of the Nuer and the Shiluk than the Dinka. Even though almost two thirds of the smaller tribes in the region raised the conflict with North Sudan as a source of concern their particular issue of disappointment is corruption and lack of service delivery, a scourge common to all communities. However, an examination of the results of our question asking respondents about the nature of the political system and the state, the good governance argument was unlikely to persuade them support the SPLM dominated government. The widely held view is that the fundamental contradiction in south Sudan is what they referred to as the 'division between the oppressed' (by which they meant the majority of the people of South Sudan particularly those who were not at the centre of the liberation struggle) and the so-called liberators i.e Dinka dominated SPLM. The political undertones of their responses seem to reflect the ethnography, closeness and remoteness to the respective involvement in the liberation struggle and the evolving power relations in the new state.

The specific concerns raised by the smaller ethnic groups in WBS are not totally unlinked to the specific nature and ethnic composition of the state. Many abhorred the fact that the Danka's expand to their lands and towns and displace them to control administrative structures. They expressed distrust and distaste to the force-backed grabbing of land and violent governance mechanisms. Similar views are expressed by the Equatorians except with stronger language and tone that is reminiscent of the Kokora movement of the 1970s. For Equatorians the border issue(internal borders),uncontrolled expansion of the Dinka's aided by Cattle Generals and the oppressive security apparatus of the 'Dinka-dominated' institutions have become major areas of concern. The drift towards strong federalism espoused by Equatorians is now almost shared by most of the other ethnic groups in the country, including the Nuer who

tend to assume a comparable level of power with the Dinka. Interestingly, resistance to the kind of Federalism espoused by several groups in the country, had come out clearly in the areas inhabited by the Dinka. Addressing these issues is critical in the process of restructuring the state in south Sudan.

Not surprisingly, the dissatisfaction about the SPLA is reinforced by the fact that the other communities from Yambio to Malakal believe the army doesn't represent them and tribal domination of the army is a major source of grievance. As one puts it 'the SPLA only defends the SPLM not the people'. The problem is that supporters of each narrative and political position in the present day south Sudan tended to think that their grievances are legitimate and their preferred political agendas are widely supported and electable in a democratic election. The issue of civilian disarmament and its blow back effect on security has also been mentioned repeatedly as a major source of grievance.

As far as the nature and identity of the future south Sudanese state and the perceived Dinka-domination is concerned many of the other groups often began with doubt and ended in certainty. Particularly the Equatorians and the Nuer had plenty of tribulations to record, but in their narratives the tribulations never end, the doubts never cease. As perceived by them Dinka brutality, arrogance and expansion glued with the migration of cattle, tribalism and corruption, land grabbers and cattle raiders topped the list of security threats in south Sudan. As a result the camp of those who consider themselves 'looser with grievances' has been fast expanding. Unable or unwilling to seek a collective memory and command a common narrative the SPLA encouraged tribalism and segmentation and continued to do after it assumed state power. The regime has only survived through international support and even then it has lurched from one crisis to the next. But when the oil revenues which fed the patronage network dried up because of the government's decision to cut off the transit of oil to Sudan it did not take long for the SPLM to implode.

Concluding remarks

The SPLM/A had a weak institutional base and poorly pronounced narratives.. Often it pursued political objectives at odds with the aspirations of south Sudanese which has defined the trajectory of peace and state building. The SPLA never had a political party

until very late in the day, New Sudan was more of a vision than an ideology and never captured the minds of southern Sudanese, its leadership proved incapable of overcoming local conflicts and developing national sentiments and the dominant ethos of the movement was militarism. As a result, the SPLA fostered, rather than dampened, tribal sentiments and was widely viewed – particularly in the Nuer lands and Equatoria – as an occupying force and not a liberation army. Typically revolutionary parties in Africa fostered national sentiments and attempted to limit tribal based patrimonialism by indoctrinating their supporters with a strong ideology. But in the absence of a South Sudanese nationalism, patrimonial politics always dominated the SPLM/A and its scope simply expanded when the SPLM/A assumed a hegemonic position in the state.

Perhaps a recurring theme in the peace processes in Sudan and now south Sudan is that the peace agreements remained elitist, exclusionary, governed by a simplistic view of bringing together personalities and failed to address the underlying causes of the war. Unfortunately the same goes by in the current peace process in south Sudan. In the present circumstances diplomatic efforts geared at reaching an agreement between President Salva Kiir and his former Vice-President Dr. Riek Macher follow the same pattern and will likely produce similar problematic results. In the run up to the CPA John Garang and Osman Mohammed Taha were at least leaders of their respective organizations who had a high degree of control over their armed groups, which is not the case with Salva and Riek. Recent events make clear that Salva is only nominally in charge of a badly broken SPLA and is increasingly dependent internally on hard-line Dinka figures and the Jieng Council and until recently on Yoweri Museveni's army, while Riek is leading a collection of SPLA fragments, militias, and white army groups over which he has limited control.

Even if IGAD and the diplomats are successful in bringing Riek and Salva together, there is little hope that will produce sustained peace, much less address the underlying causes of the conflict. Indeed, Salva's post-25 July 2013 government is based on so-called technocrats and NCP friendly politicians and they were specifically selected because they are bitter enemies of the Garangists they replaced. The diplomats' efforts to reconcile these warring camps and even to bring them into an expanded government is a recipe for deadlock, divisions, more inter-elite competition, and probably a return to war before too long. Moreover, presumably this government will be led by Salva Kiir,

who – after the killing of Nuers in Juba in the period of 15-18 December – may be found to be a war criminal.

Riek's claim that he does not lead an ethnic revolt of the Nuers is based on his fragile alliance with Garangists that Salva first dismissed from his government and then jailed. Riek then made the release of the Garangists a pre-condition for negotiations and the diplomats devoted their energies to achieving that end. But the people of South Sudan, including the Nuers, were happy to see the end of this motley crew and cannot be expected to believe that their return to power will bring peace, much less development, after they failed in the last 12 years to do anything but line their own pockets. The demand for a government of national unity and elections, however, fits the mould of elite accommodation and the top-down peace efforts that characterized the failed Sudan peace process which will continue to be at odds with the broader peace and state building agendas in south Sudan. Unless the underlying causes are addressed and competing narratives are tackled in a serious and practical manner everything else will remain superficial. The way forward requires that competing and antagonistic narratives of statehood are bridged and the south Sudan political elite adopt a clear and coherent political project that reflects the history and political aspirations of the people of south Sudan. Hence, reframing narratives of statehood is more pivotal than ever.

Reframing Narratives of State Building in Africa: Lessons from South Sudan

- The early history and political development of the SPLM/A has greatly compromised the trajectory of peace and state building in south Sudan. Torn between confusing ideologies and contradictory political agendas the SPLM/A was ill prepared to push state and peace building forward. The SPLM/A chose to ignore, often suppress, the dominant popular narratives of statehood in South Sudan and ended up only holding power without an overarching peace and state building agenda.
- A liberation movement or a political party aspiring to lead a country, if it is going to be taken seriously and gain legitimacy, has to seriously work on the competing narratives in advance and develop a coherent agenda of peace and state building.
- The ideology of the SPLM/A thus says little about the people of the south, the conditions they live in, and their aspirations, apart from the popular demand for self-determination; instead it is largely a series of ideas suspended in space.

- Unless competing narratives and antagonistic political projects are bridged state and peace building, particularly in the context a country emerging from conflict becomes deeply flawed and problematic.

- Ideologies that breed confusion and are readily manipulated cannot contribute to a strong narrative of statehood. Indeed, for the SPLM/A ideological clarity had little value and little thought has gone into developing it.

- The case of the SPLM/A is suggestive of the contradiction between appearance and reality. As well as its internal problems, the SPLM/A suffers from multi-faceted dependency i.e. economic, political and diplomatic.

- As far as the SPLM/A is concerned sheer militarism without a strong political organ had serious consequences for the group and the young nation it was supposed to lead and transform. Particularly critical here is the contagion effect of the regimes in the region on the SPLM with the potential to discredit the liberation narrative and mythology for which millions of south Sudanese lost their lives. Of immediate concern is however its negative implication on peace and governance in south Sudan.

- The attempt to impose liberal formulas of state building into a traditional and deeply illiberal society and social base is also deeply problematic.

- The lack of attention given to political concerns; apart from popular slogans is a key determinant. SPLM leader have done little to politically educate their people. Negligence to reconcile competing narratives and the weakness to properly educate and mobilise the southern population around them had a huge cost in terms of opportunities lost in peace and state building endeavours.

- Most of the responsibility lies in the inability of the SPLM/A to develop a coherent ideology that would lay the basis for unity and for joint action to transform society and build the state.

- It is fair to assume that the crisis in south Sudan is the failure of demilitarization and state building. South Sudan is emblematic of the direct link between failed and mismanaged DDR and the challenges of peace and state building. The practical axis that there is always violent conflict when there is war before or war next door is highly relevant to the predicament of the south Sudanese. The centrality of successful DDR in all of this cannot be overstated.

- The international community is arguably largely responsible for allowing the elite to plunder the new state to sustain their businesses and their own military bases within and outside of the army. To a certain extent, the liberal peace-making vision that concentrated on elite accommodation rather than the broader political realm and on the economic and political empowerment of 'ordinary' people during the CPA negotiations facilitated the rise and consolidation of ruling elite prone to the political economy of corruption and rent-seeking.