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On Sources of Political Violence in Africa: The Case of "Marginalizing State" in Sudan

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Abstract

Several theories have sought to explain the prevalence of political instability and war in Africa since independence, culminating in the recent econocentric tendency. One of the most representative cases in Africa, Sudan, has experienced insurgencies continuously for decades. It is argued in this article that to highlight the origins of insurgencies in Africa and Sudan, the economic realities need to be considered in their proper social and political contexts. To undertake this task a concept of "marginalizing state" based on a center-periphery approach is introduced, pointing to the continuing importance of colonial and pre-colonial governance legacies in Sudan.

Key words: State, insurgencies, marginalization, periphery, Sudan

Resumen

Varias teorías han buscado explicar la prevalencia de inestabilidad política y guerra en África desde su independencia, culminando en la reciente tendencia econocéntrica. Uno de los casos más representativos de África, Sudán, ha vivido continuas insurgencias en su periferia por décadas. En este artículo se argumenta la necesidad de considerar las realidades económicas en sus propios contextos sociales y políticos para visibilizar los orígenes de las insurgencias en África y Sudán. Para realizar esta investigación se introduce un concepto de "estado marginalizador" basado en un análisis centro-periferia, señalando la continuada relevancia del legado de la manera de gobernar colonial y precolonial en Sudán.

Palabras clave: Estado, insurgencias, marginación, periferia, Sudán.

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A number of African states have experienced prolonged armed conflicts since independence often pitting the state as one of the principal protagonists against armed groups frequently associated with political opposition. Although many of these contemporary wars are related to structural weaknesses and the crisis of post-colonial state leading to state failure or outright collapse, they are also linked to colonial legacy.[1]

Rather than centered on party politics and strong democratic institutions as in Western states, African politics is generally shaped along ethnic or cultural formations to which elements such as language and religion are highly relevant. In addition, formal and informal patron-client networks, in modern African states, link the elite in charge of the executive and political institutions intimately to its social base.[2] Hence, understanding the neo-patrimonial ethnic politics arising from African social fabric after independence helps to explain the weakness of the contemporary political institutions, originally imported and imposed by the colonizers, possibly because of their distinct logic that contributes to difficulties relating to democratic governance (a Western concept), and a general trend of decline of efficiency of the contemporary African state.[3] These types of states tend to have a narrow and highly concentrated structure of power with large parts of population politically, economically, and socially excluded.

In general, current African states are a product of external geopolitical and economic interests of powers seeking to dominate the local reality, and to a less

[1] Many contemporary wars in Africa have elements linking them to the colonial legacy, or beyond.

[2] See e.g. Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument*, Indiana University Press, 1999.

[3] See e.g. Claude Ake, *The Feasibility of Democracy in Africa*, Dakar, Codesria, 2000, pp. 35-36; and Patrick Chabal, *State and Governance: The Limits of Decentralisation*, The Hague, SNV Netherlands Development Organisation, 2007, pp. 3-5.

extent a result of local aspirations, although some actors did take advantage of the external domination through strategic alliances.[4] The colonizers constructed the states in Africa around a small, mostly European, ruling elite, demarcating borders according to colonial territorial holdings, not along ethnic communities, and tended to practice the strategy of 'divide and rule' to minimize local challenges against the colonial authority.[5] In the attempt to create sufficient political order to maximize the extraction of resources with minimum investment, the colonial policies encouraged demographic and regional marginalization of state peripheries and promoted economic, political, and social inequalities and imbalances. It has been argued that poverty was deliberately created and used as a method of controlling colonial subjects.[6]

The continuity of colonial ruling methods after independence, initially through repressive policies aimed for nation building along the culturally or ethnically defined divisions, ensured that the economic interests of the elites prevailed. When African elites, most of which had previously collaborated with the colonial masters, obtained political power, they generally sought to consolidate their hegemony through exploiting their decision-making power through neo-patrimonial order. As a result, the neo-patrimonial system, in which political and economic power is often monopolized and interest groups are organized along ethnic, language, religious, racial and/or cultural identities, became prevalent.[7]

It has been demonstrated how politicians in Africa choose to exploit particular elements of individual identities to draw constituencies and maximize benefits.[8] This was the case among the elites already during colonialism, but soon after independence the extending of the identity of the ruling elite to fill the persisting colonial political boundaries became part of nation building in a number of states,[9] and in many cases curbing political plurality through the

[4] This refers to Bayart's concept of "extraversion", a strategy which African leaders have used to obtain political and economic resources for local use. For more, see Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, New York, Longman, 1993.

[5] Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1996.

[6] Macharia Munene, "Culture and the Economy: The Creation of Poverty", Kenyatta University Culture Week Seminar, 20 September 2001.

[7] See Chabal and Daloz, *op. cit.*

[8] Daniel Posner, *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2005.

[9] See e.g. Robert O. Collins, *A History of Modern Sudan*, Cambridge University Press, 2008; and Ole M. Gaasholt, "Resources and Other Sources of Power: Rebellion in Northern Mali", 3rd European Conference on African Studies, June 6-9, 2009.

establishment of authoritarian regimes and one-party political systems became the norm. Consequently, repression and co-optation remained as principal tools of governance aimed to exploit political and economic inequalities and imbalances that had emerged during the colonial period or external administration prior to that.[10] This has directed political decision-making towards ensuring the continuity of elite monopoly of power.

In spite of some authors highlighting the domestic elements in the origins of African conflicts,[11] wars tend to originate, due to a complex interplay of internal, and possibly more remote but not irrelevant, regional, and international factors. In addition, it is inadequate to reduce conflicts in Africa to economicism or resource war logic, because insurgencies tend to be characterized by complex economic, political, socio-cultural, and ideological local-regional-international networks affecting their origins, course, and termination.[12]

Moreover, although several authors have emphasized the importance of valuable natural resources in the origins of contemporary conflicts, there are a number of cases in which economic opportunism manifested in exploitation of valuable resources has not been the main motivational element of insurgents staging an armed challenge against the state, but material conditions have rather formed an inherent part of existing political grievances.[13] This indicates that instead of being based on simple greed, the motivations of the warring parties are complex and may change in the course of prolonged conflict. It is argued here that generally the main motivations that drive regionalist or secessionist movements to take up arms against a government are a combination of political and economic factors, including grievances, greed, and others, all linked to structural conditions, and generated or exacerbated by exclusive and marginalizing state policies.[14]

[10] President Félix Houphouët-Boigny of Côte d'Ívoire could be considered among the most successful in such politics. In Sudan, this legacy of exclusive governance originated the 19th century. See the following section.

[11] Chabal and Daloz, *op. cit.*

[12] See Christopher Cramer, "*Homo Economicus* Goes to War: Methodological Individualism, Rational Choice and the Political Economy of War", *World Development*, Vol. 30, No. 4, December 2002, pp. 1845-1864; and Christopher Cramer, *Civil War is not a Stupid Thing: Accounting for Violence in the Developing Countries*, London, Hurst & Co., 2006.

[13] See Paul Richards, "New War: An Ethnographic Approach", in Paul Richards, *No Peace No War: An Anthropology of Contemporary Armed Conflicts*, Oxford, James Currey, 2005, pp. 1-21; and specifically on Sudan, Aleksi Ylönen, "Grievances in the Roots of Insurgencies: Southern Sudan and Darfur", *Peace, Conflict and Development*, No. 7, 2005, pp. 99-134.

[14] This has been the case of a number of insurgencies in Africa and particularly in Sudan.

Furthermore, the international system that treasures the principle of respecting the integrity of sovereign legally recognized states commonly downplays their domestic situations, including the deliberately marginalizing exclusive policies provoking political instability and localized ethnic conflicts. Rather, repressive government measures are often justified as legitimate use of force against armed opposition considered illegal by the international state-centric system. In spite of this, the 'marginalizing state' in Africa, a product of external domination, and its domestic policies are tolerated at the international level largely because the African elites often accommodate external economic and political interests that tend to advance their own aspirations either directly or indirectly.[15] This has allowed the merging of development and security, and a process in which the role of the state has diminished while individuals from the elite to the grassroots level have been increasingly linked to the global economic system dominated by the neoliberal doctrine –linking free market economy with a theory of liberal democracy–, which in turn reinforces Africa's economic marginalization and clientelist policies.[16] Hence, not only regimes but also non-state actors are able to use international leverage to extract resources as a strategy of extraversion similarly to those groups of Africans that had previously shifted alliances with the colonizers or the Cold War powers for their own benefit.[17]

In Sudan, peripheral armed conflicts should be viewed as political challenges to the monopolized rule of the state's Arab-Muslim elite that inherited exclusive political power from the British. However, the armed opposition also defies the Arab-Muslim elite's political project of assimilation of the periphery to build a culturally homogenized Arabized and Islamized polity through extension of their self-proclaimed Arab cultural identity, deeming non-Arabs and non-Muslims as second class citizens.[18] The implementation of this program was initiated

[15] For instance, it could be argued that Robert Mugabe's regime in Zimbabwe is singled out by Western countries largely because of its unwillingness to accommodate their interests. It should also be noted that during the 1980s and 1990s African ruling elites were able to accumulate personal prosperity despite the deteriorating economic conditions. See Nicholas van de Walle, *African Economies and the Politics of Permanent Crisis, 1979-1999*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001.

[16] See Mark Duffield, *Global Governance and the New Wars*, London, Zed Books, 2001; and Padraig Carmody, *Neoliberalism, Civil Society, and Security in Africa*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

[17] Bayart, *op. cit.*

[18] This perception of the ruling elite along with a number of other Arabized groups in the north-central Sudan has its origins in Sudan's pre-colonial period when many slaves arrived to northern Sudan on their way to Egypt and beyond as part of commercial networks. The captives originated largely from the southern frontiers of Funj and Keira sultanates and later from the southern margins of the Turco-Egyptian polity. See e.g. Ruth Iyob and Gilbert Khadiagala, *Sudan: The Elusive Quest for Peace*, London, Lynne Rienner, 2006; and Jok M. Jok, *Sudan: Race, Religion and Violence*, Oxford, Oneworld, 2007.

shortly before independence by the northern Sudanese nationalists who have instrumentalized it and drawn support and influences from Arab states, merging it as part of a repressive system deliberately creating inequality, exclusion, and uneven development, against which marginalized communities of the periphery have mobilized politically and militarily.[19]

In addition, the implementation of the governing elite's political project has buttressed pre-existing political and economic polarization between the center and the periphery both regionally and in terms of ethnic or cultural identity. In these circumstances, economic prosperity of the central riverine Sudan, the home of the Arab-Muslim elite, has contrasted the systematic economic and political marginalization of those peripheral regions and their populations that have resisted the elite's cultural assimilation mission.[20] As a result, the uneven development patterns rising from colonialism have been deliberately sustained, using repressive control and policies to facilitate poverty and dependency, to maintain relative difference in prosperity between the governing elite and its constituency in the center and the marginalized periphery, generating political and economic grievances among the regional elites and their followers.

This article sheds light on exclusive politics and insurgencies in Africa with focus on Sudan. It illustrates how external economic and political interests have played a significant role in the construction of the 'marginalizing state', and shows why this is the main historically derived structural source of political instability and rebellions. The article deals briefly with the major insurgencies since independence in southern Sudan, Darfur, and the Red Sea region, highlighting their political and economic origins.

'MARGINALIZING STATE' AND THE CAUSES OF CONFLICTS

The theoretical framework introduced in this paper draws from the author's ongoing research of conflicts in Sudan and from an observation that: "Contemporary Sudan is mired in multiple conflicts whose origins can be traced to the distant precolonial past and the eccentric colonial heritage of Anglo-Egyptian overrule".[21]

[19] See e.g. Emeric Rogier, "No More Hills Ahead? Sudan's Tortuous Ascent to the Heights of Peace", Netherlands Institute of International Relations, Clingendael, Security Paper No.1, 2005; and Aleksi Ylönen, "Conflicto y crecimiento: la configuración y supervivencia del Estado fallido en Sudán", *Revista Académica de Relaciones Internacionales*, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, núm. 8, 2008a.

[20] See Francis M. Deng, Sudan: Contested National Identities, Washington DC, The Brookings Institution, 1995.

[21] Iyob and Khadiagala, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

It has been commonly established that in Sudan various groups and regions have been marginalized or excluded outright from political and economic processes, such as political participation and economic development.[22] This marginalization and exclusion has been deliberately applied and institutionalized in the ruling methods, governance, and policies of Sudan's 'marginalizing state', which has safeguarded its minority central riverine Arab-Muslim governing elite's exclusive control of political power. A structural condition, the 'marginalizing state' is a product of historical processes originating in the state creation as a culmination of external domination for which management of local populations for resource extraction was paramount. It has enabled the governing elite's exclusive control of decision-making processes dictating economic and development policies to dominate the state economy and national resources, ensuring the continuation of the Arab-Muslim elite's hegemony over the Sudanese state by politicizing its self-proclaimed identity.

The persistence of the political and economic power in the hands of the Arab-Muslim elite has necessitated the maintenance of exclusive governance drawing historically from the periods of external domination and allowing a type of privatization of the economy and its material benefits (money, land, official positions, employment, etc.).[23] Some of these benefits have been redistributed according to patron-client networks of the ruling elite and its constituents, deliberately excluding or marginalizing groups of the periphery that do not adhere to the governing elite's culturally defined Arab-Muslim nation-building project to which obligatory assimilation of the ethnically and culturally distinct groups in the periphery has been inherent since independence. This political project, drawing ideologically from Arab nationalism, has served as justification for Sudan's elite to monopolize political and economic power, permitting it to obtain resources from Arab states by defining the country as Arab-Muslim, and providing an excuse to deprive peripheral populations and regions of equal participation in domestic political and economic processes.[24]

19th Century Legacy: The Formation of Centralized Polity

Until the 1820s, the region that comprises contemporary Sudan was divided into zones of authority of a number of kingdoms and sultanates.[25] After gradual and

[22] See e.g. Deng, *op. cit.*; and Jok, *op. cit.*

[23] Emily Wax, "Sudan's Unbowed, Unbroken Inner Circle", Washington Post, Foreign Service, 3 May 2005, p. A01.

[24] Rogier, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

[25] Among the largest of these were the Funj sultanate in south-central Sudan and the Keira sultanate of Darfur.

largely peaceful penetration of Arab culture and Islam to the region, the Funj kingdom, which had emerged as the main power in central Sudan, converted into Islam.[26] This process was facilitated by an increasingly prominent status of Arabs in the Sahelian societies owing to their patrilineal tradition and economic prosperity principally as merchants. Thus, intermixing with generally matrilineal local communities produced Arabized descendants with gradually growing access to positions of power.[27] Partly because of their improving economic and political position, the Arabized elements were able to gain social status by laying emphasis on Islam and claiming to trace their lineage back to Saudi Arabia and Prophet Muhammad, which enabled them to assert social prominence.[28] As a result, Bayart argues that: "In the Sahelian belt, adherence to Islam, with its northern origins, became almost essential in the conquest of power".[29] Thus, the societies and polities of the area, excluding southern Sudan, became characterized by a culturally defined social hierarchy emerging throughout centuries in which Arab-Muslim individuals claimed elevated political and economic status, while those identifying with neither one of these particular cultural elements tended to occupy the lowest position in the social order.[30] For instance, this was the case of the slaves obtained from the Nuba Mountains and southern Sudan in the 18th and 19th centuries.

A centralized state that covered a large part of contemporary Sudan's territory was first established during the Turco-Egyptian period (1821-1885). As a result of Egyptian conquest, previous small kingdoms and sultanates were overran and substituted by a centralized state governing vast territory to facilitate economic exploitation to satisfy Egypt's material and military aspirations.[31] However, it was not until the 1840's when Egyptians penetrated to southern Sudan that it became to be considered as a frontier land for extraction of trade commodities, such as slaves and ivory, while it took until the 1870's for Khedive Ismail to annex Kordofan and Darfur to the Egyptian dominion.[32] This had a limited socially homogenizing effect through increasing interaction among the diverse populations within one polity.

[26] Iyob and Khadiagala, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-24.

[27] *Ibid.*

[28] Jok, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

[29] Bayart, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

[30] See e.g. Deng, *op. cit.*

[31] Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim, "The Strategy, Responses and Legacy of the First Imperialist Era in the Sudan, 1820-1885", 5th International Sudan Studies Conference, University of Durham, 30 August-1 September 2000.

[32] Ylönen, 2008a, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

The Turco-Egyptian rule introduced modern state structures in the region for the first time. Centralized state administration was established that culminated in Khartoum's inauguration as the capital in 1833 and a heavy tax regime was implemented.[33] In addition, following Egyptian and Ottoman model, religion became to be used increasingly as a method of control, with orthodox Sunni Islam that served as a centralizing force to organize the Sudanese subjects instituted as the state religion, and there was an effort to modernize Sudan by introducing technology, new agricultural methods, and communication and transport infrastructure.[34]

Moreover, to control the vast extensions of northern Sudan, the Egyptian regime needed to collaborate with prominent local social forces. Since the weakening and collapse of the Funj dynasty Sufi orders had become the most influential and authoritative means of social organization, in which patrimonial relationships between the leaders and their subjects established the norms of political and economic power and exchanges.[35] Egyptians chose to collaborate with Khatmiyya brotherhood, which had arrived to Sudan in the 18th century and advocated Islam compatible with the Orthodox doctrine imposed by the state.[36] This enhanced its socio-economic and socio-political influence among the Muslim population.

However, faced with Islamist nationalist inspired rebellion in the mid-1880s, the Egyptian administration in Sudan collapsed. The subsequent Mahdist period (1885-1889), contributed to the process of state building in north-central Sudan despite of the Mahdist state becoming internationally isolated, suffering from continuous warfare and famine, leading to its demise when faced with British invasion in 1896-1899.[37]

The Mahdist period helped to lay the base for future competition for political power between two main sectarian Arab-Muslim religious movements, the Mahdists and the Khatmiyya. While the Khatmiyya was driven out having been the main local collaborator of the earlier regime, it subsequently returned to Sudan after the Anglo-Egyptian conquest that led to the formation of colonial state. It became known as the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium controlled by Britain and counted on collaboration of the two prominent sectarian groups.[38]

[33] *Idem.*

[34] See e.g. Tim Niblock, *Class and Power in Sudan: The Dynamics of Sudanese Politics 1898-1985*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1987; and Ylönen, 2008a, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

[35] Iyob and Khadiagala, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25.

[36] Ylönen, 2008a, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

[37] *Ibid.*, pp. 9-11.

[38] Despite of Sudan becoming Egyptian and British co-dominium through conquest, Egypt was under British influence and Sudan was therefore in effect controlled by Britain.

Moreover, there are other aspects of the external 19th century legacy that endure in contemporary Sudan. Although Arab-Muslim dominated social hierarchy had already been part of the social fabric of Sudanese kingdoms before the 19th century, during Egyptian and Mahdist periods it became institutionalized in most of northern Sudan. This contributed to the concentration of political and economic power to Arab-Muslim groups in the new polity, which buttressed their self-perception of cultural superiority over other ethnic, cultural, and linguistic groups. Consequently, Arab culture and Islam were perceived as the key determinants of a "social race", deeming peripheral groups that refuse or are unable to adhere to these two cultural identity pillars as inferior.[39] In this social hierarchy, the population groups in southern Sudan, the traditional sources of slaves for centuries, continued to be subjected to slavery well into the 20th century and occupy the lowest social level, facing persisting inequality.[40] Particularly in contemporary northern Sudan, this group-based "horizontal inequality" involving low social status, lack of rights, political marginalization, and economic exclusion of non-Arabs and non-Muslims, is defined according to ethnic, cultural, and linguistic lines.[41] Even in today's Sudan, there exist practices that can be considered modern manifestations of social subjugation and slavery.[42]

Finally, the above historical processes from the 19th century, rooted in the pre-colonial period, set the foundations for what could be viewed as the 'marginalizing state' in Sudan. This was facilitated by the adoption of Arab-Muslim dominated social hierarchy as a form of socio-economic pattern for the newly formed state. Consequently, the Arab-Muslim groups of the central Nile Valley were best positioned to engage in economic accumulation and benefit from scarce educational opportunities due to their collaboration with the Egyptian and Mahdist rulers, highlighting their social prominence. In the process, these groups obtained political influence, while peripheral regions of the state remained as the frontier land in terms of official and private violent

[39] See e.g. Deng, *op. cit.*, pp. 369-400 and 484-5; and Jok, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-5.

[40] See e.g. Martin W. Daly, *The Empire on the Nile: The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1898-1934*, London, Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp. 232-239.

[41] On horizontal inequality see e.g. Frances Stewart, "Horizontal Inequalities: A Neglected Dimension of Development", Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford, CRISE Working Paper No. 1, 2001; Frances Stewart, "Crisis Prevention: Tackling Horizontal Inequalities", *Oxford Development Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 3, October 2000, pp. 246-62.; and evidence on generalized treatment of southerners in northern Sudan in Duffield, *op. cit.*; and Jok, *op. cit.*

[42] During the conflict in the South slave raiding and selling was resuscitated to a limited extent by government associated Arab militias, while Duffield, op.cit., points out how the southern Sudanese continue having lower status in the eyes of many northerners.

incursions for slaves, ivory, and other resources, devastating the local societies and excluding local groups from modernizing influences of the state.[43]

Colonialism and Beyond: The Persistence of Marginalization

After the British conquest of Sudan, an Anglo-Egyptian Condominium (1899-1956) was established. While Britain dominated the colonial state de facto, Egypt's role was recognized de *jure* and reduced to one of a financial contributor.[44] In this period, a colonial 'marginalizing state' emerged in Sudan, serving principally economic and geo-political interests of Britain as the metropolis, a class of British administrators of Sudan Public Service, and largely European and Middle Eastern merchants and trading houses, not excluding collaborators of the regime such as the leadership of the Mahdist and the Khatmiyya movements, chiefs, Arab-Muslim merchants, and junior officials.[45] The colonial 'marginalizing state' incorporated southern Sudan and Darfur to the Sudanese state, but similarly to its predecessors it favored selected groups of Arab-Muslims from central Sudan while excluding populations of the periphery. Also, its presence in the periphery was largely limited to indirect rule, which hindered recognition of central state authority at the local level where tradition of resistance to external domination persisted, permitting the orchestration of challenges to the state.

The colonial ruling methods centered on the strategy of 'divide and rule', which deliberately created and/or maintained pre-existing social, economic, and political inequalities and imbalances. They were aimed to control peripheral territories through integration in an attempt to minimize challenges to the colonial rule, but at the same time marginalizing their populations, excluding them from economic processes reserved to the colonial elite and collaborators from more central areas.[46] For instance in the 1920s, the British colonial government in Sudan curbed the emerging nationalism infiltrating from the Middle East through Egypt by encouraging rivalry between the Mahdists and the Khatmiyya, implementing native administration, depriving remote Darfur and the Red Sea region from economic development, and isolating southern

[43] See e.g. Ylönen, 2008a, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-11.

[44] For Anglo-Egyptian relations during the period, see e.g. Muddathir Abdel Rahim, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan: A Study in Constitutional and Political Development*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1986.

[45] See e.g. Niblock, *op. cit.*

[46] For a historical account of the British policies in Sudan, see e.g. Daly, *op. cit.*; and Martin W. Daly, *Imperial Sudan: The Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, 1934-1956*, London, Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Sudan politically from more Egyptian influenced northern parts. In addition, a growth-pole strategy was applied in an effort to concentrate economic development and social services on central areas around Khartoum and the main agricultural export producing region in the Blue Nile, while the state's periphery was largely excluded.[47]

Moreover, like their predecessors, the British recognized the need to seek collaboration with the prominent social forces to legitimize their authority. Thus, they sought to patronize the key religious movements and tribal formations, which had already played an important role in the Sudanese socio-economic and socio-political landscape.[48] Also benefiting from the policy economically, the Mahdist leader Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi and the Khatmiyya figurehead Ali al-Mirghani became regime collaborators, acquiring resources to boost their socio-economic and socio-political influence while the British exploited rivalries between the two. Aware of a possibility of an alliance between sectarian and tribal[49] leaders capable of challenging the colonial government as had happened previously with the Egyptians, the British based their indirect administration on 'divide and rule' strategy. This form of governance set the precedent for post-colonial rule, aiming to consolidate the existing social order and socio-economic and socio-political structure by maintaining social and regional inequalities and imbalances that emerged during the 19th century and the colonial period.[50]

A process of de-colonization of Sudan initiated in the mid-1940s. It was exclusive to the Graduate Congress, the main Sudanese nationalist political formation and pressure group to end colonialism, composed almost exclusively of a small group of educated Arab-Muslim intellectuals from the north-central Sudan, which was influenced by nationalist movements in the Arab world and claimed erroneously to represent the heterogeneous local populations of colonial Sudan. This was in part a result of British exclusive political and economic favoritism of the Arab-Muslims facilitating their socio-economic prominence, converting the group as the prime candidate to inherit political power, while also providing impetus to its Egyptian influenced nation-building project based

[47] Douglas Johnson, *Root Causes of Sudanese Civil Wars*, Oxford, James Currey, pp. 16-19; Ylönen, 2005a, *op. cit.*; and Aleksi Ylönen, "Political Marginalization and Economic Exclusion in the Making of Insurgencies in Sudan", in Magnus Öberg and Kaare Ström, *Resources, Governance and Civil Conflict*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2008b, pp. 125-146.

[48] Mahmud El Zain, "Tribe and Religion in Sudan", *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 23, No. 70, December 1996, pp. 523-529. Rather than primordial ethnicity, the term tribal used in this article refers to the role of elites in reviving and manipulating 'tribalism'.

[49] 'Tribal' in this context refers to the complex Arab social organization, not 'tribalism' promoted by the colonial powers as part of their 'divide and rule' strategy. See El Zain, *op. cit.*

[50] Niblock, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

on hegemony of Arab culture, language, and Islam, which has formed the essence of its politicized identity.

Thus, a perception of Arab-Muslim cultural superiority and its political imposition resulted in a crisis over national identity. This is largely because: "the Sudanese "Arabs" decided that they embodied the truth, the heart, the core, the soul, and the reality of the Sudan, rendering all others second class".[51] Hence, according to the Arab-Muslim elite that based its political project on its self-proclaimed identity and inherited the exclusive control of the state machinery, Sudan obtained independence as a unitary Arab state confessing Islam as state religion with culturally superior Arab-Muslim political intelligentsia representing the otherwise highly heterogeneous nation.[52] In addition, the exclusive nature of the political power concentrated on the Arab-Muslim elite was complemented with its idea of *hokum*: "meaning that control of the state was contended for purposes of self-promotion and self-enrichment, not to implement policies –and [the Arab-Muslim elite] had a high esteem of itself as the vanguard of the country".[53] As a result, in the course of de-colonization in the 1950s the northern Arab-Muslim nationalist elite manipulated the democratic process to suit its interests, setting a precedent for Arab-Muslim elite dominated politics with mostly non-democratic inclination to maintain *statu quo* and its exclusive hold on power over other societal groups. Equally, Arab-Muslim elite dominated, and to an extent privatized, the national economy, ensuring the persistence of its exclusive power.

The continuity of such governance practices was, in part, also due to the Arab-Muslim nationalists' and sectarian elite's observation of the British conduct of governance and political affairs, as a number of them were closely related to the colonial administration or formed part of the state apparatus since the late 1940s. This facilitated the consolidation of the 'marginalizing state' and policies as the institutionalized base for the continuity of the Arab-Muslim elite's exclusive political and economic power.

This, along with the 'divide and rule' strategy inherited from the British as a ruling method, became among the main factors behind the policies of the

[51] Gérard Prunier and Rachel M. Gisselquist, "The Sudan: A Successfully Failed State", in Rotberg, Robert I. *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*, Cambridge, World Peace Foundation, 2003, p. 110.

[52] Rogier, *op. cit.*, p. 9. Approximately 40% of the Sudanese perceive themselves as Arab, roughly 70% are Muslim, 25% practice traditional beliefs, about 5% are Christians, and there exist nearly 600 ethnic groups and approximately 400 languages in the country. However, it should be noted that like elsewhere in Africa, complex processes of ethnic and religious blending transcend such categories, their value here merely being to highlight the immense social diversity.

[53] *Idem.*

'marginalizing state' after independence when the Arab-Muslim elite viewed the building of state through its culturally defined project essential in safeguarding its exclusive political and economic power. This nation-building project has involved highly oppressive policies in the culturally distinct peripheral regions, particularly in southern Sudan, where the worst periods of forced assimilation policy imposing Islamization and Arabization have contributed to the emergence of dissent and violent subversive activities to challenge the Arab-Muslim hegemony.[54]

Moreover, the persistence of using governing methods derived from the colonial period drawing from the 'divide and rule' logic and indirect rule (native administration) deliberately aimed in maintaining already established, or creating new, inequalities and imbalances through marginalization and exclusion, has secured the exclusive hegemony of Sudan's Arab-Muslim elite until today. The preservation of political power, in part through the control of resources, has in turn facilitated the elite control of the economy, creating resource base for maintenance of the hegemony. In addition, extraversion of resources from external sources has played an important role upholding a number of regimes, including Abboud (1958-64), Nimeiri (1969-85), and the Islamist (1989-), the government using its international legal recognition and Arab-Muslim status, when convenient, to obtain political support, and economic and military resources. In the process, loyalty of high-level Arab-Muslim army officers, who play a significant political and economic role in Sudan, has been essential for regime survival.

In other words, political and economic marginalization, which have their roots in the colonial period and beyond, have been institutionalized in the governance practices and ruling methods in Sudan by the minority Arab-Muslim elite, to the extent that it is possible to consider Sudan a 'marginalizing state'. The transition to independence merely changed the composition of the managers of the administration, but its exclusive nature persisted with statist economic orientation, relying on a narrow base of social forces and coercive measures, emphasizing the state as a device of violent repression, and not as a source

[54] This was the case when the regime of Ibrahim Abboud (1958-64) engaged in a violent campaign to advance forced Islamization and Arabization in the region that had experienced isolated dissent since 1955 when the southerners were deprived of a federal arrangement and other safeguards to ensure political participation and economic development to catch up with the more developed northern provinces. In the early 1980s, Nimeiri regime also implemented oppressive policy in the southern Sudan by dismantling regional autonomy granted by 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement to gain access to southern resources (oil, land, and water) and imposing Islamic law for the country knowing that most southerners are non-Muslims.

of security for non-Arab Muslim individuals.[55] Consequently, the exclusive nature of Sudanese politics has marginalized non-Arab groups politically and economically, while the governing elite has benefited from both the colonial and post-colonial environment and competed among its own factions for power, which it has held through authoritarian military or single-party rule throughout most of Sudan's independence. This has deliberately prevented political participation of marginalized groups.[56]

Furthermore, the concentration of political and economic power to the sections of Arab-Muslim elite and its constituents created a highly polarized society between those who adhere to the main symbols of Sudanese Arab-Muslim identity, Arab language, culture, and Islam, and those excluded subjected to the state's political and economic marginalization. This has made the marginalization of the peripheral regions and their populations socio-culturally defined,[57] and explains partly why the Arab-Muslim state's economic development policies maintain a similar pattern to those during colonialism, depriving the marginalized areas of economic progress. In contrast, the diverse peripheral political movements, partly divided through government policies, have been unable to stage a sufficiently serious challenge to the governing elite's hegemony to claim wider redistribution of political power and national resources.

However, faced with a mounting tension more recently, the government has signed a number of peace agreements including the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) with the Southern People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), the main rebel movement in southern Sudan, the 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement with a faction of the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) insurgents, and the 2006 Eastern Peace Agreement with the Eastern Front (EF), an umbrella group of regionalist political and armed movements from the Red Sea region. Yet, this has been, at least in part, an attempt to preserve power by dividing the opposition both in Khartoum and in the marginalized periphery, while portraying willingness for power sharing in the Government of National

[55] Ake, *op. cit.*, p. 36. It should be noted that periphery populations in Darfur, Red Sea region, and elsewhere, considered non-Arabs are subjected to such violent policies in spite of being Muslims. Still, Arab-Muslim locals and migrants to such regions often receive preferential treatment from the central government, including protection if necessary. For instance, this has been the case of the *jallaba* merchant class extended allover the country with its ethnic origins in the north-central riverine Sudan and influence among the ruling elite in Khartoum.

[56] There are occasions in which democratic Arab-Muslim governments have voluntarily given up power to the military in order to prevent the marginalized peripheral populations of gaining more prominent political role. This was, for instance, the case in 1958 when Abboud regime took power, and similar claims are related to the 1969 coup that brought Nimeiri to presidency.

[57] See e.g. Ylönen, 2005a and 2008b, *op. cit.*

Unity formed according to the CPA, but simultaneously maintaining effective control of key political and economic institutions, agencies, and companies.[58]

Finally, it is suggested here that state policies centered on cultural Arabization and Islamization have caused grievances in the peripheral Sudan, which have been taken upon and manipulated by the local elites in part because of the realization that even by buying into the Arab-Muslim project they would never obtain social status equal to that of the riverine Arab-Muslims.[59] This has facilitated ethnic and regional mobilization for the opposition in which a variety of identity elements, such as ethnic, regional, linguistic, and even religious, have been manipulated to challenge the ruling elite's political and economic hegemony. Repressive government policies often providing a pretext to accelerate mobilization against the state in the periphery, the local leaders tend to orchestrate insurgencies around grievances but their real motivations often reflect an evolving intermix of political and economic factors during conflict. Yet, this is not to discard emphasis on regional and international elements in the causes of insurgencies since local conditions cannot be isolated from regional and international influences.

ORIGINS OF CONFLICT IN THE PERIPHERY: SOUTHERN SUDAN

It is plausible to argue that the conflict in southern Sudan is a culmination of historical processes, rooted in Arabization and Islamization of northern Sudan, leading to the formation of Arab-Muslim dominated social hierarchy politicized and commercialized in the context of the Sudanese state, and challenged by sections of the heterogeneous southern elite. The Turco-Egyptian period is particularly important in the process of transforming social relationships between groups because it marked the founding of state in Sudan, unifying a number of small kingdoms and sultanates in the region and incorporating the southern region to the Sudanese polity as a subservient frontier land for resource extraction. The subsequent Mahdist period strengthened the earlier relationship between the state and southern Sudan, based on violent exploitation, and was particularly disastrous for the social order in parts of the region although most parts remained out of control of the central administration.[60] Due to this 19th

[58] See e.g. Aleksi Ylönen, "The Fragile NCP-SPLM Partnership: Sacrificing Truly Comprehensive Peace?", 7th International Sudan Studies Conference, University of Bergen, Norway, 6-8 April 2006.

[59] Jok, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

[60] Ylönen, 2008a, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-11. However, some slave lords exercised localized authority through their private armies.

century experience, a pre-existing legacy of resistance intertwined with a general sentiment of fear and mistrust of northerners in southern Sudan.[61]

Organized violence against the state in southern Sudan first surfaced during de-colonization in the mid-1950s. Its structural causes are primarily linked to the policies of the colonial 'marginalizing state' favoring Arab-Muslim groups economically and politically, while southern Sudan, isolated from the northern parts from the 1920s to the 1940s, was excluded from both political participation and economic development. Mistrust towards northerners associated with the legacy of violence of the 19th century slave raiding,[62] the monopolization of the state apparatus by the Arab-Muslim elite, and the loss of prospects for economic development and jobs in the process of de-colonization became important motivational elements for the emerging southern political elite to call for safeguards or federal arrangement for the southern region to prevent the feared domination by the more educated, and economically and politically established northern Arab-Muslims.[63] However, the British, along with their American allies who pressured for de-colonization, failed to enforce the demands of southern leaders for special status for southern Sudan, which led to members of the southern elite to attempt to organize spontaneous disturbances and army mutinies in southern provinces in 1955.

In its subversive efforts, the southern elite used the sentiment of fear and mistrust towards northerners that had heightened during de-colonization in its effort to mobilize its constituents against the government. In the mid-1960s, the rebellion gained momentum as a result of oppressive Arabization and Islamization policy of the military regime of Ibrahim Abboud (1958-64), and internationalized with the involvement of the neighboring countries, regional players, and international actors, before ending in 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement that provided southern Sudan a limited regional autonomy.[64]

The second rebellion in southern Sudan materialized in 1983. This time the mistrust of the Arab-Muslim military regime of Jaafar Nimeiri (1969-1985)

[61] See e.g. Deng, *op. cit.*

[62] Europeans were also heavily involved in slave raiding in Sudan during the 19th century. However, the violent legacy of the northern raids particularly during the Mahdist period remained. This could be in part due to European and American missionary education in southern Sudan since the Westerners were likely to deny any responsibility of the enslavement.

[63] See e.g. Deng D. A. Ruay, *The Politics of Two Sudans: The South and the North 1821-1969*, Motala, Nordic Africa Institute, 1994; and Ylönen, 2005a, *op. cit.*

[64] For some excellent accounts of the rebellion, see e.g. Mohamed Omer Beshir, *The Southern Sudan: Background to Conflict*, London, Hurst, 1968; Mohamed Omer Beshir, *The Southern Sudan: From Conflict to Peace*, Khartoum, Khartoum Bookshop, 1975; Cecil Eprile, *War and Peace in the Sudan 1955-1972*, London, David & Charles, 1974; and Edgar O'Ballance, *The Secret War in the Sudan: 1955-1972*, London, Faber and Faber, 1977.

was one of the principal elements that contributed to the causes of conflict and the residual guerrilla warfare that had taken place in the Southern Region by scattered groups of which some rejected the Addis Ababa Agreement. This sentiment strengthened during the 1970s due to government policies towards the Southern Region, and by the mid-1970s Sudan suffered from a deepening economic crisis, whereas the politics of the 'marginalizing state' and economic deterioration led to continuous interventions in southern politics and deprivation of the southern regional government of its stipulated financial allocations.[65]

The regime's deliberate exclusion of the Southern Region from petroleum politics and an attempt to divert the Nile to benefit northern Sudanese and Egyptian agriculture raised grievances. Moreover, Nimeiri and his Islamist collaborators dismantled the southern administration, divided the region into its three original provinces by manipulating its internal ethnic differences, and redrew the north-south boundary to annex a recently discovered oil region situated in the southern territory along with fertile land that allowed the extension of mechanized agriculture controlled by the northern Arab-Muslim elite,[66] including its army officers through their established commercial interests through businesses and military economic corporations.

Finally, the war broke out when a number of mutinies organized by southern ex-rebels incorporated in the army took place in Bor, Pachalla and Ayod in the south.[67] This was after the discontent southern elements in the army had begun to strengthen their relationship with the remaining armed groups. Since 1976, the residual guerrillas had been supported by Soviet-backed Ethiopia and Libya, the former to retaliate Sudan's support for Eritrean rebels and the latter due to its attempt to undermine the U.S. supported Nimeiri regime until 1985.[68] The extreme violence during the prolonged conflict polarized the identities further, dichotomizing the northerners as 'Arabs' against the southerners as 'Africans', particularly after the Islamist National Congress Party (NCP) regime's policy of the holy war, *jihad*, against the southerners of whom some are Muslims. It was not until 2005 when a complex peace process initiated in 1994 by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development culminated in the CPA that ended the major hostilities between the SPLM/A and NCP (former National Islamic Front, NIF).

[65] For a narrative on the causes of the conflict, see e.g. Johnson, *op. cit.*

[66] For an account on these developments, see e.g. Abel Alier, *Southern Sudan: Too Many Agreements Dishonoured*, London, Ithaca, 1990.

[67] Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-62; and Riang Yer Zuor and Hoth Giw Chan, *South Sudan: A Legitimate Struggle*, Baltimore, PublishAmerica, 2006, pp. 35-36, 39-40.

[68] *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60. After the overthrow of Nimeiri in 1985, Sudan's foreign policy orientation shifted towards Soviet Union and reconciliation with its neighboring Arab states.

CONFLICT IN THE WEST: DARFUR

Darfur has suffered from a number of regionally and internationally linked conflicts since the 1960s, but external domination of the region had resulted in political instability long before. Darfur sultanate was annexed to colonial Sudan for the first time in 1917, and, dictated by the dynamics of the 'marginalizing state', the region has been deprived of effective political participation at national level and economic development.[69] A neglect of the region by the British colonial authorities established the historical roots for structural exclusion, generating grievances against the central government that culminated in political regionalism manifested already in a coup attempt in 1975 by western army officers under Hassan Hussein and later in the mobilization for conflict against the central government associated groups in Darfur.

However, since the 1960s conflicts in the region that are related to the war between Chad and Libya, in which Khartoum has been involved, have polarized and militarized ethnic relations between the largely sedentary non-Arab majority and culturally Arab nomad minority, among them immigrants and militants produced by a number of local conflicts.[70] During the 1980s, Libya and sectarian leadership of the government in Khartoum began manipulating the region's Arab population through supremacist propaganda that resulted in an unprecedented coalition of Arab ethnic groups, escalating localized conflicts over land and water complicated by proliferation of arms, desertification, overpopulation, droughts, and famine.[71]

Since then, local Arab groups, often supported by Khartoum involved in manipulating regional politics, have fought for ethnic dominance in Darfur with a pretext of being a marginalized minority, an argument voiced by the Islamist regime and external actors, particularly Libya, both advancing their respective Arab supremacist projects. For instance, Sudan's Islamist regime has both politico-ideological and economic interests in the region to advance its Arab cultural project to minimize a possibly destabilizing effect of Darfur on its

[69] On marginalization of Darfur see e.g. Julie Flint and Alex de Waal, *Darfur: A Short History of a Long War*, London, Zed Books, 2005, pp. 12-13; and Ylönen, 2005a, *op. cit.*

[70] *Ibid.*, Ylönen, 2005a; and Jérôme Tubiana, "Darfur: A Conflict for Land?", in Alex de Waal, *War in Darfur and the Search for Peace*, London, Harvard University Press, 2007, pp. 69-70.

[71] Tubiana, *Ibid.*, p. 70; Flint and de Waal, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18; and Sharif Harir, "'Arab Belt' versus 'African Belt', Ethno-Cultural Conflict in Darfur and Regional Cultural Factors", in Sharif Harir, Terje Tvedt, and Raphael K. Badal, *Short-Cut to Decay: The Case of the Sudan*, Uppsala, Scandinavian Institute for African Studies, 1994, pp. 149-150.

hegemony,[72] provide land for loyal local Arab groups, and control a petroleum-rich zone in southern Darfur.[73]

In this context, the main current rebel organizations in Darfur emerged in 2002-3. They were in part a culmination of local response to Arab militia violence against civilian population, a strategy Khartoum has used since the mid-1980s in its effort to curb dissent in the periphery while advancing its political and economic interests in extending Arab-Muslim influence and controlling resources, such as oil areas, by violently removing local populations.[74] As had been the case earlier in the southern conflict, this policy was justified through propaganda to dehumanize the periphery groups. In the case of Darfur, the government deliberately uses doctrinal differentiation claiming that Islamic practices in Darfur are impure and Darfurians are 'Africans', neither Arabs nor true Muslims, and hence subject to *jihad*. In response, rebel organizations in Darfur grew out of ethnic militias to protect local groups from Arab militia raids, calling for more equal sharing of political and economic power.

The prolonged violence in Darfur has encouraged gradual polarization of identity between Arab and African, as was the case in the southern conflict.[75] Whereas Darfur's rebel organizations have been associated with the loose coalition of peripheral armed and political opposition movements in Sudan, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) that includes the SPLM/A as the strongest party, they are also regionally linked. This explains in part why the current upheaval in Darfur emerged in the course of accelerated peace negotiations between Khartoum and the SPLM/A, and has had a profound impact particularly in Chad and the Central African Republic where ethnic links of certain groups in Darfur extend.

Finally, a peace treaty signed in 2006 between Khartoum and one of the Darfur rebel factions, Minni Minnawi's constituency of the SLM/A was unable to curb the intractable violence. While the situation has escalated into a humanitarian disaster and is connected to regional instability and the power

[72] This became obvious after 2000-1 power struggle between the leader of the Islamist movement and its revolution in Sudan, Hassan al-Turabi, and his former protégé, the current president Omar al-Bashir, which resulted in the sidelining of the former. To challenge al-Bashir's constituency within the movement, al-Turabi established Popular National Congress Party with an important support base in Darfur, while maintaining links to the leadership of the local Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) rebel group.

[73] See e.g. Ylönen, 2005a, *op. cit.*

[74] This was already case during the conflict in southern Sudan when the government armed and supplied muharalin militias to target civilians around Bentiu oil region, and since then in Darfur where the janjawid have engaged in same activities.

[75] Ylönen, 2005a, *op. cit.*

struggle within the Islamist Arab-Muslim elite in Khartoum, it defies an easy solution to improve the local security situation in spite of a limited external intervention by the United Nations and the African Union.[76]

THE INSURGENCY IN THE EAST: THE RED SEA REGION

In part because of problematic pacification and the lack of government authority in the mountainous Red Sea region after the conquest of Sudan, the territory primarily inhabited by the indigenous Beja Muslim people was left as a marginal part of the British colony. Consequently, it was subjected to structural marginalization and exclusion similarly to southern Sudan and Darfur through the colonial 'marginalizing state'. Since independence, when the Arab-Muslim elite of the Nile Valley assumed political power, the Red Sea region remained marginalized causing emergence of a regionalist movement in the 1950s.

However, despite of the regionalist organization's attempt to obtain political and economic concessions through supporting the Khatmiyya, the latter is more linked to the Arab-Muslim groups of the central Nile Valley. This left the population of the Red Sea region without remedies derived from the central government to deal with the chronically variable climactic conditions that provoke recurring drought and famine, while the central Sudan was developed with state resources. From the 1980s onwards, the regional movement concentrated on maintaining distinct regional identity faced with demographic pressure due to an increasing amount of migration to the area by agricultural laborers and other workers. The demographic pressure on the sacred traditional lands of the Beja together with the government Arabization and Islamization policy has since threatened their cultural survival and served as a proximate cause to the conflict.[77]

The principal determinants of an outbreak of armed violence in the Red Sea region materialized after the 1989 coup that brought the current Islamist regime to power. Soon after the military takeover, the new regime sought to accelerate Arabization and Islamization of the periphery by repressive policies portraying itself as the bastion of Islam against African non-believers, and obtaining support from Arab countries. These policies contradict the agenda of

[76] Ben Simon Okolo, "Human Security and the Responsibility to Protect Approach: A Solution to Civilian Insecurity in Darfur", *Human Security Journal*, vol. 7, Summer 2008, París, pp. 46-60.

[77] See i.e. Aleksi Ylönen, "The Shadow of Colonialism: Marginalisation, Identities and Conflict in the Sudan", in Chantal Cornut-Gentille, *Culture and Power: Culture and Society in the Age of Globalisation*, Zaragoza, University of Zaragoza Press, 2005b, pp. 153-68.

the Red Sea regionalist movement and are perceived to threaten local majority *Beja* traditions distinct from the Arab-Muslim project of Khartoum.

Successively, the growing tension between the government and local organizations converted into violence when the regime executed the governor of the Red Sea province M. O. Karrar after accusing him of having participated in plotting against the government.[78] In response, local groups organized low intensity armed opposition by attacking sporadically against government personnel and installations in the region. Consequently, the armed groups in the area became associated with other armed opposition organizations in Sudan mostly under the NDA umbrella, and principally Eritrea that has manipulated the *Beja* opposition supported also by its ethnic kin there.[79]

In 2006, a peace treaty between the EF and the government was signed. While stipulating power and resource sharing by devolving state power to the Red Sea region, a key feature among the EF demands, its implementation has been slow and obstructed by the covert hold of power in Khartoum by the NCP. This has reinvigorated the grievances among the *Beja*.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Exclusive and marginalizing governance in Africa continues to generate political instability and conflict. Mostly related to colonial legacy, in terms of institutions and ruling methods, it is aimed to maintain the governing elite in power through exclusive management of state and private resources. As has been argued in the article, the case of Sudan's center-periphery conflict illustrates this, since the exclusive governance through the 'marginalizing state' has been justified through cultural, religious, or ethnic lines in an attempt to maintain the minority ruling elite's and its constituents' monopoly of power and resources.

As the cases introduced in this paper reveal, the causes of conflicts in Sudan have been principally political and related to governance of the 'marginalizing state'. The lack of just redistribution of economic resources nationally is an important element producing grievances, which are principally political ones because the distribution of material wealth is dictated by political power and political decisions. Even the more clandestine organized violent economic conduct for private gain in wars, often enriching most notably military, militia, and rebel leaders, is conditioned by the political situation. Thus, economic agendas and motivations related to the conflicts in Sudan, and in a number of other African countries, are inherent to their political context.

[78] *Ibid.*

[79] Eritrea has supported for instance the SPLM/A, the JEM, and the EF.

In addition, in Sudan, the marginalization of the periphery structurally conditioned by the 'marginalizing state' and its policies since colonialism has been the principal cause of deliberately maintained economic, political, and social inequality and imbalances, having a destabilizing effect on the society. This indicates that more inclusive political arrangements and policies redistributing economic well-being through the effective political representation of the peripheral regions and transparency of finances in the state organs would be likely to reduce conflict because it would both increase the legitimacy of the state at the local level in the marginalized areas through wider representation and allow a possibility for the marginalized periphery populations to gain increasing material benefits channeled through their representatives. This should be accompanied by limiting the political and economic role of the officials of the state's security apparatus and building trust between the governing and peripheral elites.

Such political moderation could also serve as an incentive for the NCP to maintain power in a similar manner to a number of other African regimes that have prolonged their rule through political and economic concessions to the opposition. Yet, the NCP is aware of the persisting grievances among the marginalized majority contesting the minority Arab-Muslim hegemony, but its strategic calculations continue to defy real power-sharing. In the current situation, the NCP carries on undermining the opposition through manipulation and persuasion, reinforcing the army, and arming militias, using its vast financial resources derived principally from petroleum. This has not only tarnished its image of goodwill for true democratic change, but also maintained the political and economic dynamics that have given rise to insurgencies in Sudan.