

## **Darfur: the Violence of Geopolitics**

Nation-state and the policy of hegemony and coercion in post-colonial Sudan<sup>1</sup>

By

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## **Glossary**

Almahadya: It is the first Sudanese State that ended the Turco-Egyptian colonization of Sudan (1821-1884). The Almahadya rule lasted fourteen years (1884-1898). Almahadya derives its name from its leader Mohamed Ahmad Almahadi, who led a movement to liberate most of what will become today to be known as Sudan in 1881.

CPA: It is the acronym for the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that was signed between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan's Peoples Liberation Movement/Army. The CPA is a collection of agreements agreed upon on December 31, 2004 and signed in a formal ceremony on January 9, 2005.

DPA: It is the acronym for the Darfur Peace Agreement that was signed between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (Mini Menawi Faction) in May 2006.

DUP: It is the acronym for 'The Democratic Unionist Party' in Sudan.

JEM: It is the acronym for the Justice and Equality Movement. It is the largest rebel group fighting the Sudanese government in the region of Darfur since 2003. Some consider that the JEM operates as the military arm of (PCP) the Sudanese Popular Congress Party (See PCP and NCP).

NCP: It is the acronym for the ruling National Congress Party. The NCP and PCP are the successors of the Political Islam movement (a.k.a. the National Islamic Front, NIF) in Sudan. In 1999, the NIF split as a result of a power struggle, and the NCP emerged as a pragmatic faction of the NIF.

PCP: It is the acronym for Popular Congress Party headed by the ideologue of the political Islam movement in Sudan Dr. Hassan al-Turabi. Since the split of the political Islam movement in 1999, the PCP opposes the government of NCP, and most political observers link JEM to the leadership of PCP. Nevertheless, both groups deny this association.

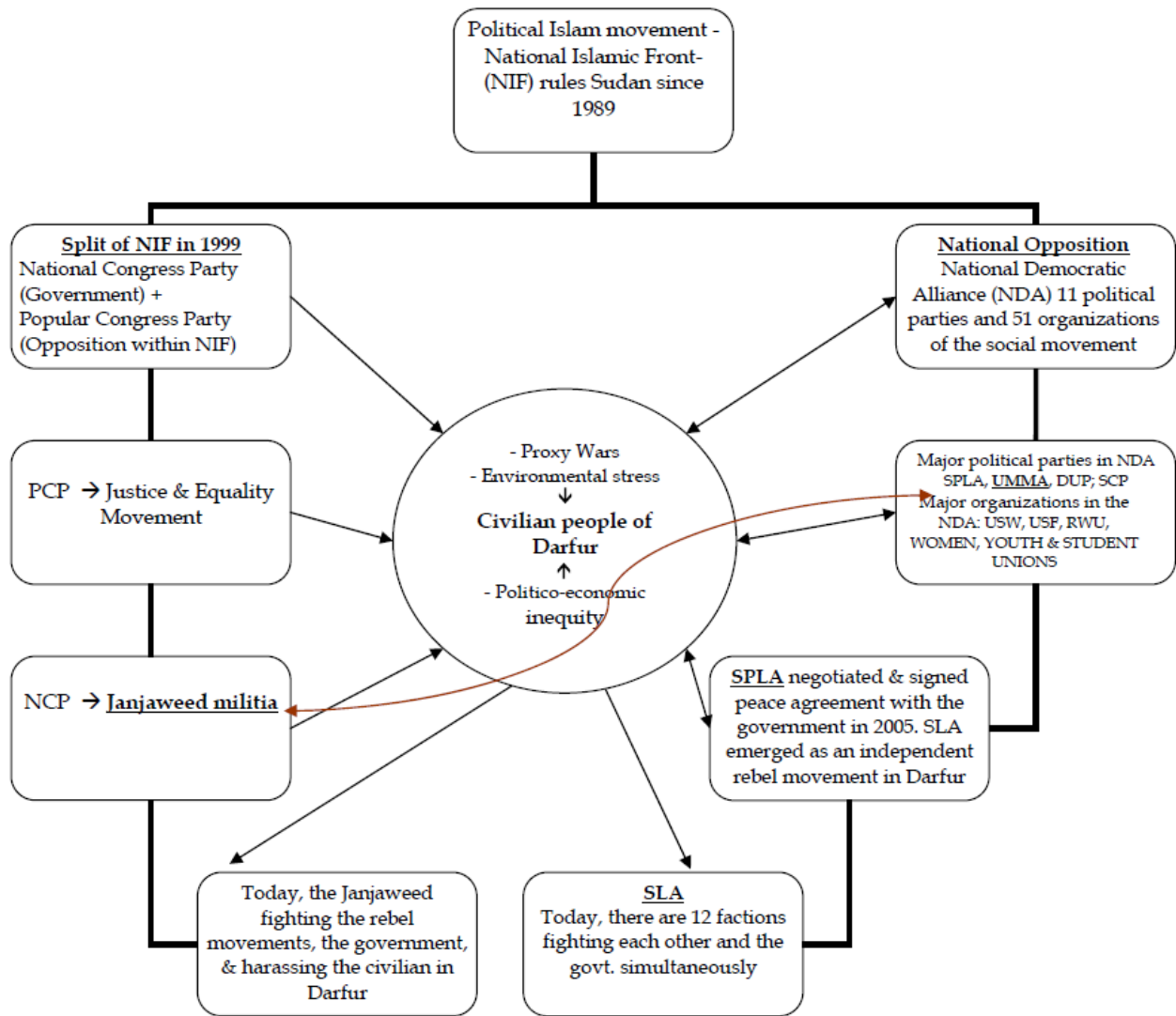
SLM/A: It is the acronym for the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army, which is the second largest rebel group fighting the Sudanese government in the region of Darfur since 2003, the roots of the SLM/A goes back to the 1980s. Today, there are about 13 factions of the SLM/A fighting in Darfur.

SPLM/A: It is the acronym for Sudan's Peoples Liberation Movement/Army. It is the main rebel group that fought a civil war against several central governments in Sudan between 1983 and 2005. After the 2005 peace accords, the SPLM/A became a governing partner with the NCP in the National Unity Government. Silva Kiir is the Chairman of the SPLM/A, the first Vice-president of the government of the Sudan, and the President of the South Sudan government.

The Umma Party: Umma is the equivalent Arabic word for nation. Thus, the name should be read: The Nation Party.

The Turco-Egyptian Condominium: Refers to the period of dual colonization of the Sudan (1821-1884), which ended by the defeat of the Turkish administration by the forces of Mohamed Ahmad Almahadi (see Almahadya).

## Conflict Map of the Darfur crisis



**Legends:**  
 □ → Elite relation   □ ↔ Interactive/grassroots relation   □ Elbow connector → Long-term conflicting relation

### I. Introduction

In recent years, the Darfur conflict experienced unprecedented global media coverage that focused on the dramatization of the conflict instead of a serious analysis of its root causes, which are underdevelopment, unequal distribution of wealth, and undemocratic policies. In that context, Darfur’s conflict illustrates another proof of the violent ideology of the state and its elite’s approach in regard to issues of political

participation and equal development. In particular, the Sudanese people in the peripheries have witnessed policies of marginalization and exclusion for the last five decades. For most Sudanese, historically, the state is violent and oppressive entity, and all regions of Sudan have suffered from the state brutality. Moreover, Darfur's conflict presents the failure of the elite and their nation-state model in the Sudan. The state not only failed to contain the root causes of the conflict, which are marginalization and oppression of the socioeconomic and political rights of the Darfuri people and exclude their region from equitable development, but also had perpetuated these injustices.

The formation of the state in Sudan has always been a problematic task for the colonial rulers and the Sudanese elite alike. Not only had manipulated and oppressed its ethnic complexity (colonizers) but they undermined the necessity of creating the appropriate institutions (elite) that reflect societal needs. The framework that the colonial powers, from the Turco-Egyptian Condominium to Colonial Britain, implemented in the making of the modern Sudanese state was deemed to be a great failure due to its alienated ideology from the existing realities of the Sudan.

Further, the examination of colonial affects, state's apparatus, and stagnation of the decolonization process has been overlooked when arguments are laid out to understand what went wrong with the Sudanese state since independence. Therefore, this paper argues that it is almost impossible to understand the flaws in the Sudanese state and the constant state of violent conflicts that marked the state since independence without shifting gears in our approach. Consequently, the study attempts to explore the issue of the Darfur's conflict through the lens of class analysis. The aim is to examine the ideology of the local elite and their approach to issues of political economy, cultural diversity, and national identity. Understanding the elite's ideological framework in regard to nation building and national identity will better allow understanding of the origins and motives of violent conflicts in the Sudan. To achieve that, the paper will explore the role of the state's apparatus that facilitate and perpetuate political, cultural, and economic injustices in the Sudan. In particular, the paper attempts to explore the state's apparatus (the educational system, the legal framework, and the military) and their historical role in the making of such an oppressive and violent State.

## **II. Background and Context**

Nation-state as a model has appeared in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe as a result of the movement to abolish the idea of divine and monarchy. But its origin goes back to the 'Westphalian System' and the balance of power that emerged from the 'Treaty of Westphalia' in 1648. However, the assumption of its suitability all over the world is debatable. The history and experience of the Third World countries stand as a solid argument for that doubt; but alas, the nation-state model has been imposed upon the

people of the Third World as a consequence of the European colonialism and imperialism. The alternative to the nation-state, as a political container of diverse social groups, is impossible to imagine given the state of the world today. Whereas the nationalistic definition of the nation-state is always remains exclusive in terms of culture/ethnic/religion diversity; however, its fate of been the ultimate/universal political container will be in doubt. Nevertheless, the nation-state is not a human destiny. Rather it's a historical subject with a particular ideology that could and should be challenged in the context of peoples' sufferings. As Samir Amin<sup>2</sup> argued:

The nation-state ideology is, however, so powerful that when, in the aftermath of the Second World War, all the countries of the world were bidding for independence, [and] they constituted a system of would-be nation-states. But at the very moment when the nation-state was being proclaimed everywhere, it was entering a crisis everywhere, even at its centers of origin, a crisis from which there seems no escape.

In the Sudan, the elite class, by acting as compradors for colonial and neo-colonial interests, bears the greatest responsibility for replicating the colonial nation-state model. The Sudanese elite applied their hegemony upon the Sudanese people by using violent means and methods (e.g. control the state's apparatus, undermine indigenous mechanisms of governance, carry out policies of marginalization, etc) that severely damage nation building process and serve neo-colonial objectives. These objectives were :(1) to apply hegemony, coercion, and oppression of a vicious mono-cultural identity that does not reflect the complex reality of the Sudanese peoples; (2) to link the new independent state to the metropolitan educationally, economically, and politically; (3) to create a dependency in the new state (client state) on the former colonizers; and (4) to hinder the decolonization process. The process of building the nation-state model in post-colonial Sudan relied on the forcible agenda of the colonial desire. This process has been materialized through State institutions that reproduce an alienated structure of national identity and facilitate oppression.

Therefore, the nation-state model definition that this paper uses here is based on the analysis of the capitalist system. For the capitalist system to accumulate capital and maximize profit there was a need for a regulatory discipline and coercion power to legitimize this process. And the nation-state was the appropriate model to replace the feudal system in just doing that. As Roberto Regalado<sup>3</sup> (2007, p.27) emphasized in his analysis of the history of the State formation:

Since its initial stages, the system of capitalist production needed a territorial space within which to create uniform and stable conditions for capital accumulation, and

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<sup>2</sup> Samir Amin: *Nation-state and the ideology of nation in crisis*

<sup>3</sup> Roberto Regalado: *Latin America at the Crossroad*.

political power capable of defending such objectives. This territory is the nation, unified and centralized, and political power is exercised by the bourgeois state, a state that is national in form and capitalist in essence

Moreover, Regalado explains how this model and its vanguards (the bourgeois) achieve its objectives to secure the process of capital accumulation by controlling the state and its apparatus of coercion and hegemony 'by all means necessary'. Regalado, however, argued, that "The bourgeois state fulfills its functions through means and methods that vary in accordance with concrete historical conditions. Among such variations might be the degree of coercion and violence used to guarantee the value of capital." Furthermore, earlier, Antonio Gramsci<sup>4</sup> also argued that the process of hegemony in the bourgeois state depends on assimilating of the oppressed classes by the state apparatus and social construction. Gramsci's analysis is based on the physical coercion that was applied on the masses, resulting in their participation in a bourgeois state. And that exactly what we have seen in the making of the Sudanese state after independence. It was obvious to notice that the elite class applying their hegemony by manipulating and protecting the State apparatus in order to clutch power among them. The Sudanese elite -as compradors-, within their political ideology and cultural identity, are called to act out oppressive policies on a regular basis to impose their alienated 'vision' on how the Sudanese society/state should be ruled and administrated. This 'vision' doesn't differ from the colonizers' policies when they exploited and oppressed the Sudanese people. More precisely, as Karl Marx<sup>5</sup> "argued, the contemporary State is not an expression of a transcendent impulse – as Hegel had argued earlier- but is an apparatus of class oppression, created for the defense of property and perpetuated through false ideology and, ultimately, by force." The contemporary Sudanese state has only served the quest of the national elite to apply their hegemony and exploit the Sudanese people. That is, when the colonizers left Sudan, their successors in the local elite (compradors) did nothing but to keep the colonial/euro-centric nation-state model in place. As Frantz Fanon<sup>6</sup> has observed, however, once the national independence is achieved, the new national elites replace their colonial masters in administrating the same institutions that where used to control them, the only difference that they change the language of oppression. On the other hand, in the Sudan after independence, there were immediate needs and ripe conditions, for the generation of the independence, to continue the decolonization process that requires a de-linking from the colonial policies and ideology.

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<sup>4</sup> Antonio Gramsci: *Letters from Prison*, First Edition, Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, NY 1973.

<sup>5</sup> Roberto Regalado: *Latin America at the Crossroad*.

<sup>6</sup> Frantz Fanon: *The Wretched of the Earth*. Grove Press, New York, NY 1963

When political independence was achieved in the Sudan, the national elite had strived to create a homogenous national identity-based on the colonial euro-centric model of nation building- that reflects their mindset on who the Sudanese people are. The imposed homogenous national identity intends to serve the elite's eagerness for domination by practicing a particular political and economic ideology. This enforcement of a homogenous national identity had plunged the country into a vicious cycle of violence (the first civil war 1955-1972). The imposition of a particular national identity that mirrored and emerged from the European model of nation building had left its marks on all conflicts in post-colonial Sudan. Arguably, the main institutions that had guarded and constructed this fictitious identity were the military, the legal system, and the education system. Unequivocally, by using violent normalization (military) and enforced discipline (law) that had been conceived through a process of mimicking the colonial (education) model that reproduces specific conceptualizations of the state, the superiority of a 'national' identity toward the majority of the Sudanese peoples has been endorsed, the elite class built their state. And that is how the state and national identity came to be known in the Sudan. The colonial rulers had advocated for the concept of one nation-state with one or a dominant national identity. The elite class seized the opportunity to impose this model upon the entire population to serve their own interests. This of hegemony and exploitation of the Sudanese people couldn't be realized unless these particular institutions that the colonial rulers invented were in place. In this context, Sudan was not an exception. As Massad<sup>7</sup> (2001, p. 1) noted, "They [colonial powers] replaced existing juridical and military structures, or introduced them to societies that did not have them before. Both law and the military retain their colonial marking as European institutions established to serve the colonial state." The Sudanese elite benefited from the nation-state model that imposed alien institutions to support the new independent state. This fanciful model that created by the colonial rulers and imposed by its compradors in the local elite, however, had blocked the path to define and articulate the debate for a different state model. Considering the state ideology, the state's apparatuses (the educational system, the law, and the military) become the vehicle to advance the colonial agenda after the colonizers left Sudan. However, by the time the national independence has been secured, the decolonization process been stagnated. This model did not allow the development of tools that are needed to break from the colonial legacy; on the contrary, it has facilitated the manufacturing of a new political, cultural, and economic identity that holds the Sudanese people back from seeking complete liberation. Undeniably, it was obvious to see the bourgeois state constructing citizens' consciousness and attitude by using false ideology utilizing the state apparatuses that were inherited from the colonial rulers.

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<sup>7</sup> Massad, Joseph: *Colonial Effects: The making of the national identity in Jordan*. Columbia University Press, New York, NY 2001

In addition, the Darfur region has been a proxy war area (e.g. the Chadian civil war 1979-82, the U.S. foreign policy to isolate Libya) during the Cold War era. The militarization of Darfur's region in the 1980s had increases the level of violence amongst its relatively peaceful population. By January of 1988 it was reported<sup>8</sup> that "there were at least 50,000 automatic weapons in Darfur [-] one for every sixteen adult men." Moreover, such militarization had also contributed to the interruption of society's norms in terms of self-reliance on food production. Food shortages create the appropriate conditions for antagonism and atrocities among the region's diverse ethnic groups. The war in Chad had negative impacts on the region's social fabric by rearranging its geopolitics, such as environmental deterioration (desertification due to instability and migration) and increasing ethnic tension and violent animosity among ethnic groups who were forced to take sides in the Chadian civil war. Similarly, in that context, the second civil war (1983) erupted in the southern regions of the Sudan.

This case study attempts to examine: (1) the root causes of the Darfur conflict through an exploration of the nature and ideology of the nation-state model; and (2) the main apparatuses of the education system, the law, and the military, that was inherited from colonialism, which gave birth to the Darfur crisis and others violent conflicts and civil wars in the Sudan since independence.

### **III. Analysis of the nation-state model and its apparatus**

#### **1. Education:**

Evidently, the process of learning and national education is inseparable from individual empowerment and issues of social change in any society. The Sudanese elite had ignored the imperative of such process of building a national educational system that is based on the people's social needs. As a result, the educational system that in place has hindered the decolonization process in the post-independence era. The mimicking of the colonial educational strategy form the Sudanese elite unable them to develop a democratized and inclusive national educational system. This colonial strategy -that targeted to build a client state in political, economic, and cultural dependency- unable the new leaders of independence to infuse the national independence into the general mechanism to liberate, integrate, and advance the Sudanese society through a native-centered educational system that is capable to build the national identity/ies through a scientific critique of common history of the Sudanese peoples and link the past to the quests of the future. As Julius Nyerere<sup>9</sup> (1985, p.45) argued that:

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<sup>8</sup> Human Rights Watch: *The forgotten war in Darfur flares again*. Report Volume 2. No11 (A) 1990, p.3.

<sup>9</sup> Education and Democracy: *Sociology of Education*. Vol. 61, No. 2 (April 1988).

Education is affected by the social morals, the physical and social necessity which causes governments to establish a “Ministry of Education.” However, revolutionary its intentions and effects, education is strongly influenced by the past and serves to influence but not control the future. Formal education in any country is bound to be- and from society’s point of view is intended to be- an element in maintaining or developing the social, political, and economic future of that society.

The remodeling of the educational system that was in place during the colonial era by the national elite has reproduced the ignorance, institutionalized racism, oppression, and neglects the decolonization process. The Sudanese elite continue operating within that ideological framework by designing an undemocratic and exclusive national education system. That framework was based on the context of modernity verses tradition (in the surface level, or as if modernity only applicable to Euro-centric models) that produces an alienating system of education and a sham national identity. The system was set against the very nature of the pedagogical concept of completing the national independence, which in turn has negated the decolonization process as an immediate quest for building a completely different state model from the colonial one. On the contrary, the elite imposed an educational system that only produces synonymous outcomes to those implemented during the colonial era to serve its interests. This system overrules the scientific methodologies and freedom of thought as tools of investigation and rewrites the history of Sudanese people; moreover, it emphasizes the ‘banking concept of education’ that reproduces the un-awareness of self and oppression. For example, the system did not require learners to develop strong frames of inquiry in order to critique and to analyze the effects of colonialism in the Sudan. The absence of such literature has influenced student’s ability to critique policies of dependency, and ultimately to accept as an inevitable fate ‘given destiny’ that was ‘not bad after all’ for the country. As Paulo Freire<sup>10</sup> (1970, p.27), however, pointed it out:

In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry

Freire<sup>11</sup> continue to projects the outcomes of such an education system upon oppressed population as an ideological tool that the elite class seeks to enforce through its domination of the minds of the oppressed. He argued (1970, p.95) that:

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<sup>10</sup> Paulo Freire: *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. The Continuum Publishing Company, New York, NY 1970

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*

In their political agenda, the dominant elites utilize the banking concept [of education] to encourage passivity in the oppressed, corresponding with the latter's "submerged" state of consciousness, and take advantage of that passivity to "fill" that consciousness with slogans which create even more fear of freedom, this practice is incompatible with a truly liberating course of action, which, by presenting the oppressors' slogans as a problem, helps the oppressed to "eject" those from within themselves

The educational system in the Sudan have created: (1) a sense of supremacy among the Arabized elite who had transferred it to whoever wanted to assimilate in their project; (2) enforced the elite's project of the Arab-Islamization of the Sudanese society; and (3) deepened and emphasized the ethnic division among Arab-phones and others. This division became the catalyst, for the elite, to carry on its wars against marginalized minorities. This process of constructing an imagined mythical sense of a national identity thusly secured the nation-state model that had created tremendous political unrest and violent clashes in the Sudan. It was due to its alienated nature from the concrete reality that is hard to erase from people's daily lives. This model creates a dichotomy between the real and the imagined quest for national identity or identities in post-colonial Sudan. The absence of a decolonizing pedagogical agenda within the state's educational system has severely damaged the processes of an alternative model of nation building and national identity based on multiculturalism and equal citizenship in the post-colonial era. As Freire (1970, p. 96) argued<sup>12</sup>:

The struggle for humanization, for the emancipation of labor, for the overcoming of alienation, for the affirmation of men and women as persons, would be meaningless. This struggle is possible only because dehumanization, although a concrete historical fact, is not a given destiny but the result of an unjust order that engenders violence in the oppressors, which in turn dehumanizes the oppressed

Therefore, this alienating system of national education has facilitated the hegemonic and coercive nature of the Sudanese elite and the oligarchy of the center, and places all financial resources that belong to all Sudanese people in the hands of a few. The educational system, which has been designed by the colonizers, creates and isolates an elite class in order to act as weak compradors. Consequently, the pedagogical curricula had intensified alienation instead of real democratic and popular participation of the majority in the process of defining their national identity and the direction of the State and its responsibilities. Nonetheless, this system has increased the grip of the elite on the State, tied its fate to the metropolis, and maintained a political economy that increases the State dependency on neo-colonialism. Against these historical and present facts, the Darfur's conflict ensued.

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*

## 2. Legal Framework:

Since its independence, the Sudanese elite and their state rejected the multiculturalism in the country, and have worked vigorously to install their version of an Islamic state with Arabic language as its official tongue. However, when enforcing alienated laws and drafting colonized-like constitution failed, war was the solution. The concept of nation building in post-colonial Sudan emerged from a desire to create a mono-ethno-nationalistic nation that able to protect capital accumulation within the 'Arabized' elite class. This imaginative desire had defined Sudan and therefore its laws based on the Arab-Islamic tendency of the elite. This tendency doesn't reflect the reality of the Sudanese people when one measures the state alienation for its own people. Nor doesn't meet the requirements of the euro-centric model of nation-state that suggests the essences of nation building should be measured in terms of inclusion instead of exclusion. This is especially true in terms of the state's legal system where its inclusiveness is supposed to provide equal citizenship in terms of political and religious freedoms. As Ann Lesch<sup>13</sup> (1998, p.214) argues:

In the model of a territorial nation-state, all the residents have legal equality and share allegiance to the state. The government is based on common political ideals rather than ethnicity or religious adherence. Sudanese have given lip service to this form of civic loyalty, but its content has remained vague and incapable of mobilizing people behind shared objectives and aspirations

Nevertheless, this 'legal equality and shared allegiance to the state' had never been part of the ideological framework that the Sudanese elite had inherited from colonialism. As Sadiq Al-Mahadi (the leader of the Umma party and two times Prime Minister) wrote (in Sikainga 1993, p 83) "the dominant feature of our nation is an Islamic one and its overpowering expression is Arab, and this nation will not have its entity identified and its prestige and pride preserved except under an Islamic revival". Al-Mahadi further proposed that Southern Sudanese culture "was not a culture in itself" and, therefore, Southerners "must be assimilated into Arabic and Islamic culture of the Northern Sudan".

This supremacist mentality had a major share in escalating civil wars and violent conflicts in the country. Hence, violence, oppression, and rejection of the Sudanese reality as a multi-culture/ethnic society were the characteristics of the elite and their state. In his detailed study Ahmad Sikainga argued that neither the military nor civilian rulers of the Sudan since independence had different approaches toward issues of cultural diversity, which contributed to more violent clashes in the Sudan. Examining

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<sup>13</sup> Lesch, Anne Mosely: *The Sudan-Contested National Identity*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, ID 1998

the policy of the two largest political parties in the Sudan after independence, Sikainga<sup>14</sup>(1993) argued and concluded that this approach of the 'ruling class' has been one of the determining factors of the two civil wars in Sudan. Of course, this approach had also escalated the current conflict in Darfur.

The Sudanese elite strives not to progress into the path of the decolonization process in terms of defining a post-colonial framework differ in its essence from the colonial nation-state model; specifically, that of a political, economical, and cultural independence that could act as a catalyst for democratic state's policies in issues of self-reliance, equitable development, multiculturalism, etc.

The elite class continues building the state and its apparatuses on the ruins of the colonial framework. The processes of continuing the colonial political ideology has alienated the state from the reality of the Sudanese people, which resulted in more marginalization and oppression, especially in the peripheries, where the welfare state is absent. That is, Sudanese people could not differentiate between the colonial rulers and their successors, the local bourgeoisie in terms of improving their course of life. As Frantz Fanon<sup>15</sup> (1961. p.149) point out:

The national middle class who takes over power at the end of the colonial regime is an underdeveloped middle class. It has practically no economic power, and in any case it is no way commensurate with the bourgeoisie of the mother country which is hopes to replace...But that same independence which literally drives it into corner will give rise within its ranks to catastrophic reactions, and will oblige it to send out frenzied appeals for help to former mother country

Moreover, Sikainga (p. 82) drew a clear picture of how the elite dealt with the issues of diversity in post-independence Sudan when he described the Mahjoub's administration-Prime Minister of Sudan 1965-67-who came to the post as a result of the coalition of Umma and DUP parties. "Mahjoub was known for his antipathy towards the Southerners. He had once said that the only language they understand is force." Not only that, but as Sikainga noted, "Mahjoub's rule witnessed one of the bloodiest campaigns in the South. Entire villages were burned and the inhabitants fled to neighboring countries." However, as Fanon<sup>16</sup> points out, this racial prejudice had its roots in the bourgeois ideology that the national elite inherited from their colonial masters as a defense mechanism. "The racial prejudice of the young national bourgeoisie is racism of defense, based on fear. Essentially it is no different from vulgar

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid- p. 81 Daly, M.W. and Sikainga Ahmad, edited: *Civil War in the Sudan*.

<sup>15</sup> Frantz Fanon: *The Wretched of the Earth*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*-p.164

tribalism, nor the rivalries between steps or confraternities.” These policies of alienated elite led to dehumanization of the vast majority of the Sudanese people. This historical process of dehumanization has unfolded –as a contradiction- the desire of emancipation for the marginalized and oppressed peoples in the Sudan. However, this struggle for freedom and equality wasn’t always peaceful, not only because of the state violence, but also as a result of the historical context of the dehumanization process in terms of citizenship status and its legal obligation.

### **3. Military:**

Furthermore, the history of marginalizing and oppressing social minorities (who make up the majority in the Sudan) was the permanent characteristic of the state in the Sudan, from the Mahdiyya (the first Sudanese state 1881-1894) to post colonial Sudan, from military rulers to elected bourgeoisie elites. As Gramsci (1971) explained, the process of hegemony and coercion in any society followed a specific blueprint in which intimidations through institutions of oppression inclined to create a consent in that particular society, whereas others forms of ideological control (e.g. the army) and manipulation serve to perpetuate all repressive structure within a society. However, Gramsci had identified two distinct forms of political control which are coercion and hegemony. By coercion Gramsci referred to the physical domination of the police and the army. He argued (1967, p.12) that coercion “Legally imposes ‘discipline on those groups who do not ‘consent’ either actively or passively. This apparatus is, however, constituted for the whole of society in anticipation of moments of crisis of command and direction, when spontaneous consent has failed.” By hegemony he referred to both ideological control and popular consent, as he emphasized “the ‘spontaneous’ consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group.”

In post-colonial Sudan - in which the state lacked a clear sense of independency- the elite, act as comprador class, had gripped its control over the state revenues and natural resources. In doing so, the elite needed an institution to control the source of capital in the country. By following the colonial model of nation-state, the elite aimed and worked to control the national Army. As in most new independent countries that maintain the status quo of the colonizers’ policies and ideology, the Sudanese elite, continued to keep the army as an institution to serve their interests of control by applying coercive policies. Furthermore, the army, which was also influenced by the bourgeois’ attitudes especially its high ranked generals, became part of the elite or its worst servants. In most newly independent countries, the elite class as Abdulrahman Babu<sup>17</sup> explained, becomes more aggressive and seeks to consolidate power in its hands, and tends to apply its hegemony through excessive use of violence. Consequently, the

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<sup>17</sup> Babu, A.M.: *African Socialist or Socialist Africa?* Zed Press, London, England, 1982

elite class continues to perpetuate the injustices of colonial policies in its worse forms. Babu noticed that the reason behind the tragedy resides in the adaptation of the colonial model of nation-state. He argued<sup>18</sup> (1981, p.146) that:

This is the model of the state which we inherited from our colonial masters and our petty-bourgeois leaders; and rather than change this model and make it popular and more responsive to the people, they have perpetuated it, and in the case of military dictatorships have consolidated the system by restoring even more ruthlessly than the colonialists to excessive use of force.

Furthermore, the army remains the most reliable apparatus of the nation-state, which represents the masculinity and alienation of the elite. For the elite, the military remains the most important homo-social 'national' institution within the confines of the nation-state. That is, its mission is to protect the state's elite interests, and violently control its inhabitants, as Althusser calls it "a repressive state apparatus." In order to do so the military and its state mimicked the colonial practices of violence and oppression (the techniques of coercion and hegemony) in defending and constructing a homogenous national identity for the Sudanese peoples as has been designed by the elite. As Massad<sup>19</sup> (2001, p.100) explained:

As an institution [the military], it is dedicated to the production of a certain species of nationalized being, nationalists of a different variety from those outside the military institution. Their national existence is predicated not only on a being that is nationally constituted but also on acting in defense of that being. This nationalist agency is defined by that defense of the nation, of its physical and imaginary frontiers. But the military as an institution produces a gendered set of nationalist agents- namely, those of the masculine variety. It's a violent institution by definition.

In the Sudan, the army, as a repressive institution, has acted as an arm of the elite class to control and dominate the Sudanese politics, where class interest over right race and ethnicity in terms of the oppression. However the chauvinistic ideology acted as a decisive factor in enforcing policies of nation building. For instance, the Lieutenant General of the Sudanese army Ibrahim Suleiman, who supervise the attacks on innocent Darfuri civilians, belongs to *Zaghawa* a 'black African' ethnic group, among others; demonstrate that ideology over right race in the Darfur conflict.

## VI. Conclusion:

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>19</sup> Massad, Joseph: *Colonial Effects: The making of the national identity in Jordan*. Columbia University Press, New York, NY 2001

Darfur's conflict by all measures is one of the worst humanitarian crisis looming at the turning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but our scrambling to call it 'genocide' or otherwise is not important. The imperative task here is to understand the origins and motives of such inhumane acts of violence. Understanding the real causes of the conflict will allow us to oppose its nature and source. Of course, blaming former colonizers for what is happening today in Darfur would seem as we turning a blind eye from the primary suspect of such adversity, which is the comprador class in Sudan. Nonetheless, ignoring the effects of colonialism is also turn to be a naiveté of understanding our state of the world today. Colonialism and neo-colonialism, and its ideologies have caused a great suffering around the globe. Without assessing the colonial legacy and its role in planting the seats of ethnic conflict, alienated elite class, and inflicting policies of marginalization upon newly independent countries, we will do no justice to the peoples' suffering in Darfur and elsewhere. These policies of colonialism are based on 'divide and conquer'; which it didn't cease after independence but allowed the Sudanese state, by acting as a client state, to continue oppressing the Sudanese people. In order for the Sudanese elite to control and exploit the natural resources of the country, they created an oppressive state. That state relied heavily on particular institutions in which the majority of the Sudanese people were excluded, especially in the peripheries. Moreover, the nation-state model that the elite built and guarded in the Sudan lacks any popular support. This model doesn't allow people's participation, and its maintenance has come through hegemony and coercion. National elite have used the same colonial tactic of 'divide and conquer' to deepen their power grip against the oppressed and marginalized people of Sudan. As A.M. Babu<sup>20</sup> (1981, p.121) noticed:

The British pursued this policy of isolating East and Central Africa from North Africa with unprecedented vigour. They went far as to foment racial antagonism between 'Arabs' and 'Africans' in both the Sudan and Zanzibar, and elsewhere in East Africa. Unfortunately, that policy was blindly followed even by our own governments after independence. In many ways it is still being pursued to this day, especially when the ruling stratum is faced by internal problems and feels the need for a little bit of racialism in order to maintain itself in power a little longer.

The Sudanese elite in their rush to control power after independence have tied the country politically, economically, and culturally to the metropolitan. Their hesitation not to define a liberated framework to complete the decolonization processes plunged the country into a vicious cycle of civil war. Even before the British left Sudan, the elite ruling groups -which consisted at the time of Umma and UDP-, had neglected their promises in granting the rights of all Sudanese in a federal system that decentralize the political power, and preserve cultural identity of all ethnic minorities. This denial

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*: Babu, A.M.: *African Socialist or Socialist Africa?* Zed Press, London, England, 1982

sparked the first civil war in 1955 that lasted for 17 years. That civil war had put on hold all development plans that peoples of Sudan expected to be realized after independence. In addition, all country's resources had been directed toward an unnecessary and unjust war against the people of Southern Sudan; the result was massive destruction in terms of human lives, physical infrastructures, and huge foreign debt that paralyzed social programs (e.g. education, public health, strengthens civil society institutions, etc.) However, the worst problem was allowing chauvinistic propaganda to sneak into the political stage in the name of fighting an "enemy." During that time of political instability, the army stepped in, dismissed the elected parliament, and drove political and social organizations underground. By taking over power, the army came to save the elite's weakens and their scrambling for power. The political economy of the Sudanese state in the 1950s and 1960s marked the upcoming events in injecting false ideology and imaginative 'national identity', which led to a constant state of civil and violent conflict that plunged the country for four decades and counting into civil war.

Indeed, as a result of alienate elite class' broken and colonial inherited undemocratic policies that hinder social transformation of marginalized populations and social minorities, the people's reaction to that state has to come from its very nature, which is violent. It's not a surprise to any eyewitness of the Sudanese politics during the 1990s, and prior to February 2003 (the official date in the Western media for the Darfur's conflict), that another violent conflict was under way in the Darfur region. And it's not a prophecy that another 'Darfur' might erupt in the eastern or northern region while the current conflict comes to settlement for the same reasons. Since the recipes of violent conflicts are still there, and it's hard for the Sudan to achieve a comprehensive peace until the elite and the state change their attitudes of hegemony and coercion against the social/ethnic minorities who is the majority of the country. Most important, the need to continue the process of decolonization economically, politically, and culturally, is a necessity for the Sudan to remain a united country. During the 1980s, the country entered a new phase that was marked by complete militarization and dependency. Consequently, foreign military aid provided by the US and other reactionary Arab oil-producing countries of West Asia (e.g. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, etc.) had tie and define the country's political and economic ideology. The great dreams of completing the liberation process and building a democratic inclusive society in the Sudan was lost under thunderous voices calling for cultural supremacy and a violent clashes to protect the 'Arab-Islamic gate' in Eastern Africa. 'Humanitarian Aid' and foreign debts had become the economic principles of the Sudanese state and its ideology.

The Darfur conflict represents neither an ethnic conflict nor a tribal war; rather it's a reaction toward state's ideology of marginalization of the people of the peripheries.

However, the ethnic element has been injected to serve the elite's interests by manipulating the essences of people's discontent with the state's ideology. The political Islam government has aided one ethnic group against the rest to present to the world that the Darfur conflict has nothing to do with the state's ideology rather is another form of a 'tribal war'. This definition had assisted the junta to stagnate popular reactions against their failed project of hegemony and control.

The providence of the Sudanese state, therefore, is not located in the colonial model of the nation-state, which has been proofed as a complete failure. Moreover, this model had brought unthinkable destructions in terms of human lives, material incentives, and cultural damages to all Sudanese. Alternative to such a model exist in the pre-colonial indigenous Sudanese knowledge combine with accumulated human experience. Such a model required a creation of a decentralized and autonomist state that embraces multiculturalism. Consequently, for the multiculturalism society to function well, it has to operate not only as a social container for tolerant policies among different ethnicities, but it has to effectuate a collective community-based struggle for true equity, social justice, and direct democracy. The elite 'vision' of a national state that excluded most of the Sudanese people was as historical waste. The substitute has to endorse anti-colonial, anti-capitalist, anti-elitism ideology with self-reliant economic policies to capture the dreams of decolonization, and move forward to build a society of the new Sudan. That alternative model should reject empty nationalistic propaganda and embraces indigenous mechanism of solving conflicts, sustaining development, and creating equal citizenship status.

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