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The Tribal Impact on Political Stability in Sudan

ABSTRACT   As in most Arab and Third World countries, the tribal structure is an anthropological reality and a sociological particularity in Sudan. Despite development and modernity aspects in many major cities and urban areas in Sudan, the tribe and the tribal structure still maintain their status as a psychological and cultural structure that frames patterns of behavior, including the political behavior, and influence the political process. This situation has largely increased in the last three decades under the rule of the Islamic Movement in Sudan, because of the tribe politicization and the ethnicization of politics, as this research reveals. This research is based on an essential hypothesis that the politicization of tribalism is one of the main reasons for the tribal conflict escalation in Sudan. It discusses a central question: Who is responsible for the tribal conflicts in Sudan?

KEYWORDS: tribe, ethnicity, Sudan, Darfur, local government, conflict resolution

THE CAUSES OF TRIBAL CONFLICT IN SUDAN

In general, a distinction is to be made between "the tribe" and "tribalism." The first refers to a social entity with values that ties the group and preserves their interests, while tribalism constitutes a base for identity and implies a sense of belonging. However, it overrides other identities, including the national one. Tribalism becomes a tendency and frames its members' perception of the existing social boundaries such that its basic unit is the tribe. Since it was based on customs, values, ethics, a system and a structure within which the power is distributed (such as the leader of tribe, the caretaker, the sheikh, and the mayor), so it embodies the character of political establishment. This means that the tribe is seen as a political unit or a polity.

Tribalism has a strong cultural and ethnic identity that distinguishes the members of a group from the members of another group. And with the close ties and strong kinship relations, the members of tribe feel a strong sense of identity. From a substantive point of view, in order to form a traditional tribal society, there must be a continuous traditional organization and a reciprocity

system. There is an emotional dimension manifested in a strong sense of common identity that can make people feel that they are tribally connected (Dekā 1993, 90).

The limited space here does not suffice to deal with the concept of tribe in terms of literary and conceptual definitions or in Islamic terms of religious context.[1] In the case of Sudan, tribalism as a tendency is associated with the crisis of identity, which in turn is the result of diversity and the misallocation of resources to achieve equitable and comprehensive development. The absence of development has fueled tribal conflict over resources, accompanied by ignorance, narrow loyalties, and a sense of belonging to micro- or sub-national identities.

Tribal conflict cannot be isolated from the structure of the state, its political system and discourse. Moreover, objective conditions drift the social conflict into a political one. Thus social and tribal conflicts exist in all societies—particularly in underdeveloped societies. However, their escalation into bloody conflict becomes a phenomenon and a dilemma that transcends the nature of traditional tribal dispute. Disputes and conflicts erupt in traditional tribal-based societies from time to time due to overgrazing or tribal reprisal, but they are usually limited and contained by tribal customs. Since the rates of conflict, the casualties, and the magnitude of losses have increased over a short period of time, with higher frequency, this has become a phenomenon affecting the social structure and political stability. These conflicts and disputes are not only worthy to be studied, but also reflect the failure of policies.

Extrapolating from the tribal conflicts in Sudan, they are obviously an outcome of rival and tribal disputes over agricultural and animal resources, scarce water resources, as well as the natural disasters (such as the drought and desertification). This is complicated by adherence to the traditional concept of *hakoura* (land granted by the state), which involved many tribes' objections to the form of modern institutions of the modern state. It began to affect the Native Administration (NA), the traditional structure mechanism of tribal community. The lack of state machinery that deals neutrally with the different tribes and ethnic disputes—along with politicization—has led to the complexity of the state's crisis in Sudan. This has obviously been manifested in the Darfur crisis. Therefore, this paper is based on Darfur as a case study.

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1. Rivers defines tribes in the British Encyclopedia (1971) as: "A simple social group that speaks one tone and has one authority united in reaction, such as behavior in war situations."

The tribal disputes in Sudan are linked to multiple causes and factors such as disputes over land, water resources, the pastures that intersect with the cultivated land, and animal abuse on farms, as well as environmental degradation, drought and desertification, theft and reprisal, and the flow of weapons from neighboring countries—including the new one, all of which triggered the tribal and ethnic strife (Arabs versus non-Arabs/Africans).

One of the biggest reasons for the increase of tribal disputes in contrary to modernity and globalization in Sudan is the absence of education and awareness on the one hand, and the poor presence of official (state) institutions in the countryside after the dissolution of the NA, which has led to the revival of tribal spirit on the other hand. The subsequent reinstatement of NA in a politicized shape and not as a social system produced by the mechanisms of traditional society throughout its course of natural evolution, where the community's mechanisms have been weakened by political intervention, has led to the collapse of the tools of social control.

Thus, the outcome was an administrative and security vacuum as well as weapons proliferation. Hence, the tribal conflict has escalated into an armed conflict, and the number of victims and the frequency and rates of conflict have increased (see table 1).

One of the reasons behind the aggravation of the conflict is that the intervention of the Sudanese government was seen by some ethnic groups as biased, vis-à-vis the absence of a (predominantly) legitimate, efficient NA, backing one side against the other on an ethno-political basis. With the deterioration of the economic situation, this led to the emergence of new groups that became involved in the disputes either for political/partisan or electoral gain, or through the sale of weapons. Consequently, they used to instigate the strife to divide tribes and to perpetuate conflict for their own interests.

This erroneous political intervention has triggered tribal politicization in rural areas, as well as the escalation of armed tribal conflict. The war between the armed movements and the Sudanese government in Darfur since 2003 has further complicated the crisis. Political polarization has intensively manipulated the conflict.

The absence of democracy is one of the reasons for the rise of tribalism and tribal conflict. The coup of the National Islamic Front in June 1989 "has suspended democracy in the Sudan, including Darfur, which has practiced democracy through political parties. They were modern institutions that participated through program rather than tribe" (Al-Midan 2013). This does not mean that the political parties that were active in Darfur were not influenced

TABLE 1.   Tribal Conflicts in Darfur from the 1930s to May 2015

No.	The conflicted tribes	Date	Location
Tribal conflicts during the colonial era (1898–1955)			
1	Kababish – Kawahla – Alberty/ Ziyadiyya - Meydub	1932	Darfur North
Era of first democratic/party government (1956–1958)			
2	Alberty - Ziyadiyya	1956	Darfur North
Era of Aboud military government (1958–1964)			
3	Meydub – Ziyadiyya - Kababish	1957	Darfur North
4	al- Ma'aliyya – Rouzayqat	1964	Darfur South
Era of Serr al-Khetem transitional government (June 1965–1966)			
5	Ziyadiyya - Alberty	1965	Darfur North
6	Meydub - Kababish	1965	Darfur North
Era of second democratic/party government (1966–1969)			
7	Ma'aliyya – Rouzayqat (Garang's town)	1966	Darfur East
8	Rouzayqat - Ma'aliyya	1968	Darfur South
9	Rouzayqat – Zaghawa	1968	Darfur North
10	Zaghawa – Mahiriyya	1968	Darfur North
Era of Ja'afar Nimeiri military government (May 1969 – April 1985)			
11	Zaghawa – Alberqo	1974	Darfur North
12	Bani Helba – Rozayqat	1975	Darfur South
13	Zaghawa- Zaghawa	1976	Darfur North
14	Rozayqat – Dajo	1976	Darfur South
15	Bani Helba - Rozayqat Northern	1976	Darfur South
16	Bani Helba – Mahiriyya	1977	Darfur South
17	Rozayqat – Berqo	1977	Darfur West
18	Taa'ysha – Salamat	1980	Darfur South
19	Rozayqat – Bani Helba	1982	Darfur South
20	Falata - Qimir	1983	Darfur South
21	Rozayqat – Masiriyya	1983	Darfur South
22	Kababish – Alberty - Ziyadiyya	1984	Darfur North
Era of the democratic government (1986–1989)			
23	Qimir – Fallata	1987	Darfur North

(Continued)

TABLE 1. Continued

No.	The conflicted tribes	Date	Location
Era of al-Bashir Islamic government (1986–current; statistics available to 2015)			
24	Fur - Badiyyat	1989	Darfur North
25	Arab – Fur	1989	Darfur North
26	Fur – Arab tribe	1989	Darfur North
27	Zaghawa - Qimir	1989	Darfur North
28	Fur (kabkabiya) - Zaghawa	1990	Darfur North
29	Taa'ysha - Qimir	1990	Darfur South
30	Zaghawa – Merareet	1991	Darfur North
31	Zaghawa – Bani Hussein	1991	Darfur North
32	Zaghawa - Mima	1991	Darfur North
33	Zaghawa - Barqad	1991	Darfur North
34	Zaghawa – Barqad (2nd time)	1991	Darfur North
35	Fur - Turjum	1991	Darfur North
36	Zaghawa – Migrant Arab	1994	Darfur North (Kutum)
37	Sudanese Zaghawa – Shadian Zaghawa	1996	Darfur North
38	Mesaleet - Arab tribes	1996	Darfur West
39	Zaghawa - Rozayqat	1996–97	Darfur South (currently Darfur East)
40	Arabs - Mesaleet	1997	Darfur West (Junayna)
41	Dajo - Rozayqat	1998	Darfur South
42	Arabs – Mesaleet (2nd time)	1998	Darfur West
43	Fur – Rozayqat	1999	Darfur South
44	Meydub – Alberty	1999	Darfur - North
45	Hebaniyya - Abudarq	2000	Darfur South
46	Zagahwa – Qimir	2000	Darfur North
47	Maa'liyya - Rozayqat	2000	Darfur South
48	Rozayqat - Tanjar	2000	Darfur South
49	Rozayqat – Mesiriyya (Cordovan)	2000	Darfur South / Kordofan West
50	Hebaniyya - Salamat	2000	Darfur South
51	Ziyadiyya - Alberty	2000	Darfur North
52	Rozayqat - Mesaleet	2000	Darfur West

(Continued)

TABLE 1. Continued

No.	The conflicted tribes	Date	Location
53	Rozayqat – Mansour'sons (Arab)	2001	Dafur South
54	Qimir - Zaghawa	2001	Darfur West
55	Dajo – Mesiriyya	February 2005	Darfur South
56	Falata – Mesaleet	2005	Darfur South (Saa'doun)
57	Hebaniyya - Mesaleet	2005	Darfur South
58	Barqad – Mesiriyya – Mosbaa't – Dajo	December 2005	Darfur South
59	Barqad – Rozayqat – Turjum	January 2006	Darfur South
60	Hebaniyya - Rozayqat	2006	Darfur South
61	Hebaniyya - Salamat	2006	Darfur South (Surquliya)
62	Hebaniyya – Falata	2006	Darfur South
63	Qimir – Falata	2007	Darfur South
64	Turjum - Rozayqat	2007	Darfur South
65	Falata - Hebaniyya	2007	Darfur South
66	Qimir - Falata	2007	Darfur South
67	Falata - Hebaniyya	2008	Darfur South (Afuna)
68	Rozayqat - Hebaniyya	2008	Darfur South (Qaridha)
69	Qimir - Falata	2008	Darfur South (Sanboa)
70	Bani Helba – Turjum	2008	Darfur South
71	Rozayqat - Hebaniyya	2009	Darfur South
72	Alberty – Ziyadiyya (Mleet)	2011	Darfur North
73	Salamat – Taa'ysha (Rahid alburdy)	2011	Darfur South
74	Salamat – Mesiriyya (Omdakhen)	2012	Darfur South
75	Qimir – Bani Helba (Catila – Aad Alfosan)	2012	Darfur South
76	Mesaleet – Falata (Qaridha)	2012	Darfur South
77	Bani Helba – Qimir	January 2013–May 2013	Darfur South (15 attacks from Bani Helba on Qimir because of land ownership; 190 dead and hundreds of wounded; 14 villages and 1,200 homes burned; 5 water stations

(Continued)

TABLE 1. Continued

No.	The conflicted tribes	Date	Location
			destroyed; looting of citizens' property worth 15 billion Sudanese pounds)
78	Falata - Mesaleet	2013	Darfur South (Qaridha, Om Saa'doun; 7 dead, 20 wounded)
79	Rozayqat – Abbala – Bani Hussein	June 2013	Darfur South (Abo Amer Mountain; competition on oil wells; 17 dead, 20 wounded)
80	Rozayqat –Maa'liyya	August 12, 2013	Darfur East (110 dead, hundreds of wounded)
81	Rozayqat –Maa'liyya	September 18, 2013	Darfur East (37 dead, 47 wounded)
82	Mesiriyya - Salamat	February 2014	Darfur Center (Om Dakhen; tens of dead and wounded; so Salamat fled to Chad)
83	Maa'liyya - Rozayqat	September 2014	Darfur North (500 dead, wounded)
84	Maa'liyya - Rozayqat	January 2015	Darfur East (10 dead, tens of wounded)
85	Rozayqat - Masiriyya	January 27, 2015	Darfur East
86	Falata - Mesaleet	February 2015	Darfur West (7 dead, 20 wounded)
87	Ziyadiyya - Alberty	March 21, 2015	Darfur North (30 dead, tens of wounded)
88	Salamat – Mesiriyya	March 22, 2015	Darfur South (21 dead, 24 wounded, and stolen cows)
89	Rozayqat – Hebaniyya (Santta and Ferdawss)	March 23	Darfur South and East (10 dead, 10 wounded)
90	Maa'liyya - Rozayqat	May 10, 2015	Darfur East (Hundreds of dead and wounded)

Source: Table (1) in all its parts was compiled by the researcher from several sources including the *Sudan Tribune* newspaper (30/5/2013, 7/8/2013, 21/2/2014), the Sudan Media Centre (SMC), the Center for Peace Studies at the University of Nyala (South Darfur State), and the author's follow-up to the daily newspapers published in Khartoum.

by tribalism. However, party program sometimes surmounted tribalism. This was particularly true with regard to urban centers as compared to the rural areas where tribalism is more deep rooted.[2] When the villager moved to the city, the city with its social, political, trade-unionist, and cultural relations was able to provide him with multiple channels of identification where he could accommodate into various civil society organizations (parties, federations, associations, clubs, and the like). So his tribal loyalty would be weakened.

This was the case during the democratic (party) system. However, with the advent of the National Salvation Government of al-Beshir (the Islamic Movement) "the tribes shared common residential areas in the urban centers—particularly the capital (Khartoum)" (Hakkar 2003). Paradoxically, instead of modernizing—or at the least urbanizing—the new settlers (villagers), politics has been tribalized in the urban centers whereas the tribe was already politicized in the rural areas. In the absence of democracy in Darfur, the conflict has turned into a purely tribal conflict; the local elections and any other elections have become tribal. It became forbidden for the members of other tribes to run for elections in a *hakoura* of the tribe that owns the land (Hakkar 2003, 163–68).[3] Tribal polarization has even influenced the allocation of the local governments' posts—including councils and institutions as well as public companies—taking into account the tribal interests. The National Islamic Front (headed by the late al-Turabi) has tended to persuade some tribes and so has armed and equipped them against the other ones. Hence, the Native Administration has been manipulated as a government tool to serve the pro-government tribes, whereas depriving the others who do not follow suit. Then the government confiscated the *hawakeer* of the anti-government tribes and gave them to the pro ones. Thus when democracy was back, tribalism appeared as the lonely player in the scene.

THE TRIBAL CONFLICT IN DARFUR

Throughout the period from 1916 to 1956, Darfur remained an integral part of modern Sudan, as an underdeveloped area governed by British officials

2. Al-Midan newspaper (the mouthpiece of the Sudanese Communist Party in Khartoum), 7 August 2013.

3. Al-hakura it is the land (agricultural, pastoral, residential, etc.) that is given by the governor to a person, group, tribe, or clan by a governmental decree that determines its natural borders as their property, to be inherited by their heirs.

with a strong reliance on the Native Administration system. When the Sudan became independent in 1956, the Arab north—with its Muslim majority—assumed the political and economic power of the so-called dominant Muslim Arab Nile group (Al-Batahani 2006). There were disputes in the region in the period from 1956 to 1980, from independence to the introduction of regional government, between local tribal groups in which classical weapons were used. From 1983 to 1993, the nature of the disputes turned into a war among the tribal ethnic groups, Chadian groups, and the central government using modern weapons. From 1992 to 2002 there was an ethnic polarization: Arabs against non-Arabs, and with the government's intervention, the level of conflict became national.

Scholars agree on the multiplicity of the causes and factors of tribal dispute in Sudan. The factors overlapped and interchangeably affected as well as complicated the dispute. Many of Darfur's people believed that the root of the conflict, which was triggered in 2003, goes back to 1982. It took a new dimension in 1986 under the government of former Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi, when some Arab tribes gathered under the name of the Arab Alliance, supported by the Umma Party, against the Fur tribe (non-Arab), supported by the Democratic Unionist Party, a partner in the coalition government at the time. Others believe that era of the National Government of Salvation (of the Islamic Movement) has witnessed the interaction of political Islam with the ethnic polarization. So, when the Islamic Salvation Government came to power on June 30, 1989 the process of politicization and ethnicization rapidly increased. The new Islamic Salvation Government had a "direct and powerful influence in igniting the dispute with ideological and ethnic dimensions among the so-called Arabs and Zorqa" (Al-Batahani 2006, 89). When the Fur tribes realized that what was going on was unbearable, they formed the Darfur Liberation Army at the beginning of 2003. In a short time the Zaghawa tribes joined them, and the movement's name was changed to Sudan Liberation Army (SLM). However, shortly after that a new movement, the Justice and Equality Movement(JEM), split from the first one.

More than twenty-three Arab leaders and commanders, representing a myriad of intellectuals, tribal leaders, and senior officials, pointed out in their memorandum to the then-prime minister, Sadiq al-Mahdi, that "the Arab race" has "diffused the civilization in this region in governmental religious and cultural fields" (Hakkar 2003). The Arab Alliance noted in its memorandum that Arabs constitute about 70 percent of the Darfur's population, live in about 55 percent of its total area, contribute about 15 percent of the

total national income of Sudan as a whole, and that their educated elements make up about 40 percent of the educated elite in the region. However, they represent only 14 percent of the national parliament. "We are afraid that if the representation of the Arab race continues to be neglected, things will slip from the wise hands to the ignorant ones, and this may lead to serious consequences."

Al-Bashir's government did not intervene in the right time. It intervened too late, with the wrong approach—taking part with one side against the other. This sharp political polarization coincided with the ethnic polarization: the Arabs against the non-Arab Africans (Humra vs. Zurqa). With the emergence of insurgents, there were intersections between what was political and what was tribal, and the result was the escalation and internationalization of the Darfur crisis.

However, it is notable that disputes in Darfur over the decades have not always been ethnic or politicized. There were intra-Arab conflicts, as well as non-Arab African ones. The conflict between the farmers and the shepherds over scarce water resources and in grazing areas is one of the traditional conflicts in the African continent. In Sudan, particularly in Darfur, this was the case in the aftermath of climate change and rainwater changes over the last two decades, where the area of pastures and water resources has declined, along with the scarcity of agricultural land due to the erosion of fertile soils and the pressure on limited resources, leading to sharp competition between farmers and shepherds (Saadallah 2008, 52).

Peaceful coexistence between the tribes of Darfur prevailed in the region and the relations were sustained by customs, habits and traditions, as well as the tolerant teachings of Islam. Darfur has been closely linked in social, economic, and developmental terms to the larger community of Sudan which has contributed to the cohesion and consistency of the social structure in Darfur. But the situation has been complicated since the 1990s when the "black book" was (anonymously) written, in Arabic, and circulated by some educated elites of Darfur, proving by figure-based evidence the injustice and marginalization undergone by their region since independence. Land ownership became the main cause of tribal conflict in Sudan, particularly in Darfur, taking into account that these *hawakeer* (tribal lands) have become an integral part of the heritage, social, and cultural structure of the Darfur's people. They have become inherited rights and have serious political dimensions that cannot be easily tackled or resolved (Saadallah 2008).

There are several reasons that have collectively contributed to the disruption of social and tribal structures regarding the *hawakeer* and the lands of tribes in Darfur. These problems later became the core of the crisis of Darfur. The real problem of *hawakeer* system according to its prevailing concept in Darfur is that the government (central and state) has lost its esteem of authority to assure control and establish security and safety for the citizen (Hakkar 2003).

TRIBAL INTOLERANCE (EXAMPLES OF BLOODY VIOLENCE)

The armed tribal conflict has been erupting in Darfur in successive and violent cycles to the extent that the absence of intertribal conflict in Darfur community has become an exception. In the past three decades, this dispute has involved most of Darfur's tribes. To illustrate this, table 1 provides examples of some tribal conflicts in Darfur.

From this table (table 1), in all its parts, it can be noted that in the past, the periods of tribal conflict in Darfur were separated by long intervals. For example, after the conflict of 1932, there was no dispute until 1956—that means a gap of twenty-four years. Note that this was the period of British colonization where the British administration had left the mechanisms of society working in the maintenance of security and solving problems without direct intervention. Then there was one incident of conflict in 1957 between some Arab tribes (Meydub, Ziyadiyya, and Kababish), and this was during the first democratic government (1956–58). Under the military government of the Lieutenant General Ibrahim Abboud (six years, 1958–64) there were only two clashes. In the transitional period (one year, 1965–66) there were also only two tribal incidents or clashes. During the second democratic government (three years, 1966–69) there were four disputes. During the military rule of President Jaafar Nimeiri/May Government (sixteen years: 1969–85) there were twelve disputes, a relatively small number compared to the period of government (an average of one and a half disputes a year). In the era of the Islamic government of Omar al-Bashir (which began in 1989 and remained in force until the writing of this research), the statistics record sixty-six tribal disputes (twenty-six years, 1989–2015), or four conflicts per year, taking in consideration the large number of victims and material losses in this era due to the use of modern weapons.

Although the number of tribal conflicts increased from the mid-1970s to the second half of the 1980s, the shift in this curve occurred in 1989, which

witnessed four tribal disputes, followed by higher rate of disputes in the 1990s than in the two previous decades (six disputes in 1991 for example). So, if we take the year of independence (1965) as the base year, it can be seen that the rate revealed an upward trend.

It is noted that in the first decade of the Salvation Rule (1989–1999) there were twenty-one tribal conflicts (see table 2 and figure 1). So, this means that disputes and conflicts occurred at more than three times the rate of the 1980s (six disputes/conflicts only). It is noted that in 2000, for example, there were eight tribal wars in Darfur; five in 2006 and four in 2005, and four in 2008. But the most important observation is that about twenty cases of bloody conflicts occurred in one year, 2013, and between January and May of that year, fifteen of these conflicts were recurrent such as attacks from the Bani Helba tribe on the Qimir tribe.

It can be seen that the number of tribal disputes increased during the period of Nimeiri's rule (or regime) in the 1970s because of the dissolution of the Native Administration, the number of conflicts doubled during the Salvation era due to the politicization of the NA after it was reinstated. Therefore, if we compare the sixteen years of Nimeiri's rule (1969–85) with the first sixteen years of the Salvation (Islamic Movement) rule (1989–2005), we find that the total number of conflicts during the period of Nimeiri's rule was twelve while in the sixteen years of Al-Beshir's government the total was thirty-six, almost three times. But the great paradox is that during the eighty-five years in study, 1930–2015, we observe that the total number of conflicts in the period of the Salvation government (twenty-five years, 1989–2015) overtakes the all previous periods taken together: the Salvation period witnessed seventy-five tribal conflicts (incidents of bloody violence) compared to just twenty-three such cases during the previous sixty years.

Most of these conflicts were of large magnitude, where the number of victims could reach hundreds of dead. This means that there may be a lot of small tribal incidents that have not been monitored or recorded. However, it is not easy for the researcher also to obtain accurate or complete figures. For example, the researcher had no statistics for the years 2009 to 2012. These are only examples, but they are sufficient indicators for proving the escalation and increase of disputes and their complexity from one era to another—especially in the period of al-Bashir's Islamic government (National Salvation).

It is noted that tribal conflict has erupted more in the fifteen years of the third millennium than in the previous decades. The rate of tribal conflict has increased because of the emergence of armed movements on the scene and

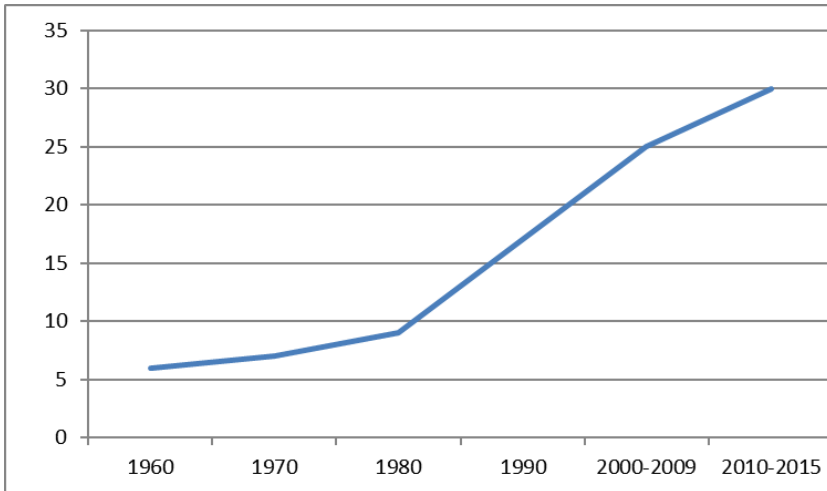| TABLE 2. Number of Conflicts since Independence	
Time period	Number of conflicts
1960s	6
1970s	7
1980s	9
1990s	17
First decile of the second millennium (2000–2009)	25
First half of the second decile of the third millennium (2010–2015)	31
Total	95

FIGURE 1. Rise of Tribal Conflicts in Darfur: 1960–2015

the activity of Janjaweed militias. These movements are representing certain tribes. The Arabs have become tribal interfaces and the Janjaweed militias are representing certain tribes. Consequently, all this has inflamed tribal warfare in Darfur in general, whereas in the past it was relatively limited (Musa 2015, 93–94).

Thus, a conflict of such large scale—one that includes most of Darfur's tribes—confirms the fact that tribal conflict has become deep rooted in Darfur and is more difficult to solved than it was in the past (through there are

local solutions such as the Ajaweed or Al-Rawakib communities and the reconciliation conferences). Many factors have emerged and the crisis has been further complicated (Saadallah 2008, 27).

Among the top of these factors (as noted earlier):

1. The politicization of conflicts. The intervention of the central government—especially in the period of the Salvation government—in an partial manner, representing certain tribes, forced the other party to resort to the foreigner, hence escalating and internationalizing the crisis.

2. The abolishment of the NA, and then its reinstatement with further politicization. The NA is no longer as powerful as in the past. By being politicized, it has lost its prestige and become less able to solve tribal problems than it was in the past.

3. The flow of weapons from neighboring countries (namely Libya and Chad).

As for the political factors (politicization of conflicts), some believe that the roots of this recent dispute date back to 1986 under the government of former Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi (as mentioned before), when some Arab tribes gathered under the name of the Arab Alliance, backed by the Umma Party, against the Fur tribe, which was supported by the Democratic Unionist Party, the partner in the coalition government at the time (Hariri and Tregi 1997). This indicates that there was a clear bloc of tribes, on racial grounds. to exert political pressure (Hakkar 2003, 181; Muhammad 2006). Then a non-Arab ethnic alignment was formed against Arabs (the Fur bloc, the Zaghawa bloc, and other non-Arab tribes against the Arab tribal bloc). This undoubtedly has affected the social peace and political stability, and has impeded development and perpetuated ignorance and backwardness.

It is notable that before 1989, the predominant feature of tribal conflict was represented by the pastures, water, and lands (between shepherds and farmers). But after 1989 (the era of Islamic Salvation/Movement), new factors came into the scene: racial prejudice, political manipulation, and insurgency. The most prominent of these was the conflict between the Fur tribe against the dozens of combined Arab tribes. This means that the tribal conflict under the Salvation government took a racist, ethnic, and political orientation. It is also notable that the intertribal conflicts arose for different reasons and between different tribes—not necessary the Africans against the Arabs, or vice versa.

The general observation is that tribal conflict is not new, and its traditional causes are old and renewed. However, the pace or scale of the conflict and its size has increased during the period of Salvation government (Islamic Movement).

Pastures, water, and theft, each formed 25 percent of the tribal conflict in Darfur, while conflict over land and racial prejudice constituted 12.5 percent each, but it should be noted noting that this latter factor (racial prejudice) is a new one (see figure 2).

However, the problem of water and pastures is linked to the problem of development while the problem of land and theft is related to laws, security, authority, and management. All this, in the final analysis, is linked to the policies and legislation that are a function of the ruling elite.

In general, the role of the ruling political elite in the escalation of tribal conflict can be expressed through the policies of the elite, starting with the sudden dissolving of the Native Administration without gradation or attempt to fill the security and administrative vacuum left in the state institutions. The politicization of ethnicity and the partisan interference in the conflict and the subsequent political/ethnic polarization of Darfur community components between the central government and the armed movements have complicated the problem and enticed foreign intervention, turning it into a humanitarian and international crisis.

Tribal conflicts over resources have intersected with the absence of equitable and comprehensive development, politicization, emergence of armed movements, government interference in favor of one party, conflict among neighboring countries, and the flow of weapons into Darfur, along with tribal militarization and the emergence of tribal militias. Government infiltration on the one hand and the various armed movements on the other have led to a complex political, social, and security situation that may influence the shaping of Sudan's political and social future if it is not properly tackled.

In the context of tribal militarization it suffices to point out that when a recently appointed governor went to visit and inspect one of the conflicting tribes as part of his mandate to calm the fighting and stop the violence, he found that the tribe has a force of more than fifty four-wheel-drive Land Cruisers fully armed and equipped. When asked about the identity of the force and its subordination, they told him that was to protect the tribe (Hamdan 2015). This situation was not an exception in one tribe but has become a phenomenon in Darfur. "It is regrettable that most of the tribal members of the educated, employees, politicians, traders, and leaders of Native Administration joined in to form the NA. The armed tribal conflicts and
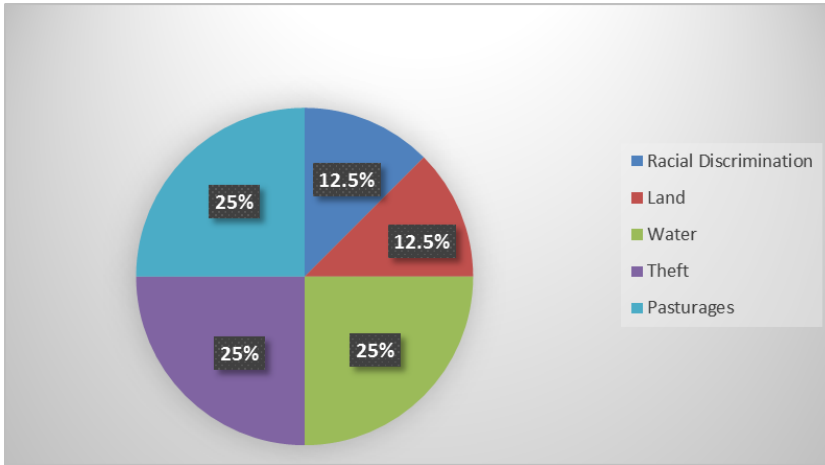
FIGURE 2. Reasons behind Tribal Conflicts in Darfur, by percent

the war in Darfur had already their warlords who derive their illegal earning. These warlords were known as "the colonels, and "the colonel is the leader of fighting group and has a council of tribal knights. They are ruthless, courageous, and arrogant in the hardest circumstances" (Hamdan 2015). Consequently, each tribe has formed its forces to protect itself: more than ten tribes formed armed groups after the intensification of the armed conflict in Darfur, especially the Arab components. This conflict resulted in more than one thousand deaths in 2010, according to the report of the Small Arms Survey of the researcher Jolie Velant on the tribal conflict in Darfur.[4]

Table 1 has clearly shown how tribal violence has escalated in Darfur society, and how it has affected the social fabric, social peace, peaceful coexistence, and stability in general. This phenomenon may continue for years and even decades if the government does not adopt radical solutions to this problem, as there are still areas of tension that can explode at any time.

The tribe still has a powerful presence in the structure of the Sudanese political mind, and is present in its culture, values, and ethics in the Sudanese political life. Of course, this weakens the political process of building civil society in Sudan, where—as mentioned above—the politicization of tribes in the countryside and the tribalization of politics in the urban centers have increased tribal influence in political behavior and tribal impact on the polit-

4. This report was issued in Geneva, 2010.

ical process. Therefore, on the basis of this politicization the tribes were militarized and some of them were transformed into militias to strengthen their military, political and economic structure. Thus, the tribe became strong in many areas challenging the state machinery.

The greatest danger here is the growth of subnational identities at the expense of the national identity of the whole country, since Sudan is still a state of nation building. The tribe in Sudan has challenged the state machinery, as in some Arab Spring countries such as Yemen and Libya. Therefore, it is expected that the tribe will impede the process of building a strong or coherent civil society and a stable national state.

This danger seems clear through revitalization of tribalism and ethnic polarization even at the national level. In this context, new concepts have emerged expressing this distorted and divided regionally and ethnically polarized reality, such as the concepts of the "People of the Sea" (Awlad al-bahar or Jallaba) versus "People of the West and Zorqa" (black Africans). This has produced deep cleavages in the Sudanese society as a whole, as well as affecting the relationship between "People of the West" (of Sudan) in how they envisage the "People of the Nile" and "the central elite" who dominate policy making and decision taking in the government. This further strengthens the perception of "People of the West" and the tribes of the other marginal areas (south of the Blue Nile and South Kordofan/Nuba Mountains) that employment takes place on this basis. This has been officially expressed by including the name of one's tribe in the special forms *(araneek)* required to apply for governmental jobs or obtain services from official organs (such as identity papers).

POLITICIZATION AND WEAKENING OF THE NATIVE ADMINISTRATION

Sudan is a predominantly multiethnic state with a tribalized social structure, particularly in rural areas and pastoral or nomadic countryside. Sudan has historically witnessed tribal conflicts over water and pasturage, and historically the Native Administration has played an active role in conflict resolution, reconciliation, and the promotion of peaceful c-existence between the different social components. Despite the decline of the Native Administration, especially in the urban centers, it has continued to play a "genuine role in settling disputes by reconciliation as a socially and politically acceptable role. The NA is a traditional and natural local rule, since belonging to the tribe is not

optional because a man finds himself in it by virtue of the natural affiliation of kinship, blood and clan" (Dany 2010).

Generally, the NA is (or has been) described as a "popular organization that performs its administrative and social functions at low administrative cost and in a simple nonrigid bureaucratic manner. It is based on the extended family with historical roots prior to the establishment of modern state, and its importance in Sudan stems from the multiplicity and enormity of the components of its social structure. The tribe is a genuine social entity in Sudanese society, which has its own lifestyle and its family ties throughout the history of the past and modern Sudan" (Dany 2010, 2). Therefore, the British colonial administration in Sudan recognized that the tribe was a social institution seeking to develop its members and better their life. The Turks and the British adopted the system of Native Administration as a traditional local rule that would manage the rural areas of Sudan and some of its small towns efficiently and cheaply.

It is notable that the NA was for a long time—from the colonial era until its dissolution in the early 1970s by the government of Nimeiri, which considered it as a reactionary or backward institution without grasping the nature of Sudanese society and mechanisms of social control—the only institution that shouldered the task of settling disputes. From 1932 until the early 1990s, there were some thirty-six conflicts in which the NA intervened thirteen times in the conflict resolution mechanism, and four times in a joint effort between the government and the NA through reconciliation conferences. IT should be noted that the NA intervened alone in settling eight native conflicts from 1932 to 1975 then the government intervened in 1976 and 1978. The intervention of the government in partnership with the Native Administration increased in the 1980s, but the rate of tribal conflict also accelerated in the 1980s and further increased in the 1990s and in the third millennium, where the NA was overshadowed or its role became secondary or weak. During this time there were reconciliation conferences sponsored by the government in the presence of the NA's leaders, who were mainly appointed by the government not by their respective tribes. So, in the final analysis the mechanism has become governmental. Here we note the increase of intervention and the increase of tribal conflict. In addition to other reasons, the government was intervening to pay blood money (*diya*), which has encouraged tribal fighting and reprisal. The parties of conflict concluded that if they killed for reprisal, the government would undertake the peace and pay blood money.

CONCLUSION

Although Sudanese society is generally transitional, some of its parts are still governed by customs and tribe. This increases the importance of the NA. It is advisable that the government support the Native Administration in the regions of Darfur as well as in the countryside of Kordofan and the East, and leave the social mechanisms to function free of government intervention and subject to natural evolution (as traditional social control mechanisms). However, the government can intervene by introducing development for these areas. Consequently, the NA will gradually give way to modern systems such as law and courts—development will bring with it education and awareness, as has occurred in other relatively developed regions in Sudan where the NA is no longer that strong. In some parts of the country the NA has become limited to solving personal or family problems. It has become part of the heritage, mostly symbolic.

The causes of tribal conflict in Sudan can be summarized as:

1. Dispute over land tenure. Land is the main cause of conflict, though at its inception it was limited to the local level *(hawakeer*, pastures, agriculture, migrant nomads against farmers).

2. The absence of equitable and comprehensive development. This has pushed the tribes to conflict over limited resources in the absence of utilization of these resources to serve people and animals.

3. The abolition of the Native Administration, and then its reinstatement, weakened and politicized. This resulted in an administrative and security vacuum that led to the escalation of tribal conflict, which intersected with the emergence of armed opposition movement and created a bloody situation.

4. The performance of security missions by tribal militias. This is the responsibility of the police and judicial apparatuses (restoring stolen goods, tracking criminals and thieves, and perhaps retribution).

5. Weapons proliferation due to conflicts in neighboring countries.

6. After the emergence of armed movements, a sharp polarization of tribes between the government and movements, shifting the conflict to a complicated one.

Subsequently, the research found that:

1. Tribal conflicts have weakened the state authority and will continue to weaken it because of other factors. Many areas of Darfur are currently under the authority of movements that called them

liberated areas or under the control of *hawakeer* tribal militias that impose their authority in the event of any conflict with another rival tribe.

2. Because of the politicization the Native Administration, it became unable to manage conflicts or contain disputes, as it was in the past, and has been unable to convince the armed militias in Darfur to make peace.

3. The government's continuation of paying blood money in the cases of intertribal killings has encouraged the continuation of crimes and violence.

4. It is noted that tribalism has been manipulated in Khartoum by influential people in the state, who seek to access power at the expense of their people's interests. So, a large part of the causes of tribal conflicts is the greed of power. Tribal belonging has become the dominant voice in the distribution of jobs. This tribal quota in the government has produced a personal-interests-seeking class, who will continue exerting efforts to perpetuate tribal conflicts.

This research recommends that:

1. The state must assure its authority over tribes and revise the federal system as well as review the federal rule, ensuring that it applies the real federal system with consociational democracy and proportional representation.

2. The state should reconsider the process of paying blood money, which has become a concern for Darfur's people because it encourages the outbreak of conflict and represents an incentive to continue killing in Darfur.

3. The Native Administration should be reinstated with its former powers, respect, and impartiality. The government must intervene in the functioning of the traditional mechanisms only by developing the community to qualify it for modernization, at which point these traditional institutions will automatically and gradually give way to modern ones.

4. The government should stop politicizing the Native Administration.

5. The government should review and amend land laws to achieve justice and put an end to conflicts over land acquisition.

6. The state should combat negative traditions such as traditional concept of *hakoura,* which is identical to the feudal system in

Europe, and should change this culture by promoting civic culture, law, central state authority, and the public ownership of land.

7. The government should collect weapons from individuals, tribes, and various militias to strengthen the regular forces and intensify their deployment in the areas of tension and conflict. (One month following the original publication of this article in Arabic the government of Sudan launched a campaign for collecting weapons, starting in October 2017).

8. Darfur's elite should stand up to the level of historical responsibility and prioritize peace-building in their agenda. They should focus in their dialogue with the state on projects and development rather than on getting posts, in order to achieve radical social change and develop a comprehensive awareness movement that eliminates ignorance and backwardness in order to broaden the Darfurian vision so as to transcend the local (clan/tribal) sense of belonging for the national one.

Finally, with these imbalances at home, which have produced wars, economic crisis, and instability, and with the effects of globalization, migration, social mobility, and ethnic/political polarization, an important question arises: Where is our social system heading? ▪

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