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Perceptions and Voices of South Sudanese About the North-South Sudan Conflict

by

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requirements for the degree of

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Abstract

The conflict in Sudan reflects historic hatred and ethnic discrimination between Northern Arab Muslims and Southern African Christians and Animists. The longest and worst conflict began in 1983 and ended in 2005, when African Christians and Animists struggled to form an interim autonomous government. This conflict claimed 2 million lives from both sides and displaced almost 4 million people from the South. This thesis attempts to understand how people from Southern Sudan perceive the root causes and sustaining factors of the Sudanese conflict between Arab Muslims and African Christians. This research looks specifically into the roles of ethnic differences and religion.

In this study, 10 emigrants from South Sudan were chosen to present their perceptions and views about the conflict, in the form of written responses to 22 questions. Analysis of their responses in light of conflict resolution literature suggests that the North-South Sudan conflict involves complex issues primarily fueled by ethnic and religious differences. This research reveals that South Sudanese refugees from varying backgrounds and professions expressed similar experiences of racial, religious discrimination and political and economic marginalization, and suggests that Sudan's July, 2011 declaration of independence, creating two separate nations, North and South Sudan, was a positive solution to achieving a just peace.

Dedication

To my uncles Gau Athain Gau and Garang Athain Gau and their entire family who supported me emotionally while they were faced with hardship and grief.

Acknowledgements

thesis, but provided critical historic narratives about the suffering of marginalized people in Sudan.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Sudan has gone through three different historical conflicts in the past years. The first and second conflicts were between African Christians and Animists in the South and Arab Muslims in the North. The third was between African Muslims in the Darfur region and Arab Muslims in the North. Together, these conflicts have claimed the lives of approximately 3 million people (Ahmed, 2008; Jok, 2007). Ethnic and traditional differences between African Christians and Animists and Arab Muslims are seen to be the root of the North and South Sudan conflict (Deng, 1995; Jok, 2007; Wai, 1981).

Sudan is one nation with two identities: Africans and Arabs. Each group is loyal to its own ethnic "nationalism" and each perceives national identity as a second priority. People of African descent strive to maintain African nationalism. Arabs maintain and attempt to promote Arabic nationalism and Islamic identity. The conflict in Sudan was fueled by a mandate of Islamic traditions on non-Arabs and non-Muslims in Southern Sudan. Wai (1973) suggested that the imposition of Muslim tradition has caused conflicts and made peaceful coexistence less possible.

There are few cultural commonalities and these ethnic groups seem not to be able to coexist. Failure to establish a national identity and consensus has resulted in a deadly rivalry between African and Arab groups. A lack of "common ground" has exacerbated tensions. The central government, dominated by Arab Muslims, began to impose Arab culture and Islamic beliefs as the only national identity in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country. Conflicts associated with these ethnic and religious differences have dominated the country.

In past decades, catastrophic conflicts have resulted from Arab atrocities against ethnic minorities in different parts of the world including Angola, Burundi, Ethiopia, India, Iraq, Somalia, and Sudan. Many of these conflicts are believed to be motivated by economic and political concerns. Ethnic and religious differences have fueled discrimination and hateful relationships among neighboring communities.

These strained relationships prevent peaceful coexistence and have killed many innocent women and children. Byman (2002) wrote that in the 1990s, ethnic conflicts claimed the lives of millions and displaced hundreds of thousands more. Ethnic groups wanted recognition of their cultures and representation in economic and political systems. Groups developed antagonistic behaviors in trying to promote their own traditions. Most only wanted respect.

Sudan provides a prime example of these conflicts. The North-South Sudan conflict has complex factors which have not been addressed since the country gained her independence 54 years ago. Among these factors, ethnic identity, religious imposition, and geopolitical development have been viewed by scholars (Deng, 1995; Jok, 2007) as cleavages that exacerbate relations between Sudanese ethnic groups. A failure to address and recognize these factors has made peaceful coexistence difficult.

The ravages of the first war between North and South Sudan were followed by the Darfur genocide in 2003. These devastating catastrophes established that multiethnic communities must find a unifying mechanism if they hope to survive. A shared national identity could provide some unity. Jok (2007) and Lado (1996) argued that between the 1980s and 1990s, the world ignored the conflict in Sudan. In 22 years of war, 2 million

people died (mostly on the southern Sudan side) and more than 4 million have been displaced (Ahmed, 2008; Sharkey, 2004). Today the Sudanese government, dominated by Arab Muslims, still commits brutalities against ethnic minorities. According to Jok (2007), Arab brutalities against ethnic groups of African origin between 1955 and 2005 have resulted in catastrophic mass graves. These atrocities are seen as an attempt to destroy African identity and religious beliefs, force conversion to Islam, and assimilate people into Arab culture. This ethnic and religious war effectively created a first genocide which proceeded to Darfur.

Reason for Choosing this Topic

A group of older men from the Dinka tribe in Aweil, Southern Sudan gathered to celebrate the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement on January 9, 2005. The elders reminded the youth that Arab Muslims have indiscriminately killed our people and looted our properties, but we did not give up. They have tried to convert us to Islam by force but they have failed. They have tried to surrogate our cultural identity with their own and they have failed. They also have enslaved our people, but we never gave up. And if we fail to vote for independence on January 09, 2011, the next thing these Arab Muslims will do is to wipe us out completely and take our land (Aweil, Southern Sudan, January 9, 2005).

I chose to write about the conflict between African Christians and Animists and Arab Muslims because I am emotionally and physically affected by this conflict. My people from the Dinka tribe witnessed unprecedented mass killings in the 1980s and

1990s when the fight began. Arab Muslim militiamen attacked our villages on various occasions to fulfill the "jihad mission." These attacks left thousands of dead or starving civilians. Many more were forced into slavery in Northern Sudan. I experienced these horrific incidents as a child. On various occasions, armed Arab men attacked my own village and surrounding areas. These attacks left a dozen dead lying in the streets, while others struggled to run from the scene. Militias raped young girls and women from my village and left us with fearful memories. In this chaos, children, mothers, and fathers struggled for their own lives instead of worrying about one another. This conflict changed my life by teaching me that hatred based on racial and religious identities leads to killings worldwide. I decided to investigate these generational conflicts and to bring awareness to outsiders who might know little about ethnic and religious antagonism in Sudan.

When I was a little boy growing up in Southern Sudan, my parents taught me to identify myself as an African Christian and Animist. In early childhood, I began to understand that Sudan was home for two different peoples: African Christians and Animists and Arab Muslims. I was told that Africans live in Southern Sudan and Arabs live in Northern Sudan. I learned about various historical conflicts between my ancestors and those of Arabs. This fighting took place in cattle camps, at schools, in the markets, on buses, at work, and over political issues. I discovered that some places were named after great Dinka heroes who sacrificed their lives for Dinkaland and Southern Sudan. Our cattle and properties were taken or destroyed by Arabs during these conflicts. Too many heroic people died in defense of African identity and land.

The Sudanese conflict left unforgettable memories in the hearts of many South Sudanese. I remember the struggles of my relatives, friends, and the people of Southern Sudan. Some people witnessed family members burnt alive by Arabs. But they could not help them. Everybody is still grieving, in spite of trying to recover after the peace agreement of 2005. The South Sudanese and I could only begin to heal when South Sudan became independent on January 9, 2011. That South Sudan is now a sovereign nation gradually brings hope for healing in South Sudan.

I left Southern Sudan because of this conflict. I began my long journey from Southern Sudan to neighboring countries in Africa and finally arrived in the United States of America. My journey began in terror. I was afraid and had to leave South Sudan with my cousin to find a safe place. I left my parents, childhood friends, and home in Southern Sudan when I was 13. I travelled to Ethiopia in 1989 and left there in 1991 after its government collapsed. I returned toward Southern Sudan, but decided my home state was not safe. Instead of going home, I rerouted to Kenya in 1994 and turned myself in to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). I was granted permanent resettlement status by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and finally came to the United States in 1995.

These memories are heartbreaking: millions of deaths, cultures and properties lost, and thousands displaced into foreign lands. Sudan, after 51 years, has not yet found solutions for injustice, discrimination, or racial and religious differences. A history of violence in Sudan has demonstrated that peaceful coexistence between Africans and

Arabs may be achieved, although it seems less possible. African Christians and animists will continue to suffer these injustices unless they are free to have a nation of their own.

Purpose of the research

The primary research question for this thesis is: How do refugees from Southern Sudan perceive the conflict between the North and South? This study will specifically look into the role of:

1. Ethnic differences.
2. The influence of religion.

I am interested to develop a more nuanced understanding of the conflict through the perceptions of fellow refugees.

Key Definitions

Ethnic difference often creates negative stereotypes. Certain terms are regularly used to single out people based on ethnic identity, religion, and social status. Ethnic and religious identifications are used to label African Christians and Animists from Southern Sudan.

a) Tribal groups

Dinka is the largest African Christian and Animist ethnic group in Southern Sudan. *Malual* is one of the largest sub-ethnic groups within Dinka. Ngok and *Tuic* are smaller sub-ethnic groups in the Dinka. *Messiriya* is an Arab Muslim ethnic group from Southern Kordofan in Northern Sudan.

Messiriya, along with other Arab ethnic groups were backed and heavily armed by the central government to attack the Dinka in Southern Sudan. *Bahr El Ghazal* is one

of the former three provinces in southern Sudan. *Messiriya* and *Rezeigat* ethnic groups enslaved thousands of African Christians and Animists. *Rezeigat* is an Arab Muslim ethnic group from the Darfur region in western Sudan. These groups exist in a number of locations.

b) Geographic locations and cities

Aweil is the capital city of Northern Bahr El Ghazal state. *Gorgrial* is one of the cities in Warrap state in Southern Sudan. *Nyamllel* is a town in Northern Bahr El Ghazal state in southern Sudan. *Warrap* is one of ten states in Southern Sudan. *Darfur* is a region in Western Sudan. *Malek Alel* is a city in Northern Bahr El Ghazal state. *Nuba Mountians* is a mountainous region and home to the Nubian people in Southern Kordofan, Sudan. *Kordofan* is a name of the region in central Sudan. *Abyei* is a district in Southern Sudan. Enslavement and other forms of atrocities occurred in these places during civil wars in Southern Sudan (Eibner, 1999; Jok, 2007; Lado, 1996).

c) Vocabulary

Khaffir is an Arab word for infidels. *Abeed* is an Arab word for slave. *Sharia* is the Islamic law that was introduced in Sudan in 1983. *Animism* is a belief that supernatural power organizes and animates the material universe (*New Oxford American Dictionary*).

d) Political, cultural, and international humanitarian organizations

Southern Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM) was a rebel movement that declared the first armed struggle against the Arab Muslim government in 1955 (and which ended in 1972). *Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Sudan People's Liberation*

Army (SPLM/SPLA) declared the second armed struggle against the Arab Muslim government in 1983 (and ended in 2005). *Muslim-Christian Dialogue Forum* (MCDF) is an interfaith organization in Nigeria. *Murahaleen* is an Arab militia organization backed by the central government of Sudan during the civil war.

The *Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) is* an agreement signed in 2005 between North and South Sudan. *Government of National Unity* (GONU) was established after the signing of the 2005 peace accord between North and South Sudan. *Government of Southern Sudan* (GOSS) is a regional government that governs Southern Sudan. *National Islamic Front* (NIF) is an Islamic organization that became a political party and assumed power in the 1980s in Sudan. *Ikhwan al Muslimeen* (Muslim Brotherhood) is an Islamic organization that was involved in mobilizing Muslims and establishing Islamic Sharia Law. *Christian Solidarity International* (CSI) is a Christian human rights organization that helped in freeing Southern Sudanese African Christians and animists who were enslaved by Northern Sudan. *International Organization for Migration (IOM)* sponsors immigrants and refugees for resettlement in various parts of the world. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR)* is an international humanitarian agency.

In chapter 1, I have introduced the general background of the thesis research and the reason why I chose to write about this particular subject, the influence of ethnic and religion in the Sudanese conflict. Chapter 2 gives a brief history of Sudan and the nature of the conflicts in their chronological sequence. Chapter 3 is a literature review and discusses an overview of identity and religion in the North-South Sudanese conflict;

Chapter 4 explains the methodology procedures. Chapter 5 reports the results and

Chapter 6 discusses the thesis analysis and conclusion.

Chapter 2: History of the conflict and attempts to resolve it

Sudan is geographically and socially diverse in language, race, religion, and location (Ronen, 1999). Sudan is an Arabic name meaning "the land of the black people" (Gall, 1998). This name was created by Arab traders when they took refuge in the country during an earlier migration. Prior to the Arab traders' arrival, the land was inhabited by African Christians and animists. The Arabs took control of the land, changed names, and attempted to integrate African cultures with their own. This mentality initiated the conflicts between African Christians and animists and Arab Muslims.
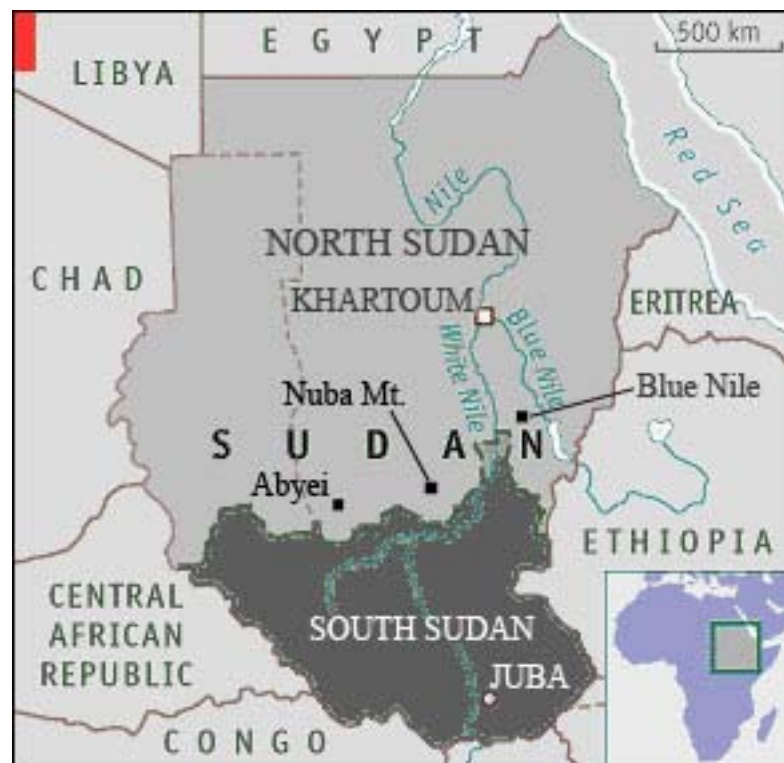
Figure 1 Map of the Sudan showing territorial areas of North and South Sudan

Sudan, one of the largest countries in Africa and in the Arab world, enjoys dual membership in Africa and the Middle East because of cultural connections and geographical location. The nation is located in Northeast Africa and shares borders with nine countries. Sudan is known as a meeting point of Africans, Arabs, Christians, and Muslims. These distinctive traditions should make the country rich and peaceful, but this hope has been denied by the imposition of ethnic traditions and religious beliefs. This mandate produced antagonism among groups and caused endless conflict for almost 51 years. The conflict began even before British colonials left Sudan in 1956. This chapter is organized to present a chronology of important events and influence in the history of the current conflict in Sudan.

Colonialism in Sudan

Many of the current difficulties in Africa and Sudan root back to colonialism. Africa is cursed with endless conflict, widespread corruption, and devastating poverty, which sprouted from colonial rule. Nhema (2008) explained that colonists reformed African communities and favored certain ethnic elites they trusted to run various countries' affairs in the colonists' absence. During the colonial era, colonists worked closely with elite politicians from certain ethnic groups who did not challenge colonial rule (Nhema, 2008).

According to Deng (1995) and Jok (2007), when the British colonists left Sudan, they handed the government to Arab Muslim elites because they were more educated than the Southern Sudanese at that time. According to Deng (1995), British policy in Sudan made the Arab Muslims feel they had the opportunity to impose their traditions on

non-Arabs and non-Muslims. The recent conflict is continuing this unfinished business from the mishandling of colonial rule.

The ongoing crises in Sudan are blamed primarily on mismanagement by colonists from Britain (Nhema & Zeleza, 2008). It was British policy that divided Sudan into an Arab Muslim North and African Christian and Animist South. This division ignored ethnic and religious diversity throughout in Sudan. The British favored Arab Muslims over African Christians and Animists, and transferred power to the Arabs, who imposed their "new colonialism" on Africans. Arabs called themselves superior and saw others as inferior (Jok, 2001). This ethnocentrism and pride created a power struggle based on ethnic identity and contributed to conflicts throughout Sudan. The practice of occupation, exploitation, and subjugation led to isolation, rivalry, and hatred between ethnic groups.

The divide-and-conquer mindset of the colonists created antagonisms that still divide African people today. Rabie (1994) wrote "When the colonial powers realized that they had to depart, they made every effort to transfer the helms of power to their friends and local agents" (p. 164). This favoritism created divisions between ethnic groups who tried to impose their traditions on others and exploit resources. This new colonialism and exploitation is no different from that of the former colonists and has caused mass killing in Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, and elsewhere. This "favoritism" led to genocide in Rwanda, in the Tutsi and Hutu conflict (Bakwesegha, 2004). This same policy led to what has been called genocide in Darfur and unspeakable murders in Southern Sudan.

Thus colonial control in Africa has partially ended, but the divisions it created block peace and unity among the African people. These antagonisms still continue to this day.

First Civil War

Sudan faced her first civil war in 1955, a few months before the British departure (Deng, 1995; Wai, 1973). When Sudan was close to gaining sovereignty, elites from the South attempted to persuade the British to divide the country before they left. Unfortunately, British and Arab Muslim elites held private meetings to discuss the process of handing over the country's affairs. Southern elites were excluded in this independence arrangement. Within four months, Sudan declared her independence in 1956. This move left southern elites with limited options and they decided to take up arms against the newly formed nation. The rebel movement from the South, known as the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM), declared its armed struggle against the Arab Muslim-dominated government in Khartoum (Deng, 1995; Glickman, 2000; Jok, 2001; Wai, 1973). The reason for starting the war was to pressure Arab Muslim elites to reverse their notion of imposing Arab identity on non-Arabs.

This conflict was difficult to resolve because these Arab Muslim elites were not cooperating with non-Arabs and non-Muslims in establishing a secular system. According to Deng (1995), the imposition of "Arabism" along with the Islamic religion remains, and continues to be a starting point for serial conflicts in Sudan. This association of religion with politics and social affairs has complicated coexistence between the North and the South for at least a generation and will likely continue unless Arab Muslims in

the North, non-Arabs, and non-Muslims establish a secular system to accommodate all people and beliefs. The SSLM and the central government signed an agreement in 1972 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, which established an autonomous government in Southern Sudan (Deng, 1995; Jok, 2007). Twelve years later, this government was dissolved because Arab elites considered the agreement an introduction of secularism in the state; President Nimeiri imposed Islamic Sharia Law nationally. This led to another civil war in 1983.

Second Civil War

The second civil war was declared on May 16, 1983 by the new rebel movement known as the Sudanese People Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A). This movement conveyed a vision for all marginalized Sudanese in the entire country. Its aim was to either create a democratic Sudan under secularism or opt for the secession of Southern Sudan (Deng, 1995; Glickman, 2000; Jok, 2001). The SPLM/A's vision for establishing secularism in Sudan has not been realized, however. In 2005, the SPLM/A signed a comprehensive peace agreement with the Khartoum government, which established two different interim governments: one secular government known as the Government of National Unity (GONU) in Khartoum and a second Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) in the South (Collins, 2008). But Islamic Sharia Law is still being used against non-Muslim populations who live in the north.

The SPLM/A's vision of secularism was misinterpreted in that its aims were perceived as intended to eliminate Arab Muslims in the North. President Nimeiri, along with Islamic Organizations (the Republican Brothers and Muslim Brotherhood) declared

jihad against the South. Glickman (2000) stated that the President called the Southerners "infidels" and called for volunteers to join jihad and fight the rebel movement in order to end resistance to Arab and Islamic influence in Sudan. The resistance to Arab and Islamic traditions has frustrated Arab Muslims in the North. The former Speaker of the Sudanese Parliament, Dr. Hassan Abdallah al-Turabi (a leader of Ikhwan al Muslimeen and the National Islamic Front [NIF]), and the current Second Vice-President of Sudan, Dr. Ali Mohammend Osama Taha vowed angrily that Sudan would not reconsider her identity as an Arab and Islamic state. They declared that Islamic Sharia Law would remain the law of the land and would be used to punish wrongdoers whether they were Sudanese, foreigners, or non-Muslims (Bengio and Ben-Dor, 1999).

Comprehensive 2005 Peace Agreement

On January 9, 2005, North and South Sudan signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) to end the longest civil war in the history of African continent. This peace accord was perceived as an opportunity to restore trust in the broken relationships between African Christians and Animists and Arab Muslims. Some of the key factors that fueled the conflict were resolved, but the issue of national identity was not. Arab Muslims defined the country as an Arab and Islamic state. The 2005 peace agreement encouraged the establishment of a secular system and freedom for all people of every ethnic and religious background (Martin, 2006). Yet, Arab Muslims continue to ignore this resolution. This issue still divides the Sudanese people.

The issue of ethnic and religious identities was unresolved by the peace agreement. The South Sudanese demanded that a unified Sudan could be possible only if

Arab Muslims accepted the establishment of "secularism" (Martin, 2006). This proposal failed because Sudanese Arab Muslim tradition holds Islamic law and politics as inseparable.

The peace agreement established two government systems: the Government of National Unity (GONU) that oversees Sudan, and the Government of South Sudan (GOSS), which rules autonomous regions in Southern Sudan. Power and wealth-sharing were mandated in the peace protocols (El Hassan, 2008). This peace agreement was seen as an opportunity to make unity attractive. The South Sudanese would be permitted to vote for independence after a six year period.

This independence could give birth to 54 sovereign nations in Africa, or a deadly conflict could resume. The clock was ticking for a South Sudan referendum. South Sudanese President Salva Kiir Mayardit warned that the South Sudanese would overwhelmingly vote for an independent state on January 9, 2011, because Arab Muslims had failed to make peace attractive (*Sudan Tribune*, October 1, 2010). Such independence was seen as leading either to a resumption of conflict or the creation of a new state.

South Sudan Votes for Independence

The South Sudanese people saw the beginning of 2011 as a year to rewrite history. They expected freedom and prosperity in voting to create a new nation. In January 2011, more than 4 million South Sudanese registered and voted for self-determination and independence from Northern Sudan. South Sudanese people went to the polling stations with jubilation and enthusiasm, shouting "my vote is my freedom." On February 7, 2011, the result of their votes was announced: 3,837,406 million South

Sudanese voted for independence from Northern Sudan; only 44,888 South Sudanese voted for unity with the North. South Sudanese independence was officially announced on July 9, 2011. Sudan's history has been rewritten; a new nation home to African Christians and Animists is born.

International observers have said that the referendum voting process was peaceful. Officials from The Carter Center and The European Union said voting was free, fair, credible, successful and broadly consistent with international standards. The results were first acknowledged by Sudanese President Omer Al Basher and then acknowledged by Australia, Britain, Russia, and United States. The African Union, European Union, and the United Nations have accepted the results and will recognize South Sudan as a sovereign nation.

Many South Sudanese received this news with enthusiasm and believe that slavery and discrimination have ended. Louis Makor, a political activist from Southern Sudan, said, "We have gained our rights, our self-determination, freedom, and I am staying up all night long to celebrate this triumph" (*Sudan Tribune News*, January 17, 2011). The creation of a new state in South Sudan was thus perceived as freeing African Christians and Animists from Arab Muslim domination in the North.

In summary, the Sudanese conflicts have a chronic history fueled by ethnic and religious discrimination, and political and economic inequality. The South Sudanese leaders declared the first and second civil wars in attempt to establish a new Sudan with a secular system in the country. However, this vision was refused by the Arab-Muslims from North Sudan and South Sudan was left without alternative but to seek an

independent nation as a solution to end the continuous conflicts. As a result, the South

Sudanese voted for an independent state and South Sudan officially came into existence

on July 9, 2011.

Chapter 3: Identity and Religion

This literature review helps identify the key factors in the North-South Sudan conflict. I have divided the literature review into 8 sub-sections. Each of the following themes is examined: Ethnic identity and conflict; ethnic identity in Sudan and the North-South Sudan conflict; religion and violence; religion in Sudan and the North-South Sudan conflict; slavery and the slave trade in the North-South Sudan conflict; resolving religious conflicts; and contributions from conflict theory and practice. A final summary weaves the themes together to show the foundation for my study.

Ethnic Identity and Conflict

Ethnic differences have resulted in devastating conflicts in various parts of the world. In Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda, the Congo, and Darfur, Sudan, ethnic differences have led to hatred and often caused catastrophic conflicts (Deng, 1995; Jok, 2001, 2007). Olson and Rothman (2001) have explained that "between 1945 and 1993, 91 civil wars were identified as conflicts over identity versus political or economic issues" (p.290). These conflicts occurred due to threats or frustrations existing within groups in given countries.

Narang explained that there are "190 nations and there are 3,000 ethnic groups who are agitated and engaged in one or other form of struggle for their identity" (p. 2696). Conflicts related to ethnic identity are occurring more frequently than conflicts with political and economic motives. This is because ethnic groups feel threatened and take up arms to express their concerns in violent conflicts. Narang (2002) said that "the deep-laid sources of the conflicts in most countries experiencing ethnic or minority conflicts are

countries such as: Chad, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, the Philippines, China, Moldova, the UK, Pakistan, Yugoslavia, Indonesia and many others" (p. 2696). Schirch (2001) holds that in many societies, ethnic conflicts are inevitable because ethnic minorities lack representation. She describes these conflicts "as relational problems between individuals and groups characterized by power imbalances, poor communication, and dysfunctional social structures that are unable to meet human needs" (p. 145).

Narang explains that the most common sources of ethnic tensions are:

1. Exclusion from employment opportunities because of language or religious requirements, both in the civil service or in private activities;

2. Actual exclusion of members of a substantial minority from most state employment positions, especially in the higher echelons;

3. Denial of land ownership, or refusal to recognize traditional land ownership;

4. Refusal to allow minorities to hold elected office because of language or other discriminatory criterion;

5. Economic development projects in minority regions which benefit the majority instead of the minority;

6. Expropriation of traditional lands without proper compensation, and/or trans-migration programme which results in arrival of vast numbers of migrants;

7. Refusal to use minority language in public schools and administration where warranted by substantial number of speakers of a minority language;

8. Denial of citizenship and corresponding rights on a discriminatory basis; and

9. Prohibition of use of minority languages, symbols or of minority religious practices in private activities. (p. 2697)

The exclusion of ethnic minorities creates frustrations and often leads to conflicts (Fisher, 2001; Rothman & Olson, 2001). Meeting basic human needs for vulnerable ethnic minority communities competing with dominant ethnic elites is sometimes difficult. This system in Sudan has led the Southern Sudanese to fight for their survival. They must acquire basic needs and, at the same time, protect their identities. Rothman believed that "conflicts involving ethnic identity do, in fact, contain issues of resources or other tangible interests" (p. 291).

A denial of basic human needs can cause discontent and violence between groups and people within given communities. Staub (2003) explained that "Frustration of basic needs is central in the development of hostility and aggression, while fulfillment is central in the development of caring about other people's welfare and altruism" (p. 52).

There is an African proverb used when people feel they are excluded by systems and denied basic needs. It says, "My oppressors have their first options to feed me, respect me, give me freedom, kill me, however, if they fail to do these things, I will fight them and get what I need." This proverb has emerges in many countries in Africa where dictators practice corruption, discrimination, nepotism, and marginalization against people of different races, religions, and political systems. Attempts to end these malpractices often lead to catastrophic conflicts. As Staub (2003) explained, "Basic needs have an impressive quality: they press for satisfaction. If they cannot be fulfilled by

constructive means, people will attempt to fulfill them by destructive means; that is, in ways that harm themselves and/or other people" (p. 53).

There is no fair system and many societies have malpractices or injustices intended to exclude and marginalize certain groups and communities. Exclusiveness or denying basic human needs to groups or people because of their race, religion, or political affiliations can elevate frustrations and ultimately lead to violent conflict. Most conflicts are created to address human needs denied by oppressive systems. As more people lack basic needs throughout the world, conflicts have become intensified. Staub (2003) explained that "Difficult life conditions in a society, such as intense economic problems or intense political disorganization or conflict, or great, rapid social change, or some combination of these are frequently the starting point for genocide violence. These conditions create social chaos and disorganization" (p. 54).

Even if conflicts seem inevitable, education and good justice systems can help manage conflicts. Whether conflicts are cause by a denial of basic needs or something else, the suggestions provided by conflict resolution experts can help minimize conflict.

These dark clouds of conflict represent a betrayal of the spiritual traditions of all of the people of Sudan. All Sudanese seek peace. When those within and without Abrahamic traditions learn to treat their neighbors as they would be treated, all things can become possible. Only by embracing traditions which hold them together and rejecting war, can reconciliation, reconstruction, and revitalization proceed.

Ethnic Identity in Sudan and the North-South Sudan Conflict

Sudan is ethnically diverse (Deng, 1995; Jok, 2001; Wai 1973). Many sub-ethnic groups identify themselves as Arab and Muslim, while 60 sub-ethnic groups in Southern Sudan are Christian or Animist and claim African identity. The conflict between African Christians and Arab Muslims in Sudan has been perceived as stimulated by ailing contemporary traditions (Deng, 1995). The traditions of African and Arab identity have not been reconciled since the birth of Sudan.

Deng (1995) suggests that Sudan is still evolving a national identity. People from East, North, and West Sudan call themselves Arabs. They may identify themselves only as being from the Middle East or Africa. People from Blue Nile, Southern Sudan, and Southern Kordofan call themselves Africans.

The conflict in Sudan was no different from other conflicts mentioned. One of the factors associated with the Sudan conflict has been ethnic identity differences (Deng, 1995; Jok, 2007; Olson & Rothman, 2001).

Dynamics included in these cultural shifts involve ethnic identity, geopolitical conflicts, and imposition of the Islamic religion. These mechanisms have strained relationships and precluded peaceful coexistence between African Christian and Animist groups in the South, and Arab Muslim groups in the North (Jok, 2007).

This conflict has been difficult to resolve because the demands of African ethnic groups were not met by the Arabs. These demands were: (1) to maintain their groups' identities; (2) equal recognition; and (3) equal status with Arab Muslims (Deng, 1995; Jok, 2007). This conflict persisted because ethnic identity survived in each group and no

group was willing to compromise. This lack of compromise made peaceful coexistence less possible and dragged conflicts on for many years.

Experts on ethnic conflict say such conflicts and demands are difficult to resolve quickly. Olson and Rothman (2001) explained that "parties in identity-based conflict fear that their identity needs will be neglected or negated by a conflict settlement, they will not be motivated to engage in negotiations to settle" (p. 295). This is a living reality in the Sudan conflict. African ethnic groups fear that assimilating their identity with Arab identity is a form of discarding their identity.

Religion and Violence

Religion blends both positive and negative ideals. The peaceful teachings of Christianity and Islam demonstrate positive ideals based on tolerance. But religious "fundamentalisms" within these traditions have shifted this philosophy of tolerance into violence, especially between Christians and Muslims. These religious cleavages become catastrophic when one religion battles to promote its dominance and teachings. This occurs especially when one of the religions is a minority in a given country (Fox, 2002). Christianity and Islam are based in peace, unity, loving, forgiveness and supporting needy people. But the absence of peace—and countless atrocities—can be traced to religious influence and the presence of religiously motivated conflict in some societies (Adekola, 2009). Fighting over religious doctrine has let fear and violence win over faith and love.

Religious fundamentalism often contradicts religious doctrines which support peace. For decades, atrocities have been committed "in the name of religion." These

atrocities occurred at both intra-national and international levels. The rise of violence in multiethnic and multi-religious countries has initiated a "cleavage" that causes conflicts. Hassan and Gray (2002, p. 117) call this religious cleavage an '*ill*' of religion. This ill constitutes a negative part of religion's role in the complex social structures of Sudan.

Beckford and Demerath (2007) have insisted that "religion operates as one of the many forces shaping and being shaped by our increasingly globalized and globally conflicted world" (p. 3). Considering the catastrophic atrocities waged to preserve religious belief, this "ill" has multiple results and exacerbates difficult ethnic relations. These conflicts are not specific to or limited to Sudan.

Kriesberg (2007) explained that "religions usually provide a general vision of how individuals or communities should treat each other, including guidelines for engaging in conflict" (p. 132). Examples of hateful religious engagement in support of conflicts are the atrocities of Al Qaida and its leader, Osama bin Laden. Bin Laden waged war on Western countries, and particularly the United States. Kriesberg explains that in February 1998, Bin Laden issued a statement saying, "Jihad against Jews and Crusaders condemns the wrongs committed by the United States against Muslims" (Kriesberg, 2007, p.133). Bin Laden described the alleged wrongs as such:

> For over seven years the United States has been occupying the lands of Islam in the holiest of places, the Arabian Peninsula, plundering its riches…, humiliating its people…Second, …the great devastation inflicted on the Iraqi people by the crusaders-Zionist alliance…, Third, if the Americans' aims behind these wars are religious and economic, the aim is also to serve

the Jews' petty state and divert attention from its occupation of Jerusalem

and murder of Muslims there. On that basis, and in compliance with God's

order, we issue the following fatwa to all Muslims: The ruling to kill

Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for

every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it

Kriesberg, 2007, p. 133).

Gopin (2003) said that "Religion is thus one of the most salient phenomena likely

to cause massive violence in this century" (p. 253). Religion is often used by brutal

leaders and regimes to mobilize forces to fight and defend their interests. Religion was a

factor in many tragic conflicts because certain groups and leaders wanted to successfully

dominate others. Gopin explained that in many cases "complicity of leading religious

figures or institutions was critical to the success of the oppression" (p. 255). They use

religion to rally their groups to defend political and social interests.

The calamity of religious conflict continues to create hate and isolation among

communities. We are left searching for ways to unify people despite their differences.

Conflicts associated with religion have drawn major attention in the 20th and 21st

centuries. Even in the diplomatic arena, religious differences have interfered with policies

and created hateful relations. The ongoing heated diplomatic relations between the West

and the Arab world are shaded by religious animosities. The leaders of Al Qaeda, Hamas,

and Hezbollah have argued that Western influences in Middle Eastern nations and other

parts of the Arab world are reasons for waging jihad and extremism against the West.

These justifications for violence interfere with efforts to secure the peace.

Religion in Sudan and the North-South Sudan Conflict

Fox (2002) defined 'ethnoreligious conflict' as conflict between ethnic groups who are of different religions. The ethnoreligious conflict in Sudan presents a unique case. The religious influence in politics and social affairs in Sudan has been especially controversial because it is *designed* to promote a divisive view. This proactive provocation has predictably strained relations between Sudanese ethnic groups.

Religions in Sudan include Animism (Traditional Beliefs), Christianity, and Islam (Glickman, 2000). Religious "percentages" are geographically structured according to ethnic group distinctions found in African and Arab identities. Christianity and Animism are practiced in the South, Blue Nile, and Nuba Mountain regions of Sudan, by groups identifying with African cultures. The establishment of an Arab and Islamic state has been irreversible because Muslim populations remain a majority. According to Glickman (2000), religions denominations in Sudan consist of 60% Sunni Muslim populations (mostly residing in Central, East, North, and West Sudan), 25% "indigenous belief" and 15% Christian populations (mostly living in Southern Sudan, Abyei, Blue Nile, and Nuba Mountain regions in Northern Sudan). The nation of Sudan was ready to explode because of tensions among these groups.
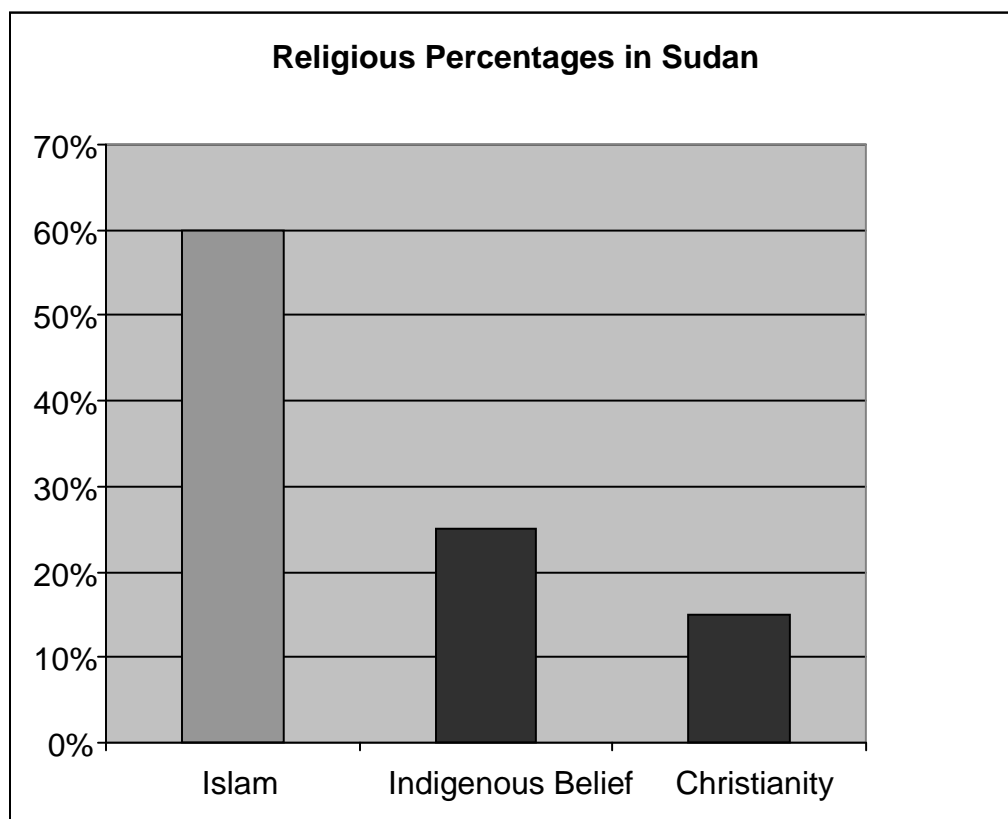
Figure 2: Religious Percentages in the Sudan

The role of religion in this conflict is important. These religious distinctions established spiritual identities for the Sudanese. These identities became important when the Sudanese government imposed Islamic traditions on Christians and Animists in South Sudan. During the conflict, Arab Muslim governments called on Arab Muslim ethnic groups to wage a holy war or 'jihad' against Christian. Animists were considered as infidels (*khaffir*) in Southern Sudan, Abyei, Blue Nile, and the Nuba Mountain regions (Collins, 2008; Jok, 2001; Sharkey, 2004). The notion of establishing Islamic identity in a multi-religious country mobilized Arab Muslims ethnic groups in Northern Sudan against Christians and Animists in Southern Sudan and encouraged religious rivalry.

As a consequence, conflicts evolved and a multiplicity of religious values created divisions. Each group, protecting their values, found "legitimate reasons" for hating and fighting members of different religions. Since the creation of Sudan, Islamic influence in politics and policies has created divisions between a Muslim majority in the North and Christian and Animist minorities in the South. Islamic influence has been unchallenged in Sudanese policies because the Muslim majority is the force, and contributes the only policy-makers in this multi-religious nation. Since 1955, every conflict fought between the North and South has been related to Islamic influence that undermines freedom of other religious groups in the country. These spiritual differences and religious misunderstandings have prevented reconciliation between Sudanese—an ability to see each other as one people who belong to one nation.

Deng (1995) acknowledged that the "turn of Islam against the South, became a divisive element" (p. 11). Consequently, "religion" became a divisive influence the government used to organize individuals and groups to commit inhumane acts to promote certain government objectives. The conflict was ignited by several factors, but religion has been fundamental. Arab Muslims used 'Islam' to rally support and gain financial and military support from the larger Muslim world. In the same manner, African Christians and Animists in the South used their Christian and African identity to seek support from Africa and Western nations. These supporting factions often fueled the conflict.

Promoting one exclusive religious identity creates division in multi-religious regions. These conflicts had already occurred in Chad, Bosnia, Indonesia, Nigeria, Sudan, and several other nations (Elaigwu & Dunstan, 1984). In the North- South Sudan conflict,

in 1983, the Sudan government declared a mandate to impose Islamic Sharia Law in hopes of transforming multi-ethnic and multi-religious Sudan into an Arab-dominated Muslim state (Eibner, 1999). The government intended this imposition to be a method for establishing and promoting an Islamic state. During the North-South Sudan conflicts, the imposition of an Islamic religious mandate was devastating.

Mandating Islamic Sharia Law limited and sabotaged the rights and freedoms of Christians and Animists in parts of Sudan. Christians and Animists perceived the imposition of Islam as an attempt to create an Arab and Islamic state, (Eibner, 1999). Ever since Sudan became independent, government and Islamic organization like *Ikhwan al Muslimeen* (Muslim Brotherhood) have been attempting to convert non-Muslim ethnic groups in Southern Sudan (Glickman, 2000). This mission was initially implemented in peaceful approaches by building Mosques and Islamic schools. The Brotherhood also paid people who were willing to convert to the Islamic religion (Glickman, 2000). Intellectuals, politicians, church leaders, and elders noticed this campaign was persisting and tried to ban Islamic missionaries in the South.

This irritated Muslim lawmakers, who pressured the President to sign a law making Islamic Sharia Law the national standard. This debate was ended in the 1970s, when President Jafar Nimeiri declared that Sudan was an Islamic state and Islamic Sharia Law was the law of the land (Deng, 1995). This imposition encouraged non-Muslim politicians to form a rebellion in 1983; they immediately banned all Islamic activities that were imposed on non-Muslim populations in the South. However, it was non-Muslims

who lived in the North during the Shaira Law's implementation who were the first to face inhumane sentences.

Since then, implementing Islamic law has resulted in horrific punishments in Khartoum. These punishments included the following changes: *(1) Punishment for stealing was now defined as an amputation of one hand for the first offense and the remaining hand for the second, (2) Adultery was punishable by death by stoning, and (3) Prostitution was punishable by public flogging* (Collins, 2008*).* No exceptions were made for Southern Sudanese Christians or Animists, despite their religious differences.

The mission of this imposition was to exterminate non-Muslims from Southern Sudan. In the 1980s, the Arab Muslim government in Sudan declared holy war (jihad) against the Christians and Animists in Southern Sudan (Jok, 2001; Sharkey, 2004; Warburg 2003). Between 1986 and 1989, Southern Sudan regions came under devastating attack from the Arab Muslim-dominated government in Khartoum. Multiple war campaigns consisted of regular military attacks on rebel-controlled areas. Meanwhile, Arab Muslims organized militias from Rezeigat and Messiriya ethnic groups waged merciless attacks on the Dinka sections of Malual and Twic in Southern Sudan (Eibner, 1999). Organized militias from various Arab Muslim ethnic groups repeatedly attacked different Dinka sections and killed and abducted tens of thousands of civilians (Eibner, 1999).

These militias took livestock and destroyed items they could not manage to carry. This caused catastrophic famine that took the lives of more than 150,000 Dinkas (Jok & Eibner). This discrimination and hatred still divides the Sudanese. Even after the signing

of the peace agreement in Sudan, Arab Muslims in the North and Christians and Animists in the South don't seem to coexist because Islamic Sharia Law still applies restrictions in major cities.

Resolving Religious Conflicts

Ethnic identity conflicts can be solved with appropriate means. Abu-Nimer and Schirch (2001) explained that "in interethnic identity conflicts, simple changes in contextual arrangements can produce breakthroughs and change the attitudes of participants" (p.344). This strategy can work with power- and wealth-sharing and a pledge to recognize ethnic identities.

If people explore these solutions, many conflicts can be avoided. The causes of ethnic conflicts are rooted in discrimination against, and the marginalization of ethnic minorities. People of different ethnicities can live peacefully if dominant ethnic groups allow systems that provide opportunities for ethnic minorities.

While religion has certainly been at the root of many violent conflicts, including that of Sudan, some have suggested that religion plays a positive role in peacemaking and reconciliation, and addressing violent conflict (Kriesberg, 2007). Religions are well known for doctrines meant to preserve humanity. Rejecting violence and killing, while caring for the poor and needy are usually advocated by followers of Catholicism, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and other major religions (Kriesberg, 2007). This pacifist belief is rooted in peacemaking. Violent conflicts have been perpetrated in the aftermath of Christian crusades and Al Qaida's Jihadism, but however tragic, these

incidents cannot wipe away religious motivations for peacefulness, loving, and forgiveness.

Some religious leaders rely on faith in struggles for political and social freedoms. Gopin (2003) provided examples of peaceful movement through the religious inspirations of Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Dalai Lama. According to Gopin, in some places, religious leaders attempt to promote coexistence between adversaries. He provided an example of efforts to create peaceful coexistence in Israel by Jewish Rabbis and Muslim Sheikhs who proposed a religious peace treaty (p. 260). Even though this effort did not achieve long-lasting peace, the strategy and attitude of turning to religious belief revealed alternative possibilities for communities in violent conflict to engage in peacemaking.

Gopin has proposed nine suggestions that can be used to support coexistence through a religious lens. These are:

1. Recognize the paradox of religious hate and love, violence and pro-social values, and face the implications.

2. Rein the damage of prejudices and hatred emanating from the texts and traditions of organized religion, as well as from religious leaders and representatives.

3. Understand the paradoxes of hermeneutic variation with time and place.

4. Understand the war within each religion both in the traditional way and in the contemporary setting.

5. Find the peacemakers, and strengthen them within and between communities.

6. Build alliances of new hermeneutics, interpretations, and symbols to support coexistence.

7. Focus on deeds more than dialogue, or make dialogue contingent on or interactive with a regime of religious bilateral deeds.

8. Understand and use the interaction of economics, psychology, power relations, and military reality, along with religious trends, to coordinate more effectively secular and religious efforts of peace, security, and development, (Gopin, 2003, p. 260).

Gopin (2001) explained that religion, as "a way of healing human relationships and solving human conflicts," is an age-old practice that appears in numerous religious traditions (p. 87). He suggested that religion was instrumental in reconciliation movements in South Africa, Bosnia, and Rwanda. According to Gopin, religious cultures teach believers to forgive one another for committing violence or inflicting pain on others. Teaching forgiveness is a way of healing wounds and reconciling individuals or groups to live as examples of religious doctrine. Gopin explained that forgiveness can take various forms. Forgiveness can be "verbal acts and formal gestures; confession, apology, repentance, and acknowledgment of the past; a willingness to suffer punishment as part of forgiveness" (p.88).

The peaceful teachings of religious faith can sometimes provoke both negative and positive actions. But conflict resolution perspectives have convinced many that religion plays the greater role in peacemaking. Gopin explained that believers of various

religions offer forgiveness to be close to their God (2001, p.77). He provides three stages

that are used in Islam to encourage forgiveness. These three stages are directly taken

from the Islamic Qu'ran holy book. They are:

1. Forgiveness as forgetting,

2. Forgiveness as ignoring or turning away from, as a defensive maneuver if

   someone insults you, and

3. Divine forgiveness which refers to Allah's covering up of sins. (p. # 77)

It is worth recognizing that religion should not be seen as primarily a negative

factor in violent human behavior. Islam and Christianity are peaceful religions. The

stages of forgiveness provided in Islam advocate peaceful coexistence, even while violent

conflicts have been carried in the name of Islam. There still exists an optimism that

followers of Animism, Christianity and Islam can live together peacefully if they follow

the teaching of forgiveness, love, and unity.

There are two approaches to resolving religious conflicts. Various scholars have

suggested mechanisms for bringing together adversaries to live in peace. Interfaith

dialogue and secular systems have both been considered as alternatives for educating

people, encouraging tolerance, and creating peaceful coexistence.

Audi (2000) suggested three principles to help subdue religious intolerance. These

principles advocate the separation of church and state and are models for a secular

system:

Libertarian principle: says that the state must permit the practice of any religion,

though within certain limits. This is a principle of tolerance. It does not imply

approval of any particular religion; it simply recognizes the importance to citizens of their freedom to practice their religion and, on the negative side, the inappropriateness of interference with that freedom by governmental institutions. (2) Equalitarian principle: says that the state may not give preference to one religion over another. This is a principle of impartiality. (3) Neutrality principle: says that state should neither favor nor disfavor religion (or the religious) as such, that is, give positive or negative preference to institutions or person simply because they are religious. Interfaith dialogue is also another alternative to solving the religious conflicts. (p. 224)

These guidelines can provide a framework for changing social relationships and reducing conflict. There are examples of successfully ameliorating conflicts with effective communications.

In the 1990s, amidst the violence in Nigeria, Pastor James Wuye and Imam Muhammad Ashafa made courageous decisions by bringing rival communities together. These men once represented fundamentalist Christian and Muslim youth who had created hostilities in Nigeria. After observing the consequences of years of violence, these leaders rejected violence and created opportunities for interfaith dialogue. This dialogue eventually allowed peaceful resolution among these groups (Little, 2007).

Pastor James and Imam Muhammad began a joint preaching mission in Christian and Muslim youth communities and brought them together for reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. These religious leaders created an organization called the Muslim-Christian Dialogue Forum (MCDF).

This organization has been active in mediation and reconciliation efforts between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria since 1995 (Little, 2007). Despite the many challenges they face, the Interfaith Mediation Center has made significant contributions toward easing local religious tensions and reconciling warring communities in Nigeria.

The inspiring story of Pastor James Wuye and Imam Muhammad Ashafa, the Nigeria Christian-Muslim team, further underscores the conspicuous peacemaking potential of religion. A product of their own personal efforts to overcome Christian-Muslim hostility in Nigeria quickly developed into an extraordinary vehicle for training youths and others in the techniques of mediation and conflict reduction, and in the practice of reconciliation. By now the Interfaith Mediation Center has worked with seven thousands youths, has a membership of ten thousand people, and has located at least two youth leaders trained in conflict-resolution in every one of Nigeria's thirty-six states.

Ending religious conflicts is a challenge, yet solutions can be found. These solutions require systems that encourage religious tolerance. Religious freedom allows members of different faiths to worship without fear, intimidation, or harassment. This creates harmony in multi-religious societies. Creative dialogue and education reduces conflicts over religious differences.

Many scholars believe Sudanese authorities can establish a better system to encourage unity and peace instead of divisions and conflicts (Deng, 1995; Jok, 2001; Wai, 1973). Dr. John Garang de Mabior, the leader of the rebel movement SPLM/A, stated in his public address (shortly after signing a Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 with the Sudanese government) that "It is up to the Arab Muslim north to make the

unity of Sudan attractive….either by accepting a secular Sudan or keeping the notion of defining Sudan as an Arab and Islamic state." (Dr. John speech, 2005).

One of the obstacles to reconciliation and reconstruction among various religious groups is the perception that conflict is *inevitable*. The fact that conflict has dominated periods of human history neither predicts nor controls the future. Once people are educated and understand the dynamics which inspire hatred and war, religious strife can be subdued with a proactive pursuit of peace. Tolerance can promote unity in warring societies, and courage can conquer fear.

Slavery in Sudan

Between 1983 and 1998, when slavery and the slave trade reemerged in Sudan, it was possible to buy a human being for as little as $15. These human beings were African Southern Sudanese Christians and Animists (Jacobs 1996). They were forcibly taken to "cultural-cleansing" camps for indoctrination in Arab culture and were compelled to convert to Islam (Jacobs and Lado, 1996). As Lado (1996) reported, in 1987 more than 1,500 Dinka civilians were burnt to death in "train wagons" in El Diein-Babanusa; over 7000 children and women were enslaved by Arab Muslim militias from Rezeiygat and Messiriya tribes (p. 2). This tragedy occurred in the 20th century, when slavery and the slave trade were no longer thought to exist.

The role of slavery and the slave trade in Sudan prior to and during the North-South Sudan conflict is important because it resulted in a catastrophic loss of lives and cultures among African Christian and Animist ethnic groups in Southern Sudan. During the conflict, ethnic identity (among other factors) was perceived as an influential force

that encouraged slavery and the slave trade in the African Christian and Animist Dinka

sections of Malual, Tuic, and Ngok in Southern Sudan. According to Jok (2001),

Sudanese society seems to be extremely polarized along perceived racial lines, such that

each ethnic group strives to impose its "tradition" on people of different cultures.

Therefore, slavery and the slave trade in Sudan was "legitimate" according to Islamic

traditions, and enslavement of non-Muslims captured in the course of jihad conflict was

allowed (Eibner, 1999).

On December 10, 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and

proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that slavery and the slave trade

were violations against humanity. Article 4 of the UN declaration stated that "No one

shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all

their forms" (UN, 2007, p. 5). Sudan, a member state of the United Nations, still has not

implemented this mandate and continues to practice slavery and the slave trade among

people of African origin and Christian and Animist religious affiliation in Southern

Sudan.

Slavery and the slave trade in Sudan are incited by racial and religious differences

among African ethnic traditions and Christian and Animist beliefs. Leopold (2003)

conceded that slavery and the slave trade in Sudan have enforced 'racial lines' and

reinforced distinctions between Northern Arab Muslims and Southern Sudanese African

Christians and Animists. This claim of racial bias has been validated, because in the civil

war era, Arab ethnic groups waged slave-raids on the Malual Dinka people in Aweil and

Ngok Dinka of Abyei. These slave-raids also spread to Twic Dinka areas in Gorgrial in

Southern Sudan and emphasized ethnic differences, according to Leopold and Jok (2001).

These differences between people and cultures made it impossible to realize the UN

mandate against slavery.

While overt intercontinental slavery and slave trade practice eventually ended,

intrastate slavery and the slave trade remains hidden but active. Twaddell (1996), in his

address to the US Congress, explained that slave raiding and slavery of Southern

Sudanese has a long malignant history beginning in 1821. As ethnic conflicts amplify,

root causes relating to these conflicts become apparent. Ethnic cleansing and the

humiliations of slavery were forced upon minorities who were perceived as inferior. This

was the case in Sudan. Ethnic and religious differences encouraged slavery and the slave

trade (Jacob, 1996). In the Sudan Civil War, these cultural differences drove the conflict

and contributed to an ongoing tragedy.

People of African descent from Southern Sudan suffered punishment,

extermination, and conversion to Islamic and Arabic traditions. In his 1996 Testimony to

the United States Congress, Augustine Lado (1996) explained that slavery and the slave

trade continued in Southern Sudan and during the imposition of Turkish/Egyptian rule in

Northern Sudan in 1821. These inhuman practices become even more widespread during

the civil war from the 1980s to the 1990s. The devastation had not ended.

The enslavement of the Southern Sudanese has been committed at different times

since the earliest intercontinental and internal slave trading in Sudan. In the mid-

nineteenth century, Southern Sudanese slaves were traded in Tripoli, Libya, Cairo, Egypt,

and in the Hausa country known today as Nigeria. The three regions composed of Bahr el

Ghazal, Darfur, and Kordofan were essentially slave frontiers during the slave trade (Leopold, 2003). In the midst of the 1980s and 1990s conflicts, Southern Sudanese people suffered unprecedented slave trafficking when Arab Muslims took them to Northern Sudan. Slavery and slave trades were mandated in Southern Sudan to weaken the position of the rebel movement in the regions (Jok, 2001). In more recent times the brutal oppression of the slave trade has been undiminished.

According to Jok (2001), Southern Sudanese people and other enslaved members of African descent have existed since the arrival of Arab Muslim traders in Sudan. This enslavement has been used to expand Islamic tradition and exploit Southerners for cheap labor in Northern Sudan. During the conflict between the North and South, more than 25,000 children and women from the Dinka ethnic sections of Malual, Ngok, and Tuic (in Southern Sudan) were enslaved in Northern Sudan by Arab Muslims (Jok, 2001). Lives continued to be lost and cultures destroyed.

Conflict resolution theory and practice

Lederach (1997) explaind that conflict resolution approaches that bring actors in the conflicts are essential to a successful peacebuilding. He employs specific models that were used in the conflict between North and South Sudan. He explains that in case of conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Sudan, grassroots leaders from religious groups, chiefs, cattle camp leaders, sheikhs, and church leaders should be used as mechanism to broker peace negotiations between the warring parties. This model succeeded because the parties that Lederach studied were rebel groups from within Southern Sudan. However,

the conflict between North and South Sudan was a chronic ethnic and religious motivated and the warring parties were lacking the above mentioned approach as a solution.

Conclusion

Themes of ethnic and religious discrimination emerged from a review of the literature which is developing on the conflict in Sudan. These causes are considered to be responsible for the conflicts. The impact of this behavior has encouraged hateful relations between African Christian Animists and Arab Muslims in Sudan. (Refugees from South Sudan who participated in this research have explained that the independence of South Sudan in last July was an alternative solution to the Sudanese conflict).

Chapter 4: Methodology

This research seeks to explore Southern Sudanese refugees' perceptions of the role of ethnic and religious differences in the North and South Sudanese conflict using a qualitative case study interview.

Qualitative Research

Strauss and Corbin (1990) defined qualitative research as "research about persons' lives, stories, behaviors, but also about organizational functioning, social movements, or interactional relationships" (p. 17). This method can be used to understand what is behind phenomenon about which little is yet known. This research method style can be used to study organizations, groups, and individuals. According to Creswell (2003), qualitative research uses multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic. The current study uses such methods to examine the perceptions and views of South Sudanese refugees who have experienced civil war in the past, and are now given an opportunity to educate those who may know little about the North and South Sudan conflict.

"Qualitative research is a largely situated process that locates the observer in the world" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Qualitative research takes place in natural settings when a researcher goes to the site, home, or office of the participant to conduct research (Creswell, 2003). According to Creswell, this qualitative method gives the researcher an opportunity to "develop a level of detail about the individual or place and to be highly involved in the actual experiences of the participants" (p. 181). Qualitative research is widely used in the field of social sciences because it seeks to interpret the meanings of

people's actions and stories, and obtain a more in-depth understanding of the subject and its context or setting.

Case study

Case study is a popular research strategy that is mostly used in the field of social sciences. This research strategy has inspired many researchers because it specifically deals with developed issues that are of interest to the researcher. In Creswell (2003), case study refers to a researcher's "in-depth exploration of a program, an event, an activity, a process or one or more individuals" (p. 15). The case(s) are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (Stake, 1995 as cited by Creswell, 2003, p. 15).

Yin (1994) defined case study as an "empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 13). He further explained that this inquiry is used to cope with variables of interest other than just data points, and with more than just one result. However, Stake (1995) made the point that case study can also focus on the particularity and complexity that seeks to understand the coming of activity within important situations.

For these reasons mentioned by different scholars, the purpose of using a case study research strategy in this research is to explicitly dig up and examine in depth factors of the North and South Sudan conflict.

Qualitative case study interviews

This qualitative interview research used an intrinsic case study to interview refugees from South Sudan who had resettled in Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington after they escaped Sudan's civil war. I chose this intrinsic case study because I am interested in the Sudanese conflict and wanted to learn more from the experience, perceptions, and views of South Sudanese refugees in the United States affected by this conflict. As Stake (1994) suggested, intrinsic case study is "undertaken because one wants better understanding of this particular case. Study is undertaken is undertaken because of intrinsic interest in, for example, this particular child, clinic, conference, or curriculum" (p.237). It was thus my interest to explore and learn the views of South Sudanese refugees about the very conflict that has affected them, including their current displacement into Western countries.

Fontana and Frey (1994) explained that "interviewing has a wide variety of forms and a multiplicity of uses. The most common type of interviewing is individual, face-to-face verbal interchange, but it can also take the form of face-to-face group interviewing, mailed or self-administered questionnaires, and telephone surveys" (p. 361). This research made use of face-to-face interviews because I wanted to have direct face-to-face interaction with participants; it also made the procedure easier for them since I was translating questions from English to Dinka, their native language.

Seidma (1991) has correctly emphasized the importance of interviewing in qualitative research. He explains that "At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that

experience" (p. 3). My interest in this research was to examine the experience of South Sudanese refugees and the way they perceive the Sudanese conflict. Using interview methods in this research was educational; I not only learned new things about the experiences of the participants, but also about how those who encounter horrific sufferings see the world we live in.

I chose the interview method because I wanted to examine the perceptions of South Sudanese refugees whom I knew had previously lived in Arab Muslim territories in Northern Sudan. I was curious to hear of their experiences. I wanted to know what they thought about the conflict and how they assessed Sudan's future. I learned a great deal when these refugees explained their experiences because I myself have not lived in Arab Muslim areas and knew little or nothing about the way South Sudanese were treated while dislocated in Northern Sudan.

In the interview procedure, I asked the participants who knew how to read and write English to fill out the questionnaire forms. I asked them to do that because I wanted them to put their own words on paper. Other participants were educated in Arabic but did not know English well enough to read, write, or understand the wording of the questionnaires. To make the procedures easier for these participants, I asked them to give me permission to read the questions to them and to write down their responses. Most of the participants who knew little English accepted this arrangement, and I read questions for them and wrote down the answers for the entire interview procedure.

Translating participants' responses from Dinka to English was not hard for me. I read out the questions in Dinka language and the participants would explain their

responses; I wrote them down in English. I noticed that participants were at times a little confused and talked in disorganized ways.

I thought it was important to honor the participants by conducting the interview procedure in their native Dinka language. When I told them that it was fine for them to answer the questions in Dinka language, I could see the happy smiling faces of being relieved from the fear of speaking and writing the questions in English. Seidman (1991) acknowledged this occurrence of people symbolizing in their own language. He explains that "At the very heart of what it means to be human is the ability of people to symbolize their experience through language" (p. 2).

To conclude, using intrinsic face-to-face interviews in this research helped the participants overcome a language barrier when I translated questions from English to Dinka. As a researcher, it was easy for me to meet the participants in person and explain the procedures of the interviews. It was a learning experience to hear the participants share emotional stories of suffering in Sudan's past conflict.

Method

Participants

The participants chosen for this study were from South Sudan only, since the goal of this study is to give voice to this population. This study was designed to reveal their views and perceptions. The interviews in this study were conducted in Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington, with ten immigrants from the Sudan. These immigrants were among thousands of South Sudanese displaced and resettled in the United States after conflicts erupted between North and South Sudan.

Choosing the participants

Ten participants were chosen to participate in this research. I knew some participants before we came to the United States and I met some in the United States during Dinka Community Association conferences. I chose these men from the Dinka community because I have known them for long time. I also chose these participants because they lived closer to me. Some of these refugees live in Seattle, Washington and others live in Portland, Oregon. It was easy for me to approach them. When I informed them about the research and the need to interview them, they eagerly accepted.

I chose Southern Sudanese research subjects because I wanted to give space to their voices and experiences. The ten participants were male, Christian, and members of the Dinka tribe in South Sudan. I chose to interview men from the Dinka tribe because in South Sudan, men are culturally privileged to discuss emotionally sensitive political issues such as these tragic conflicts. It would also be strange for a visitor like me to approach women I didn't know and interview them; husbands, for instance, might not allow me to interact with their wives. These subjects agreed to participate because they knew me as a fellow Dinka tribe member. I interviewed experienced politicians and others who lived in North and South Sudan before civil war broke out.

Demographics

Five men live in Portland, Oregon and five live in Seattle, Washington. Two men were graduate students, five men were veteran politicians, and three men were religious leaders. Two men are 24-27 years old, three are in their mid-thirties, and five are in their fifties. These participants were honest and knowledgeable about the origins and causes of

the conflict. They said sharing their personal experiences was a useful way to educate those who may not understand the Sudanese conflict.

Procedures

I informed the participants about my research in early 2010 and explained that I would need their help when the time came to collect data. I briefed them that my research topic involved exploring the role of ethnicity and religious differences in the North-South Sudan conflict. I notified participants one month before I met them for interviews.

I called each participant and set up an appointment. The interviews were conducted on Saturday and Sunday evenings at participants' homes. I went to their houses and was warmly welcomed and treated as a guest. I was seated in the living room, served Sudanese hot tea, and had dinner with some participants. After dinner and tea, I explained the interview process and had participants review and sign Informed Consent waivers (Appendix A). We then began lengthy conservations which led to the interview questions. I provided a sheet with questions (Appendix B) and instructed participants to fill in their answers. Some participants were not proficient in English and asked me to help fill in their answers.

Each interview took 2 to 3 hours. The interviews took a long time because I had to translate the questions from English to Dinka. There were 21 questions divided into two areas: 1) Ethnic difference in the North-South Sudan conflict, and 2) Religious influences in the North and South. During these interviews, participants were engaged and interested in the research topics. They were calm, honest, and direct both when asking and responding to questions.

Role of the researcher

My interaction with the participants was educational. These participants were immigrants who left Sudan during the civil war and resettled in the United States. They left their families and land to avoid Arab Muslim persecution.

I have tried to present this research from an academic perspective, but it has been hard to exclude my personal experience with this topic. I am a victim in this conflict. I ran to neighboring countries in Africa and finally resettled in the United States looking for a safer place and better opportunities. It is difficult to exclude my feelings and opinions in this study. I share many of the perceptions of the participants. We have suffered together.

In this chapter, I have described the nature of the study, the methodology chosen, the selection of participants and the proceudures that I used to collect data. In the following chapter, I describe my results.

Chapter 5: Results

This chapter will discuss themes emerging from the interviews. These results represent the direct perceptions and voices of South Sudanese refugees chosen to participate. The chapter describes causes of the conflict including: the issue of identity; the mandate of religion; Sudanese multiculturalism; power machinations; slavery and the slave trade; and coping strategies.

Causes of Conflict

All the participants from Southern Sudan explained their perceptions about the causes of the conflict between North and South Sudan as associated with various factors. One, Awan, said that "Arab Muslims have promoted political marginalization, ethnic and religious imposition on non-Arabs and non-Muslims; all these issues are the causes of the conflict." Another, Isaac said "The Arab Muslim-dominated government in Sudan forcefully mandated indiscriminate policies to punish black Africans and Christians in South Sudan for their refusal to accept Arab and Islamic traditions." According to Awan and Isaac, mandating these traditions has intensified violent conflict in Sudan since 1955.

Awak explained that lack of physical infrastructure and political marginalization in South Sudan are among the factors that have caused the conflict.

> South Sudan is clearly discriminated against in terms of development and also prevented from the political arena compared to other regions in the entire Sudan. If you ask any South Sudanese, he or she will tell you the reason of their suffering has to do with African ethnic identity and Christian faith. Our politicians are not even allowed to run their political affairs in South Sudan, as the Arab Muslim elites in Northern Sudan do not want South Sudanese

politicians to excel in political arenas and this discrimination is based on ethnic identity and religious differences.

John said, "I think the hostilities between North and South Sudan had existed predating the colonial era. In the contemporary period, the root causes of the North-South Sudan conflict in my perception is mostly political and religious. On political ground, North Sudan has been dominating the government, whereas South Sudan has been political marginalized and underrepresented."

Diing explained that "Sudan's government is not transparent and honest to unite Arab Muslims and African Christians and Animists. Discrimination and inequality in institutions are designed to isolate South Sudanese in the systems. This is another cause of the conflict."

Wol said that Sudanese systems controlled by Arab Muslim elites discourage unity between the Sudanese people through cultural and religious impositions. He explained:

> Arab Muslim politicians do not embrace Sudan as a multiethnic and multi-religious state and this has made peaceful coexistence less possible. When I was in Sudan, I felt as a foreigner because I saw my cultural identity was exclusive from the Sudanese national identity. Government and private institutions favor and give opportunities to people with Arab heritage and with Islamic faith. If you are not an Arab and a Muslim in Sudan, you are considered less human, and will be discriminated against and viewed as a second class citizen.

Kuach said he believed "lack of development in South Sudan is a major cause of the conflict between North and South Sudan. In South Sudan, there are no good schools, hospitals, infrastructures; basic human needs are not available."

Awan said that he believes the Sudan conflict is complicated because it involves many factors that are difficult to resolve without each side compromising. He explained these issues:

> Sudan's government and the Arab Muslim politicians have forcefully attempted to convert Africans and Christians people to Islam and to also acquire an Arab identity. The attempt of mandating Islamic and Arabic traditions are the hot topics; however, politician marginalization and lack of development have also frustrated the South Sudanese people since Sudan became independent. These issues are important and none of them can be compromised by either Arab Muslims from Northern Sudan or African Christians from Southern Sudan.

Isaac explicated that "The Arab Muslim controlled government doesn't want to recognize the diversities that comprise the Sudanese cultures and this neglect of other cultural beliefs causes mistrust between African Christians and Arab Muslims in Sudan."

Akecc said that he sees the lack of development in South Sudan as a major issue in the conflict. He explained that South Sudanese die simply because they lack good healthcare systems and educational opportunities.

> The Southern Sudan region is neglected and remains one of the poorest in Sudan. The Arab Muslim politicians denied our people's development especially in healthcare, education, and physical infrastructure. Lack of these development opportunities has caused an increase of deaths of the South Sudanese people. We South Sudanese die in cold blood just because we refuse Arab identity and Islamic faith. This problem in my opinion is a factor in the conflict.

The Issue of Identity

Awan explained that he views Sudan as one nation made up of two distinct identities: "Brownish Arab Muslims and Black African Christians." He said he experienced 'skin color' discrimination when he grew in the Arab Muslim territories in Northern Sudan. When he was studying in Northern Sudan, Arabs gave him the new

nickname "Asad," referring to his dark skin color. He said that "He politely reminded the

Arabs repeatedly that he knew he had a darker skin, but this was not his name. His name

was Awan, not "Asad." Awan explained his position:

> I will never forget the experience of racial discriminations and prejudice that I encountered when studying with Arab students in Northern Sudan. Arab students mocked me after I received high marks on tests. Arab students in class stared at me and said that their mothers and fathers would laugh at them for letting a dark-skinned boy beat them on the tests.

Isaac, too felt the Sudan conflict was racially motivated. He explained that "Arabs

dislike black Africans and nothing will ever unite these different groups." He said,

"Racial differences divide Sudan, and both Arab Muslims and Black African Christians

have drawn lines between them to prevent cultural confusion or integration." He said

> Sudan has been already divided because Sudanese sometimes identify themselves by using skin colors and regions of origins. When Arab people see a dark-skinned person, they start calling the person by skin-color and regional location: when Arabs see a person from Southern Sudan, they call the person "you, black (Assad)." They also call a Southern Sudanese by the region, "you, southerner." Ethnic identity differences (Arab and African origins) create such a big gap that I don't think we can coexist or live peacefully with each other unless Arabs change their mentalities of viewing us as their slaves.

Akecc said that "ethnic difference in Sudan creates a mentality of seeing black

Africans as inferiors and slaves of the Arabs." He said he experienced great suffering at

Arabian hands and does not want his children to face the same treatment. Akecc further

said:

> I think Arabs hate black Africans and we, the black Africans, hate them too. It is complicated and difficult to like a person or group that oppressed our people for so very long time. When I see a person with a light complexion, I can only think about how they destroyed my culture. I mean, our African culture is not seen anywhere in Sudan. I feel as if I was in a foreign land.

Everything from artifacts, museums, clothe, and even food only relate to Arab culture. I feel my black African people are excluded from everything in Sudan.

John recalled his experience in Northern Sudan as terrible discrimination because of his dark skin color. He reflected on a time when he "was employed by wealthy businessman from the Arab tribes in Omdurman, a city in Northern Sudan." John explained his perception of ethnic discrimination in this statement:

> The Arab man hired me to do laundry and clean his home, but later on, the Arab man refused to pay me in cash, and instead, gave me leftover food as salary. The Arab man yelled at me and said a black slave like John can only be paid with leftover food, no cash for a slave. My master the Arab man threatened me and told me not to sit on the couch or watch TV in the living room. I think the Arab man hated me because of my skin color, not because I was a dirty employee.

Wol said that Arabs from Northern Sudan have marginalized the South Sudanese in every institution, not because the South Sudanese lack capacities to perform given duties, but because they are black Africans. Wol also said he "remembered once incident in 1982 when government officials from Southern Sudan were denied the opportunity to welcome visiting foreign dignitaries at Khartoum International Airport." Wol added this statement:

> Arabs in Sudan view themselves as superior to black Africans from the South. This encourages most Arabs to discriminate against the South Sudanese and even enslave our people during the civil war. The injustice of Arabs against black Africans in Sudan is supported by the Arab dominated government. Their intention has been to force black Africans out from the mainland, Sudan. For example, Arabs from Northern Sudan, since 2003, have waged indiscriminate war against the Darfur people. I think [Arabs] are trying to eliminate black Africans' existence in Sudan. We must leave them alone in a Sudan that only belongs to the Arabs.

Kuach explains that "the solution to ending Arab discrimination against South Sudanese will be to divide Sudan into two countries." He thinks that all ethnic groups who identify themselves as Arab should be in Northern Sudan while ethnic groups who claim African origins should be in Southern Sudan. In addition, Kuach said:

> Conflict between Africans and Arabs began in 1955 and ended in 2005. Two peace accords were signed in 1956 and 1972; however, war erupted again in 1983 because Arabs failed to accept the idea that Sudan is a multicultural country.

Mark explained that issue of ethnic identity in Sudan has been debated for over 54 years and no resolution has been reached. "The Arabs do not want to back down from their perceptions of defining a Sudanese Arab state….They refuse to acknowledge the fact that Sudan is multiethnic consisting of African and Arab groups. They only want Arab identity and ignore black Africans' identity." Mark added his possible solution for maintaining unity and peaceful coexistence:

> This debate of ethnic identity in Sudan can only be solved if the Arabs accept that Sudan is multiethnic, and this means the whole country can establish a national identity inclusive of all ethnicities dwelling in Sudan. The notion of imposing Arab identity has been the main factor of the Sudan conflict, and I think we won't live peacefully if this mentality continues. The other alternative is that if Arabs oppose secular systems, then the South Sudanese can opt for their own country. And the idea of having an Arab identity will not be opposed if South Sudan separates from the Northern Sudan.

Diing said he thinks ethnic identity differences in Sudan cause hatred and division among Sudanese people because Africans and Arabs in Sudan are completely different. He explained, "The British handed the power to the Arabs, but knew that Africans from South Sudan and Arabs from North Sudan did not have any commonalities whether in

culture or religious traditions." Diing further explained his perception, and solution for

the conflict in these words:

> The conflict between North and South Sudan has been going on and off since 1955 and ended in 2005. In all those years the Arabs and their dominant government showed unwillingness to resolve the debate of national identity in Sudan. Elite politicians from Arab ethnic group have said publicly that Sudan is an Arab state. They did not mention anything about black African ethnic groups in South Sudan, Darfur, Nuba Mountain, or the Blue Nile regions. They wanted and had imposed their Arab and Islamic traditions on black Africans and Christians, and this problem has created two states. This is the only solution.

Deng said ethnic conflicts fought in Southern Sudan, the Darfur region, and other

areas in Sudan constitute genocides, but the international community has done nothing to

hold Arab leaders from Northern Sudan accountable. He stated, "if non-Arabs remain in

the unity of Sudan, I believe people of African descent will be alienated on the map of

Sudan." He explained more:

> Ethnic conflict in Sudan resulted in a great loss of humanity. This loss of humanity, showed in two separate conflicts, is enough evidence that Arabs in Sudan are committed and willing to eliminate non-Arabs in Sudan.

Awak explained that the issue of ethnicity and religion in Sudan creates divisions

between Sudanese and when civil wars began, people used hateful experiences to kill

each other. Arab Muslims took Islamic faith and Arab identity as fundamental values to

rule the nation and this attitude encourages discrimination and hatred in Sudan:

> I believe that race and religion are the backbone of the North and South Sudan civil wars. Northern Sudanese feel superior to their counterpart in the South because of their light complexion, and also because of the Islamic faith which preaches subjugation of non-Muslims. Because of this mentality, Arab Muslims are the first class citizens in Sudan and they perceive African Christians and Animists in the South as inferior.

The Mandate of Religion

Isaac said religion is one of the factors dividing the Sudanese people, and that he believes that "Islamic religion is favored over Christianity and other traditional beliefs in Sudan, and this favoritism has encouraged religious discrimination and hatred among the Sudanese people." Isaac elaborates more about religion:

> During and the North-South Sudan conflict, Christians from Southern Sudan were enslaved and forcefully taken to Arab Muslim territories in Northern Sudan. Those Christians were forcibly converted to Islam. Men, women, children were renamed with Islamic names and taken to camps in the desert North of Khartoum to learn Islamic doctrines. These crimes were supported by the Islamic-dominated government of President Omer Hassan Al Basher.

Akecc suggested the mandate of Islamic traditions on non-Muslims triggered tensions between Christians and Muslims in Sudan. He said when he was staying in Arab Muslim territories in Northern Sudan, he had difficulty trying to incorporate Islamic traditions in his life so that he could fit in and socialize well with Arab Muslim friends. Akecc explained the impact of the Islamic mandate on non-Muslims:

> Religious conflict was declared. President Basher declared that Islamic Sharia Law will be the law of the land and that those who oppose this law are against Islam and would face jihad. This declaration undermined the rights of non-Muslims in Sudan, and when the Sudanese parliament voted and approved this law, Sudan became divided according to religious belief. If you were a Christian, you would want to stay in Southern Sudan because if you went to Northern Sudan, you would not have the rights to do your Christian ritual where Islam is the only religion given privilege.

Awan explained the mandate of Islamic tradition was a strategy to "Islamize" the whole country. Awan added that "Arab Muslims in the 1980s declared jihad only because

South Sudanese Christians refused to convert to Islam." He further added that religious

discrimination:

> Forced hundreds of thousands of South Sudanese to leave their homeland
> and resettle in neighboring countries in East, North, Africa, and Western
> countries. And people who were not able to leave Sudan quickly were killed
> or enslaved by the Northern Sudanese.

Awan also said that religious persecution in Sudan insults the Christian faith and

makes South Sudanese fearful about praying and celebrating Christian rituals in Sudan,

especially in Arab Muslim territories.

Mark believed the mandate of Islam was a problem in the conflict between North

and South Sudanese. He explained that "it is the Arabs politicians who strongly

introduced the mandate of the Islamic laws because they wanted to convert non-Muslims

to Islamic faith." Mark said non-Muslims are not wanted in Sudan:

> Arab Muslim militias armed by the government of President Basher
> committed untold genocide in Southern Sudan from 1980s to 2002. The
> militias burned women and children alive, took women and children and
> kept them as slaves, and looted most of the livestock from South Sudan.
> Between the 1980s and 2002, hundreds of thousands of South Sudanese
> starved and perished. Even today, some South Sudanese remain in the hands
> of Arab Muslims as slaves. This is why I believe the suffering of South
> Sudan is caused by Arab Muslim politicians.

According to Deng, the Arab mandate of Islam as the only religion under law was

an attempt to force out South Sudanese Christians and Animists from Sudan. Deng

explained that he "felt his Christian faith was threatened when the Islamic government in

Sudan prevented Christians from doing their religious events." Deng added that:

> The religious hatred development was encouraged by Presidents Jafar
> Nimeri and Omer Al Basher and the Arab Muslims from the Northern
> Sudan. At times when the Islamic government was weakened by the rebels
> from Southern Sudan, President Al Basher and other elite politicians called

on the civil population to turn out big and wage a jihad war against the Christians in Southern Sudan.

John said he views "Sudan as a multi-religious country and that mandating Islam as the only religion in Sudan is an indirect declaration of religious war on non-Muslims in Southern Sudan and other regions in the country." He said that he believes "Christians and Muslims cannot live in peace in Sudan unless the Islamic government of President Al Basher recognizes Sudan as a secular multi-religious country." John also explained:

> Religious hatred has become a sobering issue and I believe both Christians and Muslims seem unwilling to reconcile religious differences and allow peaceful coexistence. When I was in Sudan, I witnessed several dialogues and workshops conducted to educate Christians and Muslims to live peacefully, however, it has never been successful. Muslims were the ones not able to encourage religious tolerance. This behavior promotes religious tensions between Christians and Muslims in Sudan.

Wol reflected on his past experience when he was abducted by the Arabs militias and taken to Northern Sudan as a slave. He explained that "my Arab's master changed my name from James Wol to Mustafa Wol. Mustafa was an Islamic name given to me when my Arab master forcibly converted me to Islam. I was not willing to convert to Islam; however, I accepted to convert after my master lashed me twice a day." Wol added:

> Thousands of South Sudanese who remain in captivity of Arab Muslims are fully converted to Islam. During my captivity, along with other South Sudanese, we attempted to report severe and abusive punishment we were facing; however, the Islamic government led by President Al Basher denied us and said our cases were not federally related. The government said that our masters could decide whether to keep us or treat us whatever way they wanted; it was absolutely the masters' choice to free or not on their own will.

Kuach said "Christians in Sudan experienced tragic treatment during the North-South Sudan conflict because of our Christian faith." He was enslaved and placed in an Islamic indoctrination camp. He explained that "the Arab Muslim man who enslaved me tortured me and warned me that I must accept the teachings of Islam or he would beat me to death. He told me that I was his enslaved son and there was no way could I stay Christian in his home." Kuach added this statement about forceful indoctrination:

> Being in the Islamic indoctrination camp was the most a painful experience I ever had in my life. I was humiliated and insulted just because of my Christian faith. The Arab Muslim master who owned me threatened to saell me to other Arab Muslims who didn't have slaves.

Kuach reflected more about his suffering in the Islamic indoctrination camp:

> Sometimes, my master ordered me to sit next to him and then began asking me questions like why my family and I did not convert to Islam a long time ago. I was very scared and didn't know what that man would do to me if I missed answering his question correctly. I thank God that I am still alive. Most of my family members and friends were killed in Islamic indoctrination camps because they were not quickly willing to learn Islamic principles. After all that suffering, I am still a Christian. I thank God for giving me courage to overcome the suffering and still believe in Jesus Christ.

Sudanese Multiculturalism

Awak and Diing explained that "multiculturalism in Sudan is negative as opposed to multiculturalism in other countries." They explained that "multiculturalism is a good thing if people are willing to consider it as positive, learn new ideas, and acknowledge other cultures as unique regardless of what the differences are." But this is not the way Arab Sudanese see it. The system in Sudan only favors Arab identity and Islamic faith

and this concept has made multiculturalism in Sudan impossible. Diing elaborated more on the importance of multiculturalism.

According to Diing, conflict between North and South Sudan was initiated by issues of ethnic and religious differences. He explained that "Sudan is a multicultural and multi-religious country because it has more than a hundred sub-ethnic groups and three different religious faiths. Some of these ethnic groups are Arabs and others are black Africans." Diing explicates this statement about the importance of multiculturalism:

> Sudan has many ethnic groups with different unique cultures. For example, ethnic groups in Southern Sudan, Blue Nile state, Nuba Mountain, and Darfur are black Africans, while ethnic groups in North, East, and Central Sudan are Arabs. These ethnic communities do not get along. They don't see each other as citizens of one country; instead they see themselves as rival and different from one another. Sudan's policy of favoring the Arab ethnic groups has caused conflict between Africans and Arabs in Sudan.

Awak said that, "the Arab Muslim led government in Sudan has refused to recognize the diversities that make Sudan one of the most unique countries in Africa." Awak believed Sudan can be a peaceful country only if the Arab leaders begin to realize every ethnic group has importance. He explained the positives of cultural diversity in this statement:

> If the Sudanese government can accept valuing all the cultures equally, citizens can adapt tolerance and enjoy learning different things about cultures around them. Learning other cultures would encourage Sudanese people to see themselves as one people with different cultures that make their country a unique one.

Mark illustrated that when he was studying in Northern Sudan, "I enjoyed the times I spent with my friends from different backgrounds. I had Arab friends and black Africans. I also had Christian and Muslim friends and it was great to learn new things

about each of my friends' traditions." Mark said he likes having friends from different

backgrounds of Sudanese religions and cultures. He sees "Sudan multiculturalism

differently because of Arabs' behaviors of mandating their traditions on non-Muslims in

Sudan."

Isaac said, "I believe multiculturalism in Sudan is negative because Arabs have

divisive views, discriminating against non-Arabs and non-Muslims." He explained, "I

grew up in Sudan hearing bad things about both Arabs and black African people;

therefore, I can't say I had learned something positive about multicultural system in

Sudan." Isaac also said:

> Since Sudanese people hate each other because of their cultural differences,
> I don't think it is beneficial for black Africans and Arabs live together in
> never-ending conflicts. I am thankful that the South Sudanese have voted for
> their own independence country. It is a good feeling. I know united Sudan
> has done nothing for us South Sudanese people. Now that we will have our
> own country, cultural conflict will end as Arabs remain in their own state.
> Having two separate countries will allow each country to promote its
> cultural values without opposing views.

Power Machinations

According to Awan, government affairs and the wealth of Sudan have been in the

control of Arab Muslims from Northern Sudan. Awan emphasized that "since Sudan

gained its independence in 1956, Arab ethnic groups from Northern Sudan have held the

Presidency, Vice Presidency, and other high-ranking posts in the government." Awan

explained the role of power in the conflict:

> South Sudanese politicians have not given opportunities to participate in the
> government even in local governments in Southern Sudan State
> administration. I believe the issues of power-sharing and wealth distribution
> are also factors in the North-South Sudan conflict… In political arenas,

South Sudanese politicians don't get opportunities in government unless they are converted Muslims.

Southern Sudan regions comprised of ten states remain one of the very remote regions in all of Sudan. In term of development, the whole ten states of Southern Sudan have no comparison with states in the Arab territories in Northern Sudan. Southern Sudan has no tarmac roads, no hospitals, no universities, no airports, no clean water, and lack many other basic human needs. These examples show that Arabs have denied us development and political participation in Sudan.

Diing explained that Southern Sudan regions have been marginalized in terms of social and political developments. Diing said, "Southern Sudan is isolated from the rest of the Sudan regions. It is hard to travel to different regions because there are no roads or airports to make travelling possible." He says that this marginalization frustrated the South Sudanese and played a part in the conflict.

Diing said that "Arab Muslims have neglected South Sudanese and denied us basic necessities…. For example, I was in Southern Sudan. If a person became sick, people carried the sickened person to a local clinic in Arab territory approximately 8 hours walking distance …..In most instances, the sick person never reached the clinic, they died on the way. I still think about the suffering my family, relatives, and close friends went through. These terrible grievances will heal now that we, South Sudanese, voted for separation from the North."

Slavery and the Slave Trade

Slavery and the slave trade are essential issues to discuss in this research because participants indicated that "our ethnic and religious differences were the motivating factors for Arab Muslims to enslaved people of African descend and Christians from Southern Sudan." Awak, one of the participants, explained that "I was in Khartoum when

large groups of South Sudanese children and women arrived in Northern Sudan cities. I was embarrassed and saddened to see my people being enslaved in their own country by Arab Muslims and the Arab Muslim-dominated government said nothing to rescue South Sudanese slaves."

Wol explained that "South Sudanese people were enslaved because they were black African and Christians. For example, when the slaves reached Arab Muslim territories, they were immediately indoctrinated to Islam and given Arabic names. Those who resisted Arab traditions indoctrination or convert to Islam were severely tortured and others were killed."

Diing elaborated that "I believe thousands of South Sudanese remain in captivity of Arab Muslims in Northern Sudan. They are still there as slaves, even after North and South Sudan signed a peace agreement in 2005, Arab Muslims refused to free many South Sudanese slaves."

Kuach said one of his cousins was enslaved during slavery and the slave trade in Southern Sudanese. He explained that "My cousin is currently living in Northern Sudan under supervision of his slave master, an Arab Muslim man. I said that his cousin was tortured and became disabled from being beaten for almost a month when he tried to resist converting to Islam."

Coping strategies

In the aftermath of the two conflicts fought in Sudan during 1955 and 1972, South Sudanese leaders have presented protocols they intend as mechanisms to help in reaching peace accords with the Arab Muslim government in Northern Sudan. The research

findings indicated that Southern Sudanese leaders have repeatedly encouraged leaders from Northern Sudan to reestablish a unifying national identity to represent all ethnic communities and religious faith (Ahmed & Al Hassan, 2008). Unfortunately, Arab Muslims vowed not to back down from defining Sudan as an Arab and Islamic state.

Research participants from Southern Sudan (Awan and Mark) explained that the unity of Sudan has been discouraged by Arab Muslim political elites and citizens who intend to marginalize ethnic groups and isolate Christianity and Traditional faith in Sudan. These participants said, "South Sudanese leaders have worked for the unity of Sudan in many occasions; unfortunately, Arab Muslims leaders denied their effort and tolerance to make Sudan a secular state for all of the ethnic communities and religious." Awan and Mark reflect that Sudan would be better off now that the South Sudanese have voted for an independent state.

Isaac said that the "creation of new state in South Sudan will help ease the stress of bitter hatred and continuing conflicts between black African Christians and Arab Muslims." He explained that after this vote of separation, North and South Sudanese will begin to think more positively about each other, and that South Sudanese will no longer be viewed as infidels, inferiors, and slaves.

Based on the findings of this study, resolution to Sudan's conflict would seem to be complicated. It appears that Arab Muslims do not want to compromise by accepting a secular system. They fear that giving other cultures and faiths religious freedom could promote competition in the country. The views of this study's South Sudanese refugees seem to represent the whole of South Sudanese people. These refugees explained that

because Arab Muslims have refused to accept a secular system, only the creation of two

separate states side by side is a viable alternative solution to the conflict.

Chapter 6: Analysis and Discussion

Analysis and Discussion of Results

In this final chapter, I describe the analysis of the data and then bring to light the intrinsic and instrumental elements of this case study of the North-South Sudan conflict. This analysis section goes in depth to summarize and interpret the participants' experiences. The analysis is structured based on the themes described by the participants in the data. Many of the participants have described the conflict between North and South Sudan as fueled by discrimination, power machination, and ethnic persecution.

Many refugees suggested that African Christian Animists faced discrimination because of their ethnic and religious backgrounds. Isaac, for instance, illustrated a form of discrimination he experienced when he was living in Arab Muslim territory in Khartoum in the 1980s. He further described how South Sudanese politicians were not allowed to run for political offices even in South Sudan territories. He said that Arab politicians from North Sudan handpicked weak politicians whom they knew could be bribed and would work for the interest of the Arab Muslims rather than in the interests of their South Sudanese constituencies. These political machinations have frustrated politicians from South Sudan and pushed them to opt for violence and the declaration of war against Khartoum's oppressive government.

One aspect of the interview process that deserves mention was having an impressive and educative dialogue with groups of men from the Dinka tribe. During my interview time with the refugees from South Sudan, I felt a sense of determination and patriotism from these men who proudly introduced themselves to me as being from the

Southern Sudan region. Although these participants had experienced horrific suffering at the hands of an oppressive government led by Arab Muslims in Northern Sudan, many of the refugees remained optimistic and believed that Sudan would never return to that oppression.

Even though these refugees were not fluent in English, they had studied Arab languages when they were in Sudan. As well, they had impressive backgrounds, possessing certificates, diplomas, and degrees in education, engineering, law, political science, and social work from accredited universities in Sudan. They were strong aspirations to return to help South Sudanese reconstruct their country should the region become fully independent after the interim period ends. They believed that the fight against Arab discrimination in Sudan would not end unless and until South Sudan gains full independence. They pledged to return home and give back their wisdom and educate the younger generations about the struggle that would never end until Arab Muslims in Sudan begin to recognize South Sudanese as normal human beings who deserve respect and perseverance of their heritage.

According to these refugees, discrimination in Sudan was the root of conflicts, causing resentment, violence, humiliation, and barbarity. But they still maintained the personal assets of resilience, patriotism, problem-solving, and passion, and these have brought about their hopefulness for the current situation.

10 refugees were interviewed about the North and South Sudan conflict. In the data and explanations provided by refugees from South Sudan, various themes were discussed. The participants cited racial and religious discrimination as potential factors

that may have intensified conflicts in the Sudan. Participants said that African Christian Animists from Southern Sudan were the most vulnerable and were denied basic services because of their different traditions. The participants explained humiliating and inhumane experiences they encountered when they were displaced to live in Arab-Muslim territories in Northern Sudan.

The interviewees from South Sudan explained that the Sudanese conflict involved serious factors that government authorities from Northern Sudan refused to address since Sudan became divided in 1956. All the participants who were interviewed mentioned that ethnic and religious discrimination against African Christian Animists from Southern Sudan caused conflict and that the conflict would not stop unless Arab-Muslim leaders come to a compromise in unifying mechanisms for recognizing all ethnicities and religious beliefs in Sudan. One of the participants, Isaac, explained in the interview that "Arab Muslims dislike black Africans and nothing will ever unite these different groups." In addition, another participant, Akecc, explained that "Mandates of Islamic tradition on non-Muslims triggered tensions between Christians and Muslims in Sudan." These behaviors have resulted in power machinations leading to the persecution of African Christian Animists from Southern Sudan.

Treatment of South Sudanese displaced to North Sudan

During the aftermath of civil war, the South Sudanese endured horrific treatment by Sudanese government troops and their supported militias. Southern Sudanese refugees indicated that the conflict has caused destruction of their culture and properties when they were forced to leave their ancestral land in Southern Sudan. Participants in this research

explained that they left their ancestral territories in South Sudan when Arab Muslims

militias (backed by the central government) attacked and burned their villages, looted

their properties, and enslaved and removed hundreds of thousands women and children to

Northern Sudan.

These participants explained they went to North Sudan not because they liked it,

but because their belongings were destroyed. They also could not pursue their livelihoods

or stay in the South because they knew Arab militiamen would repeat merciless attacks

on them and their families. One of the participants, Isaac, said that when he was residing

in Khartoum, he was mocked by Arab Muslim boys. The boys hit him with rock and

called him by his dark skin color "Asad." Sometimes when he went to a restaurant to eat

breakfast or dinner, Arab Muslim men in the restaurant laughed at him and called him a

foreigner from Southern Sudan. He said those Arab Muslims called him a foreigner

because he looked different from them and spoke broken Arabic.

During the interview, Wol narrated his experience in the camp near Khartoum in

Northern Sudan. He explained that Arab-Muslims controlling the government in

Khartoum created a camp for South Sudanese when the army and militias forced these

people from their homes in South Sudan. When most South Sudanese arrived in Northern

Sudan, the government denied them entrance to the capital city, Khartoum. Police were

sent to escort them to the camps that were created in North Sudan. Wol said this

experience was an embarrassment and a humiliation in his own country. Another

participant, Kuach, described how he saw his fellow citizens, in Jebel Alwalia, being

refused entrance near Khartoum. Kuach said that government-deployed police were stationed around the camp and used to keep the refugees out of Khartoum city.

Another participant, Mark, related a similar experience. When he was staying in Jebel Alwalia near Khartoum, government sent the police to demolish homes he built with grass and mud. He explained that every time the South Sudanese built their homes, government security and police would come and demolish them. The authorities lied and said the areas where they built homes in were government properties. He added that his cousin lost his little son because the police would not allow him to take the sick boy to the hospital in Khartoum. Mark explained that many South Sudanese refugees in camps died from treatable diseases, like diarrhea and malaria, because Sudan government officials denied people access to hospitals and other sources of humanitarian assistance.

Awan said South Sudanese refugees in camps around Khartoum were denied opportunities to have identification cards and passports. He explained that every dark-skinned person from South Sudan was accused of being a rebel supporter. He said that on numerous occasions, Sudan police questioned refugees, asking them to list family members who served in the rebel movement. People were terrified and refused to admit their brothers, uncles, fathers, and sons were serving in the rebel movement. The police began to torture and threaten to kill refugees if they felt they had not told the truth. Because of this torture and mistreatment, some people admitted their relatives were rebels. Then their families were taken to jail. Many people never returned. Some who refused to comply with police demands were seriously tortured and others were killed.

These participants suffered from being treated as aliens in their own country. Some of them thought that Sudan had become seriously fragmented by ethnic and religious discrimination and didnot think there could be any way to support peaceful coexistence if Arab-Muslim perceptions of South Sudanese as inferior did not change.

Slavery

Many participants believed that the Sudan government planned to enslave South Sudanese as a strategy for extermination and elimination of the African race and the Christian-Animists population in Sudan. Awak explained that during the war, Arab militias enslaved more than 7000 children in one town of Aweil in Northern Bahr El Ghazal state. He said most of those children were indoctrinated in Islamic camps and forced to become Muslims. He said that the Arab intention had been to eliminate and displace South Sudanese from their ancestral land so that Arab tribes from Northern Sudan could move in and take over the rich resources. He believed that the start of civil war rescued the culture of African Christian Animists, because if the Southern Sudanese had not resisted quickly, Arab Muslims could have done whatever they wanted, including the extermination and elimination of the South Sudanese people.

John said that hatred between North and South Sudanese is something serious and is taught even to young children. Arabs want to impose their culture and religion on African Christian Animists and we resisted this new colonialism within our own nation. He explained the situation in Sudan as a win-lose situation. If Arab Muslims succeed, they would forcefully integrate their culture and religion on non-Arabs and non-Muslims.

And because Arab Muslims have power, they used enslavement, murder, torture, and displacement in attempts to eliminate African Christians from the country.

Coping

Even after South Sudan became independent, it was too early to tell if the two countries could live peacefully and respectfully with each other while respecting one another's' sovereignty. The tension is growing. For the North and South Sudanese to live side by side peacefully, further negotiations must take place so that new relationships can be built. The UN Security Council has pressured North Sudan to immediately stop bombing or violating South Sudan air space. South Sudan on the other hand, has threatened to prevent the transport of its oil into North Sudan. All these pressures coming from both sides make peaceful relations and mutual trade unlikely unless North Sudan changes its attitudes and ends its aggression against the new Republic of South Sudan.

Personal reflection

During my interviews with participants, I noticed the participants had high expectations. Time was ticking for South Sudan to vote for independence. They viewed their independence as a way to preserve a culture they almost lost to the Arab-Muslims. They viewed independence as a way to prosper and enjoy the rich natural resources that had been denied to them the North in old Sudan. But, the last three months of tentative independence have been sobering. In many instances, North Sudan has frozen its borders, blocked oil transport, and declared a new war on a new nation.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in 2005 resulted in the independence of South Sudan last July. This independence was thought to be a

resolution to the conflict, but conflict continues. Independence didn't solve the conflicts existing between the North and South. There are pending issues: demarcation, the Nile water deal, oil pipelines, debts, and many other issues that have already triggered conflicts between residents of the two nations within a nation. South Sudan is in the fifth month of independence, but there is a tension of a new war. In the last past month, the new nation has been bombed four times by North Sudan.

This aggressive behavior from North Sudan indicates that even after Sudan split into two countries, it remains impossible for these two nations to respect their sovereignty and live in peace as good neighbors. Last weekend, the North Sudan Air force entered into South Sudan air space and bombed two cities. They destroyed homes and forced civilians to leave the areas. Many military generals from South Sudan have rebelled and are believed to be supported by the regime in Khartoum. These rebel groups have already created instability in a new nation.

Continued aggression from Khartoum is evidence that the North Sudanese do not want to give South Sudan a chance to operate as a separate independence state. North Sudanese aggression against South Sudan reveals that that the North Sudanese don't want to see a stable and prosperous state of South Sudan next to North Sudan. South Sudanese celebrate their independence, but within a few months, they have had to mourn the loss of their peoples and endure the destruction of villages as a result of attacks from Khartoum and the bombing of innocent civilians.

Limitations of the study

This study was only meant to examine the perceptions and views of South Sudanese refugees. Although I know Arab-Muslims from North Sudan, I chose not to include them in this study because I thought they would not be honest in explaining the root causes of the conflict. Arab-Muslims from North Sudan often deny that the conflict has anything to do with religion or ethnicity. Therefore, including them in this study would have created a conflict of interest. But I recommend that larger and future studies must include North Sudanese perspectives so that we can learn from both groups.

Even faced with the challenges ahead, they believe they were finally free from slavery and the imposition of Arab-Muslims tradition.

Conclusion

Finally the people of South Sudan got their freedom with the help of the international community, but this independence doesn't translate into a real peace because North Sudan has been looking for ways to make South Sudan a failed state. As relations became more strained after South Sudan declared independence, the international community continues to engage both parties in negotiations to finalize the pending issues so that the two nations can start a new relationship with promises for peace and mutual respect emerging with their sovereignty.

My conflict resolution training leads me to believe that the Sudanese conflict could have been handled in a way that maintained the unity of the country. Conflict resolution models and training might have been effectively employed. But when North Sudan denied a proposed secular system that the South Sudanese wanted to promote,

dreams of multiculturalism and multi-religious reconciliation began to fade. I hope other countries that practice ethnic and religious discrimination learn from the Sudanese example. Discriminating against certain groups because of their ethnic and religious differences must not be condoned. We need not be creating two nations from one due to different ethnicities and religious beliefs. We can all get along and live together peacefully, but the struggle for peace can be difficult and elusive.

Repressive governments must be removed, preferably by nonviolent means. Peace will require that all people become activists, writing, studying, and working together to create newspapers and educational institutions which can raise the level of discourse and free the people. Active and determined peacekeepers must supporting policies of education which are essential for keeping the government on a peaceful track. The use of violence for political ends must not be condoned. The conflicts in Sudan are caused by cultural and religious differences. A third party may need to assist both new nations in defining and enforcing acceptable behavior. Until that time, people from all parts of Sudan must focus on what they share rather than quibbling over differences. People can work to create a more peaceful and prosperous future. And they must begin this task.

Conflict Resolution

Conflicts associated with ethnic and religious differences have destabilized many nations. These conflicts are inevitable because of unwavering ethnic discrimination against minorities and political and economic inequalities in many parts of the world. Ethnic minorities have resorted to violent conflicts with the aim of protecting their

existence and preventing assimilation by and impositions from the dominant ethnic elites (Narang, 2002).

Ross (1993) explained that "Conflict can be viewed as cultural behavior" (p. 15). Conflict is difficult to avoid and reflective of a particular group's cultural milieu. To understand human behavior better and the cause of conflicts, it is important to consider the influence of ethnic, religious, political, and economic gaps between people. Those gaps create injustice and inequalities which cause intense hatred among groups within countries.

The human suffering caused by ethnic, religious, political or economic violence persists due to unjust systems in the world. As a result, disadvantaged people or communities resort to violent conflicts to challenge lawless regimes and systems and claim basic needs and identities. The increase in violent conflicts fueled by a denial of basic needs, ethnic identities, and religious beliefs has claimed large numbers of people. Although such conflicts seem complicated to prevent, it is also possible that there are approaches that can be used to reduce violence and promote peaceful coexistence in our world. Christie (1997) has suggested that "Fulfillment of the needs for security, identity, material well-being, and self-determination is central to peace building" (p.53).

In understanding the nature of conflicts, Fry and Fry (1997) explained that conflicts and conflict resolution are cultural phenomena (p. 10). Individuals, members of households, communities, or nations can initiate violent conflicts. However, there are conflict management strategies that can de-escalate conflicts. There are traditional methods of handling conflicts and academic resolutions from the field of conflict

resolution. These methods can manage conflicts, depending on a given society. Examples

of such mechanisms have been suggested by Fry and Fry (1997). They explained that

"Some cultures have formal mechanisms for handling conflict, such as courts or

arbitration boards, whereas other cultures rely on informal mechanisms, such as teasing,

gossip, exclusions, witchcraft, and so on."

Even though conflicts within cultures and communities seem inevitable, conflict

management experts such as Fry and Fry (1997) suggested that social learning processes

are crucial for shaping behaviors and represent a second important area relevant to

reducing across social levels (p.15). These methods can educate people of different races

and religions to understand each other's traditions. After learning about differences there

is the possibility of mutual respect and tolerance among groups living peacefully.

Some conflicts in third world countries are caused by a lack of tolerance between

communities and people just because of certain differences. The mass killing in Rwanda

and other merciless killings in Burundi, Congo, Darfur, and Somalia are recent examples

of how misunderstanding and intolerance can lead to unspeakable losses of human lives.

Educating people about other cultures can bring understanding. Maybe people will see

cultural and religious differences as parts of their uniqueness.

Kriesberg (2007) explained that "Social conflicts are an inherent part of human

life" (p. 1). He elaborated that social conflicts occur when one or two people or groups

manifest the belief that they have incompatible objectives. According to Kriesberg

(2007), there are some conflict resolution mechanisms that can be helpful if used to

reduce the escalation of social conflicts. He suggested several types of inducements that

can be useful in de-escalating international or internal conflicts. Among these inducements are (p. 98-99):

1) Rewards as Inducements

2) Persuasive Inducements: persuasive inducements are couched as efforts to influence an opponent by communicating arguments, information, or appeals to alter the other side's perception of the conflict. If effective, the receiver becomes convinced of the value of the sender's goal for itself as well and accepts it. Persuasive inducements are frequently used in conflict, but often they are accompanied by some degree of coercion.

If these strategies suggested by Louis (2007) are used, it is possible that large and small conflicts can be settled peacefully before they become catastrophically unmanageable. Sometimes oppressed victims use these alternatives to claim their rights. If certain rewards are offered, such as wealth, political posts, ethnic or religious freedom, this method could save lives and promote tolerance between dominant and disadvantaged communities so they might live peacefully.

Possible Solutions

Solutions to the North and South Sudanese conflicts have been laid out during both the 1955 and 1972 conflicts. But none have succeeded (Jok, 2001 and 2007). According to Jok (2001), when the first civil war began in 1955 between Arab Muslims from Northern Sudan and African Christians and Animists from Southern Sudan, the following solutions were proposed:

1. Establish a secular Sudan

2. Promote a Democratic Sudan

3. South Sudan could opt for independence

These three plans failed.

The second civil war erupted in 1983 and ended in 2005. Jok explained that the peace agreement signed in 2005 outlined the following protocols as solutions for the North and South Sudan conflicts (Ahmed, 2008):

1. Formation of a Government of National Unity,

2. The Peace agreement signed in 2005 gave South Sudanese an interim period of six-years to govern themselves. At the end of the interim period, they could vote either for unity or separation,

3. Wealth sharing: South Sudan got 50% from oil and other resources revenues and North Sudan also got 50%,

4. Power sharing: South Sudan got the First Vice President position and 25% of the positions for ministerial and civil servants.

The North-South Sudan conflict has been to some degree resolved. The newest protocols have been honored and the South Sudanese voted for separation on January 09, 2011. South Sudan officially declared on July 09, 2011 as the newest African nation.

Summary

In the interview process, participants indicated their past experience was psychologically and physically inhumane. The participants explained that they suffered

brutal massacres, slavery, rapes, and were intentionally forced to convert to Islamic traditions and Arabic cultures.

They suffered racial and religious discrimination at the hands of Arab Muslims in Northern Sudan before and during the conflict. The ten participants are from Southern Sudan and currently live in various states in the United States. These participants shared their personal grievances and pointed out that ethnic and religious differences were the main issues provoking conflicts between North and South Sudan. Six participants explained ethnic difference as the root of the conflict, while four participants said they thought religious mandates were another problem. The participants shared their stories in an emotional fashion.

The ten participants answered the interview questions with mixed emotions. They said that answering the interview questions reminded them about the last atrocities that caused them anger and fear. The first emotion was grief, reflected in their personal stories about the North-South Sudan civil war. Eight of the participants mentioned they had lost family members and said that some of their friends and family members remain captive and slaves to Arab Muslims in Northern Sudan. The second emotion was pride for the birth of their new nation. The people of Southern Sudan voted on January 9, 2011 and declared independence on July 09, 2011. They also were proud to share their experiences because they spoke on behalf of many South Sudanese people whose stories had not been heard.

These participants answered the interview questions with honesty. They shared key issues about ethnic and religious differences. The responders were relieved when

they spoke about their new nation, the Republic of South Sudan. They feel the sacrifices of their martyrs and suffering of their people have paid off in the birth of the newest nation in the world. These Sudanese people said that the birth of their nation means they will be no longer see themselves as second-class, inferior, or slaves. They hope the days of slavery and discrimination have come to an end.

Recommendations

The South Sudanese have provided their voices to examine what caused the conflicts. They are victims of this conflict and their voices are worth knowing. I excluded the Northern Sudanese for two reasons:

1. Many Northern Sudanese do not accept that the conflict is ethnic and religiously motivated, and

2. South and North Sudanese communities are not on good terms and I would not be able to find them.

But I recommend that the next research should include both North and South Sudanese people. I also recommend a separate study should be done only for the Northern Sudanese, to present their views about the South Sudanese.

Any further research must include both male and female voices, to eliminate gender bias and provide a more comprehensive perspective.

Final Reflection

The conflict between North and South Sudan was dreadful, but peace has brought joy and jubilation in South Sudan's independence. Many South Sudanese, myself included, perceive its status as an independent nation as positive, although the wounds of

war will not be forgotten. South Sudanese from every background, including professionals and church leaders, see the fight for independence and freedom as legitimate and justifiable. Our fight for freedom was inspired by a vision of reclaiming a lost African heritage.

This conflict and vision were intended to establish a new Sudan for all people and remove the oppressive regime in Khartoum. This regime ruled with their fists and a brutal imposition of Arab and Islamic tradition. My training in conflict resolution has been tempered by my experience with intergenerational conflicts and being an African Christian in what became an Arab Muslim dominated country.

I do not advocate violent conflict, but I celebrated with millions of South Sudanese in the joy of Independence Day on July 9, 2011. I celebrated with the hundreds of South Sudanese in Seattle, Washington and Vancouver, Canada. We shared the feeling that our independence has replaced our great loss and relieved the sufferings our people endured.

A South Sudanese chaplain who served in the rebel movement during the conflict reminded the crowds on South Sudan Independence Day in Seattle that "We got this independence not because of our military might, but by the will of God. We won because we were fighting a just war to free ourselves and the next generation." Many of our parents and great grandparents suffered humiliation, enslavement and maltreatment from the Arab Muslim domination in Sudan. We raised our flag and sang our national anthem with pride that the conflict we risked brought freedom. South Sudanese fought the good fight and we are free at last.

Growing up in a country troubled by a violent conflict taught me that conflict brings both negative and positive results. In many instances, conflicts bring mass killings, genocides, and incredible atrocities. Yet conflicts often precede the birth of great nations. Powerful countries like the United States of America fought for and gained independence. Citizens from marginalized areas have revolted to escape from tyrants and dictators. Productive conflicts are positive because they bring freedom, liberty, and a higher standard of living. The people of South Sudan engaged in catastrophic conflicts to claim and preserve their African identities and the freedom to practice their religion of choice. This painful conflict gave birth to the Republic of South Sudan.

The war between North and South Sudan has caused horrible consequences. Both sides are now happy. The African Christians from the South created a new nation and the Arab Muslims in North Sudan remain in their Islamic and Arab state. Both North and South Sudanese see this peaceful divorce as a viable alternative to the longest African conflict.

Last July, when the people of South Sudan celebrated their independence, the celebration lasted three weeks throughout South Sudan. People see a brighter future and prosperity ahead, despite serious challenges. With freedom, citizens of the new republic of South Sudan have pledged to create a space of tolerance: those who practice the Islamic faith will have equal freedom to pray and express their views freely.

Some conflicts are focally categorized as political, ethnic, or territorial disputes; but solutions to conflicts arrive in unique and variable forms. The North-South Sudan conflict was solved in a unique way that gave the people of South Sudan a right to either vote for the unity of Sudan or choose to separate. After this referendum, when a peace

agreement was signed, unity was a priority. But Arab Muslims in North Sudan made unity unattractive by violating several key issues and choosing confrontation. This lack of compromise led the South Sudanese to opt out and vote for separation. Voting for independence was the best and only option for the South Sudanese to free themselves from injustices and discrimination of at the hands of Arab Muslims from North Sudan.

Although the enslavement of the Southern Sudanese has ended after the peace agreement, Sudan's history of institutionalized slavery and the slave trade remains as a cultural memory which is difficult to erase. Slavery was used as a method for destroying African ethnic identity to impose Arab culture. Ethnic differences were perceived as the motive for this enslavement. Arab Muslims viewed themselves as superior and saw African Christian-Animists as slaves ("abeed") and infidels ("Khaffir").

The record of slavery is clear. Africa today is in chaos. In spite of a wealth of natural resources, many of the people of Africa are still hunted by ghosts of the crushing defeat of subjugation, fear, deprivation, and terror. This cultural legacy may not be overcome soon, but the survivors whose stories have been examined, were made stronger in their suffering. A new course set in freedom can be realized by depending on their collective strength and wisdom.

The findings of this thesis present testimonial reflection about the violent conflicts I have experienced in my native country of Sudan. I relate my own experience with other testimonies from participants who expressed their dreadful experiences in courageous terms. Even though these participants conversed in unhappy moods, some of them said they were optimistic because they believed a prosperous and peaceful nation would arrive

with precious independence. For them, this independence is the only alternative to overcoming the racial and religious discrimination of old Sudan. One of the participants, Wol, explained that "New life has begun and the bad experiences from the past can now go in the history book."

As a native of South Sudan, I find myself deeply involved in this research, both emotionally and physically. I was born in the 1970's when the conflict between the North and South Sudan had resumed. I grew up hearing from my parents that the conflict between African Christians from the South and Arab Muslims from the North was persistent. My parents explained that, for generations, our family fought, dating back to 1821. If I were older or had not left South Sudan in the 1990's, I would also have entered into the rebel movement and fought for freedom and justice for my people and land.

Conflict should not be encouraged based on positive results in some places. Injustices, especially those imposed by totalitarian regimes, account for growing hatred and tension between ethnic and religious communities. Human beings can live peacefully and coexist while honoring cultural and religious differences if governments stop imposing traditions and allow people to sort out their differences while working to build strong communities. History speaks. When we examine our past, we discover love is stronger than hate and courage is more powerful than fear. We must educate people so they understand that compassion and tolerance will provide strong foundations for a common ground of peace and understanding. In this essential moment we must choose wisely for our people, our children, and for generations to come.

Conclusion

Conflict, debate, and hatred caused by ethnic and religious differences appear inevitable. Hopefully, people will recognize and respect their differences and promote positive behaviors to establish peace. It is a human responsibility to begin recognizing variable traditions, promote unity, and try to close gaps that create discrimination and inequality. People must advocate mechanisms that create unity instead of despair so that people can live in a peaceful world with tolerance and acceptance.

Conflicts associated with ethnicity and religions have occurred in many parts of the world. Even in well-known democratic societies like the United States, ethnic discrimination and inequalities still exist even after the Civil Rights Movement and Affirmative Actions were implemented to create opportunities. In France, there has been debate about banning Muslim women from wearing "Hijab" or scarfs on their heads in public areas. This move by the French government raised fears that, even in democratic societies, there can be discrimination based on ethnic and religious differences.

Many scholars from Southern Sudan have said that problems related to race and religion are divisive elements that complicate peaceful coexistence between Arab Muslims in the north and African Christian and animist in the south. These experts believe Sudanese authorities will establish a better system and encourage unity and peace instead of division and conflict (Deng, 1995, Jok, 2001, Wai, 1973).

Separating adversaries may work, but it may not be the best way to resolve ethnic and religious conflicts. If nations are created because people of different ethnic groups or religious beliefs do not get along, then the world must expect many more thousands of

nations. In Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, there are still countless disadvantaged ethnic and religious minorities. Will the world be ready to create nations to accommodate clans, tribes, and people of different races who do not like each other?

Arab Muslims, non-Arabs, and non-Muslims can live in peace when they can learn to embrace and actualize their faith. Sudanese authorities can expedite this process by focusing on shared values rather than cultural differences. We can all get along and build bridges to a more stable peaceful and productive future. We must stand together when things fall apart.

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APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT

PERCEPTIONS AND VOICES OF SOUTH SUDANESE ABOUT THE NORTH-SOUTH SUDAN CONFLICT

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Machar Wek Aleu-Baak, Master's degree student candidate in the Conflict Resolution at Portland State University. The researcher hopes to explore the role of Ethnic Identity, Religion Imposition, and geopolitical developmental in the North-South Sudan Conflicts. This research is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master's degree in Conflict Resolution, and is supervised by Dr. Barbara Tint in the Conflict Resolution Department at Portland State University. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because of your experiences and background as a southern Sudanese, who has an extraordinary knowledge about Sudan history as well as your experiences in regard to North-South Sudan relations, prior and after the civil wars. Your responses will tremendously provide a fundamental asset to this study, and I greatly appreciate your willingness to participate in this research.

The research's purpose is to study the root cause of the conflict between North and South Sudan. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to answer survey questionnaires about the topic of this research. Your responses will be used in thesis research to propose a hypothesis that can be utilized as a resolution to the North-South Sudan conflict now and in further studies. You will have about 1-2 hours to answer survey questionnaires. This procedure will take place in your house or any place you choose. You will choose either to write on survey questionnaire sheets or I can use a tape-recorder to record your answers. Your responses will be used as possible resolutions of addressing North-South Sudan conflict in this research. In this research, confidentiality is critical; therefore, any information I obtained from you will be kept confidential. Your name will not be used in the interview document and reflections in this research report unless you agree by initialing the name uses option provided below in this form. Only responses and data collected from you will be used in this study. Any communication made in this interview and in connection with the interview process is confidential and will not be released or shared with any institutions for any intentions not related to this research.

Your participation in this research is unpaid. You will not receive any money from the researcher for taking part in this study. Your participation is voluntary, and I truly appreciate your time and willingness. If you choose to participate, your commitment to the full process is required to provide needed information for this research. You are free to choose to withdraw from the process at any time for any reason. Your responses as a native of southern Sudan will provide inside information to the situations, and therefore,

will be tools in the conflict resolution mechanism in addressing North-South Sudan conflict. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be linked to your identity will be kept confidential.

☐ Yes, I agree to the use of my name in the thesis research.

☐ No, I do not want my name to be used in the thesis research.

Your participation is voluntary. You do not have to take part in this study if you don't want, and it will not affect your friendship/relationship with the researcher. You may also withdraw from this study at any time without affecting your friendship/relationship with the researcher or Portland State University.

If you have concerns or problems about your participation in this study or your rights as research participants, please contact the Human Subjects Research Review Committee, Office of Research and Sponsored Projects, 600 Unitus Bldg., Portland State University, (503) 725-4288 / 1-877-480-4400. If you have questions about the study itself, contact my thesis adviser Dr. Barbara Tint, at the Conflict Resolution Graduate Department, Office 239 Neuberger Hall, Portland State University (503) 725-3505. You can also contact me at (503) 449-8457 (macharwekaleu@hotmail.com).

Your signature indicates that you have read and understood the above information and agree to take part in this study. Please understand that you may withdraw your consent at any time without penalty, and that, by signing, you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies. The researcher will provide you with a copy of this form for your own records.

_____   _____
Signature   Date

_____   _____
Machar Wek Aleu-Baak   Date

APPENDIX B

Questionnaires Guild

Demographic information

Age:_____
Gender:_____
Participant Ethnic Identity:_____
Participant Religion Belief:_____
Country of Origin:_____

Questions about your ethnic identity as a Southern Sudanese, and how your ethnic identity plays a role in the North-South Sudan conflict:

1. In your perception, what are the root causes of the conflict between North and South Sudan?
2. How do you define your ethnic identity in Sudan?
3. What, in your opinion, is the role of ethnicity in the North and South Sudan conflict?
4. Briefly explain your perception of the Sudanese national identity?
5. What is your perception of the identity of South Sudan?
6. How do you perceive people of Sudanese Arab origin?
7. Can you describe the relationship between the African and the Arab ethnic groups in Sudan in relation to ethnic identity?
8. What is the importance of ethnic identity in daily conversations you have when you meet a person of Sudanese Arab origin?
9. Can you tell me how ethnic groups are identified in Sudan, and how people from different ethnic groups perceive each other?
10. Can you talk about Sudan as a multiethnic nation?
11. Is there any solution that you think can reconcile the issue of ethnic identity in North and South Sudan conflict?
12. Do you think unity can be achieved?
13. Is this a desirable goal? Why or why not?

Questions about the Islamic role in the North-South Sudan conflicts:

14. How do you perceive the mandate of the Islamic religion in Sudan?
15. What role does religion play in Sudanese political and social affairs?
16. Explain the culture of separation/association between religion and government in Sudan?
17. Can you tell me about religious freedom in Sudan, especially your Christian faith? How did non-Christians perceive you?

18. What is the influence of the Islamic religion in Sudanese social life and political arena?
19. How can you explain the role of religion in north and south Sudan conflicts?
20. How does the imposition of the Islamic 'Sharia' Law affect you and other non-Muslims in Sudan?
21. How did Muslims from north treat you when you were staying in northern Sudan?
22. Can you think of any proposals that could be used to promote religious tolerance in Sudan?