

# **EFFECTS OF CIVIL CONFLICTS ON WOMEN**

**(A CASE STUDY OF SUDAN 1983 – 2005)**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

This Dissertation is my original work and has not been presented for examination at any other University.

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This Dissertation has been submitted to the Board of Post Graduate Studies at the University of Nairobi for Examination with my approval as University Supervisor.

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# DEDICATION

Dedication to the sweet memories of my late parents Tito Alal and Yunia Aketch

To Tom McDonald CSSp. who ensured the gap was filled

## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effect of civil conflict on women by focussing on the Sudanese Conflict between 1983 and 2005. The analysis sought to understand women's experiences in the civil conflict.

The study reached a number of findings. Firstly, in early scholarly work on feminism and conflict studies, women were depicted as always peace loving while men were presented as more inclined to violence and fighting. In fact war was viewed as a "men-alone" business. However, in modern wars, this claim is not supported by the reality. Instead men and women are both victims and perpetrators in civil conflict. Secondly, the Sudanese civil conflict has led to a change in gender roles at the household, community and national levels. Women are now performing roles that were previously 'men's' only tasks and vice versa.

The study concludes that warfare affects men and women differently. For many men, civil conflict means that they will be forced to leave their homes and their families to fight, or to find an alternative livelihood elsewhere. On the other hand, civil conflict may mean that women may be compelled to take on roles previously dominated by men.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAT	Convention against Torture
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ICCPR	International Convention on Civil and Political Rights
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NIF	National Islamic Front
NPA	National People's Army
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
SANU	Sudan African National Union
SIM	Sudanese Independent Movement
SPLA	Sudanese People's Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudanese People's Liberation Movement
SWAN	Sudanese Women Association in Nairobi
SWVP	Sudanese Women Voices for Peace
SYRUP	Sudanese Youth United for Reconciliation Unity and Peace
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIFEM	United Nations Fund for Women
USA	United States of America
WFP	World Food Programme
WID	Women in Development
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
WPA	Women's Peace Army
WPP	Women's Peace Party

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### Civil Conflicts and Women

In the *Treaty of Westphalia in 1648*, absolute sovereignty evolved creating the territorial state. The secular state was charged with the responsibility of providing security, peace and order within its borders overriding other competing institutions such as family, community, groupings, religious organizations and racial affiliations.<sup>1</sup>

The end of the Cold War promised the cessation of the conflicts fuelled by the superpowers ideological differences. Despite this, wars have raged in virtually every part of the globe either between or typically within nation states.<sup>2</sup> Contrary to expectations the end of the Cold War did not enhance stability. For example, in Africa conflict is prone in two areas these are from Eritrea on the Red Sea, through Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to Congo, Brazzaville and Angola and in West Africa. In West Africa, Sierra Leone became embroiled in a civil war that lasted for a decade, until intervention by UN peacekeepers which led to a return of the peace at the end of 2001. Worse still, there are calls for succession in the Casamance region of Senegal (driven by militia in Guinea-Bissau), which threaten the stability and the endurance of Senegalese democracy. Religious and sectarian conflicts also threaten to split Nigeria's territorial integrity apart, let alone consolidating its fragile democracy.<sup>3</sup> Lemarchand<sup>4</sup> observes that since 1998, at least nine African countries have been involved in what some have called "*Africa's first World War*," Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi assisted a rebel war within Congo (the Congolese Rally for

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<sup>1</sup> Morgenthau: *Politics Among Nations The Struggle for Power and Peace*, New Delhi, Kalyani Publishers: 1995 pg 3-12

<sup>2</sup> UNICEF REPORT: *A critical Analysis of Progress made and obstacles encountered in Increasing protection for War-affected Children* The Machel Review 1996-2000

<sup>3</sup> Breytenbach "Thuliers Rebels and Mercantiles" in *Africa Insight Journal*, Africa Institute of South Africa, Vol: 32 Number 2. 2002

<sup>4</sup> Lemarchand (1999): "The Crisis in the Great Lakes" in John W Harbeson and D Rothchild (eds), *Africa in World Politics: The African State System in Flux*. Boulder, West view Press

Democracy). This process occupied a large piece of territory in the Eastern part of the country. While the government of Congo has received support at various times during the war from Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Central African Republic and Chad.

In explaining the Horn of Africa conflict Mwagiru<sup>5</sup> shows the tense relations among the concerned states as follows: Sudan and Uganda have been going through tense relations often bordering the declaration of outright war; Ethiopia and Sudan have also experienced good relationship, especially ever since the attempted assassination of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak on his way to attend on OAU (now AU) summit in 1996 and Eritrea and Sudan have experienced tense relations ever since the independence of Eritrea.

A United Nations report<sup>6</sup> further notes that there are now a large number of actors including non-state actors, private militias and children, having access to weapons that range from anti-personnel mines to assault rifles and surface-to-air missiles. Access has been facilitated by the opening of borders, a proliferation of arms, particularly small arms and the rapid expansion of free trade. In addition, the supply of illegally held arms has been facilitated by the persistence of corruption and growing international criminal networks, which also trade in illicit drugs, women and children.<sup>7</sup>

Many actors currently involved in conflict disregard the rules of international human rights, international humanitarian law and international refugee law that provide minimum protections for individuals who are caught in such situations. In particular, many of these actors target civilians often in gender specific ways.<sup>8</sup>

The 1949 'Geneva Convention relative' to the protection of civilians in times of war and the additional protocol of 1977 provides that women shall be protected against any attack on their honour, in particular against humiliating and degrading treatment, rape, enforced prostitution or

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<sup>5</sup> Mwagiru M (2000) Conflict: Theory Process and Institutions of Management. Nairobi, Watermark Publishers. P 78-81

<sup>6</sup> United Nations (2001): From Beijing to Beijing: Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Beijing platform for Action, Report the secretary General. UN New York.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

any form of indecent assault. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. It further states that “everyone is entitled to all the right to life, liberty and security of person”, and “no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.”<sup>9</sup> The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the world conference on human rights states that “violation of the human rights women in situations of war are violations of the fundamental principles of international human rights, and humanitarian law”. Gross and systematic violations and situations that constitute serious obstacles to the full enjoyment of human rights continue to occur in different parts of the world. Such violations and obstacles include torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, summary or arbitrary detention, all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, denial of economic, social and cultural rights and religious intolerance.<sup>10</sup>

Analysis of social relations is generally accepted to be necessary if development interventions are to be successful. In situations of conflict and war, it is essential to analyze social relations to understand patterns of power, and the nature of change. Inequalities, injustices and violence are present in the social relations between men and women in most societies. The social, economic and political inequalities between women and men not only explain why war affects women and men differently, but also the differential impact of conflict across social groups.<sup>11</sup> Although men are liable to be conscripted for combat, and thus become military warriors, women may be less mobile than men and physically unable to escape the fighting. In different cultures, structures of gender and power relations determine women’s use and control of resources, their social status and their ability to act in public affects their vulnerability during times of war. Where women are isolated within the family unit, they have less access to

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<sup>9</sup> Mekonnen “Gender and Conflict” In Reflections, No: 5 July 2001, Addis Ababa, Heinrich Boll Stiftung Publication.

<sup>10</sup> UN (1996): The Beijing Declaration and. The Platform for Action ( Forth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, 4-15 September, 1995), New York. UN

<sup>11</sup> Adams and Bradhury (1995): Conflict and Development, Organizational Adaptation in Conflict Situation, Oxford Discussion Paper 4.

support from external social networks.<sup>12</sup> Social disruptions in conflict can provide opportunities to challenge such assumptions on women, their active participation in political struggle can challenge gender stereotypes in positive ways.<sup>13</sup>

Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff<sup>14</sup> define conflict as a condition in which a group of human beings (whether tribal, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious, socio- economic, political or other) is engaged in conscious opposition to one or more groups because they are pursuing what appears to be incompatible goals. Abel<sup>15</sup> defines war as direct fighting physical conflict. Cockburn<sup>16</sup> in writing about the gendered dynamics of war and political violence defines gender as the socially constructed difference between men and women. He argues that “gender” is not used much in everyday speech; traditional perceptions of women and men in their relation are inevitably “gendered”.

Although with varied inflections from one culture to another, the differences between men and women exist in two senses. Sex roles and responsibilities are accepted, even idealized and contrasted as complementary. Terje Tredt<sup>17</sup> further argues that the differentiation between women and men is seen as an important ordering principle that pervades the system of power and its embodiment. Gender power is seen to shape the dynamics of every site of human interaction, from the household to the international arena. It has expressions in physique, that is, how men and women’s bodies are nourished, trained and deployed; and how vulnerable they are to attack. It has expressions in economics-how money; property and other resources are distributed between the sexes. It structures the social sphere, which is an initiative of the community and in the family. Gender also shapes political power.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff (1996): *Contending Theories of International Relation*. Longman. p. 179

<sup>15</sup> Abel, T, “ The Element of Decision in the Pattern of War” *American Sociological Review*, Vol 6 ( 61, , 853-853-859,

<sup>16</sup> Cockburn “The Gender Dynamics of Armed Conflict and Political Violence” In Moser and Fiona *Conflict and Political violence*. London. Zed Book : 2001 pp. 13-15.

<sup>17</sup> Terje Tredt (eds), *Conflicts in the Horn of Africa: Human and Ecological Consequences of warfare* (Uppsala University Press 1993) p.20

Many versions of masculinity in the world's varied cultures are constituted in the practice of fighting to be a real man is to should be ready to fight and ultimately kill his enemies. That is why men are often asked by leaders to sacrifice themselves for the safety and honour of their women and children.<sup>18</sup>

### **Scope of the Study**

This study will focus on the women dimension of war at the political, social, economic and cultural sectors. This entailed looking at women's role at the household, community and national level. The groups studied were. Those remaining in the war zone, internally displaced persons, and the refugees both in urban and in the camps. The focus was given to the Sudanese refugees in Kakuma camp while for the urban refugees; those in Nairobi were studied.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study endeavours to answer the following question: what is the impact of war on women? Conflicts impact negatively within and outside of the countries in conflict. Mwangi<sup>19</sup> is of the opinion that the effect of conflict, wherever it is located is to dislocate valued relationship and to cause stress on the structure on which relationships are based. The displacement of women, men and children from their homes because of military conflicts causes social, economic and emotional disruption.

A UNIFEM<sup>20</sup> report notes that women are sometimes abducted and become concubines or unpaid servants. In addition to their heavy workload, many women have to shoulder the burden of their dead or absent husbands. Lack of education, power and opportunities leaves many women improvised and vulnerable.

Since independence in 1956, Sudan has been subjected to a relentless chain of natural and man-made disasters. Except for a decade of peace between 1972 and 1983, the country has been racked by a devastating civil war. The underdeveloped south has been marked by a

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<sup>18</sup> Op cit. p. 20

<sup>19</sup> Mwangi M (1999) Op cit p4

devastating civil war. Over four decades of internal conflicts, recurrent flood, drought and several famines have caused massive displacement of the civilian population, enormous loss of life and huge disruptions of livelihood in the southern part of Sudan.<sup>21</sup>

### **Objectives of the study**

The main objective of this study was to investigate the social effects of civil conflicts on women of the Sudan.

To achieve the above overall objective, the following specific objectives were set:

- (i) Relationship between women and civil conflict.
- (ii) To give a detailed account on the historical development of the Sudan conflict and how it relate to the condition of the women in Sudan.
- (iii) To investigate the effect of the Sudanese civil conflicts on women.
- (iv) To offer recommendations and conclusions as regards the effect of civil conflicts on women in of the Sudan.

### **Justification of the study**

Very little research has been carried out on war and women's roles especially in Africa. The dearth of literature can be explained by the fact that in most universities in Africa these two areas of study are relatively new.

Mwagiru<sup>22</sup> for example observes that "one of the most alarming things in Africa has been the problem of conflict and its management has been so glaring, there is little that was being taught in African universities and other institutions of higher learning about the analysis of conflict."

This study therefore contends that an analysis on the impact of conflict on women's roles is a better place to begin.

Women issues are now of central concern in the formulation and implementation of policies in public, private and NGOs sectors. Organizations are now required to have plans on how they are mainstreaming gender in all their areas of operations. It is the contention of this study that

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<sup>21</sup> UNICEF Report: From Survival to Trivial, Children and Women in the Southern Part of Sudan

<sup>22</sup> Mwagiru (2000) op cit; P vii

women's analysis should precede the mainstreaming. Also, women issues play an integral part of the international instruments on human rights and therefore are of importance to the international community. They include: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)–1948, The International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)–1966, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)–1979, Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)–1984, Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)–1989. The period between 1983 and 2004 has been chosen because the current civil war in Sudan dates back to 1983.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The researcher encountered a serious attitudinal bias with the term gender. This study was not able to analyze the attitudes on gender and therefore further research on this is strongly recommended. Visits to various institutions in search of publication on gender with the regard to the Sudan case were met with the following answer from a number of officials there, “in Sudan, the most urgent need is to offer humanitarian aid such as food, healthcare among others”.

This notwithstanding the work was completed and we conclude by noting that the study is a modest attempt to analyze the complicated and sometimes contentious yet so interrelated issues of civil war and women. It is by no means exhaustive.

### **Literature Review**

This section focuses on two types of literature namely literature on women and literature on conflict. An assessment of the literature available reveals the causes and effect of war on society. One strong point is that war occurs because of the societal structures and the relations between different groups in societies. It also reveals the changing dimensions women are taking in the war.

## Conflict and war

Different scholars have different views on conflict. Mwagiru<sup>23</sup> argues that conflict is related closely to the cultural setting. What may be considered wrong and divisive in one culture may not be considered so in another. Lederach<sup>24</sup> disagrees with Mwagiru and instead argues that the problem of the different cultural perceptions about conflict has not been addressed satisfactorily. Mitchell<sup>25</sup> argues that when speaking of any conflict or dispute, fundamental distinctions have to be drawn between the three interrelated components of conflict:: behavior, conflict attitudes and perceptions.

Mitchell defines a situation of conflict as any situation in which two or more social entities or “parties” perceive that they possess mutually incompatible goals. The goals are meant to be consciously desired future outcomes, or ends, which often have intrinsic (but different) value for particular parties, but which also bring with them other increased benefits or decreased costs for party members.<sup>26</sup>

Conflict attitudes are regarded as those psychological states (common attitudes, emotions and evaluations patterns of perception and misperception) that frequently accompany and arise from involvement in a situation of conflict. Conflict behaviour and actions undertaken by one party in any situation of conflict aimed at the opposing party with the intention of making that opponent abandon or modify its goals.

Coser<sup>27</sup> defines conflict as a “contest over values and demands to limited status, power and resources in which the aims of the rivals are to offset, ruin or get rid of their rivals.” Coser looks at the positive functions of conflict, which, to him, have been neglected. He states thus: “far from being only a “negative” factor which “tears a part”, social functions in group and

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<sup>23</sup> Mwagiru (2000) op cit p vii

<sup>24</sup> J. P Lederach (1992): *Beyond Prescription: New Lenses for Conflict Resolution Training. Across Cultures*, Waterloo, Ontario

<sup>25</sup> Mitchell C. R (1981), *The Structure of International Conflict*. London Macmillan

<sup>26</sup> Mitchell op, P 16-17

<sup>27</sup> L. Coser (1956): *The Functions of Social Conflicts*, New York, The Free Press, P 4



other interpersonal relations” it may for example, contribute to the maintenance of group boundaries and prevent the withdrawal of members from a group.

Zartman<sup>28</sup> draws a distinction between conflict issues and crisis. For him conflict refers to the underlying issues in dispute between parties whereas crisis relates to the active outbreak of war hostilities. Elsewhere, he describes conflict as an inevitable aspect of human interaction, an unavoidable concomitant of choices and decision.<sup>29</sup>

Holsti<sup>30</sup> agrees with Mitchell and argues that conflict emerges from a particular combination of parties, incompatible positions over an issue, hostile attitudes and certain types of diplomatic and military action. All these conflicts impact greatly on human beings and families, social structures, national economies and political institutions among others.

Writing about international conflict, Northedge<sup>31</sup> is of the view that conflict, in the sense of the visible incompatibility of policies and interests of the different states, is a permanent and continuous feature of the international relations, as it is of all human relations. He further contends that conflict has been an endemic feature of human history that the idea of its abolition seems to be not only excessively optimistic but also positively unreal.

Bushra<sup>32</sup> also argues that any specific conflict should be understood in relation to its historical antecedent and as moving towards a variety of potential outcomes. Deutsch<sup>33</sup> distinguishes among a bitter end and a joint-survival conflict, fundamental and an accidental or transitory conflict. He is of the view that in a bitter-end conflict only one of the two contending actors is likely to survive the price of the destruction or practically complete surrender of the other. On the other hand, the actors of a joint-survival conflict are likely to survive and be able to

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<sup>28</sup> Zartman I W “ Conflict Reduction: Prevention, Management and Resolution” In Deng FM and Zartman I W (eds), *Conflict Resolution in Africa*, Washington DC, The Brooking Institution pp 299-318

<sup>29</sup> Zartman I W (1985): *Ripe for Resolution. Conflict and Intervention in Africa*, Oxford, Oxford University Press p 9

<sup>30</sup> K J Holsti (1988): *International Politics, A Framework for Analysis*, Prentice- Hall International Inc, p. 398

<sup>31</sup> Northedge F S (1976): *The International System*, London, Faber and Faber

<sup>32</sup> J.E Bushra, “ Transforming Conflicts,” *Some Thought on a gendered Understanding of Conflict Process*” in S Jacobs et al (eds). *Sates of Conflict: Gender Violence and Resistance*, London Ded Books Ltd, 2000, p. 68

<sup>33</sup> K W Deutsch (1988): *The Analysis of International Relations*, Prentice-Hall International Inc, p137-138

cooperate in future. A fundamental conflict is rooted in some permanent basic structure of one or both of the contending parties and is likely to occur again while accidental conflict is based on fortuitous and passing circumstances, which may not happen again in the future.

Bouta<sup>34</sup> contends that war will bring about instability in the society. He describes this as follows:

“We believe that human participants in what situations are compulsively struggling in their respective institutional environments and all social levels to satisfy primordial and all social levels to satisfy primordial and universal needs such as security, identity, recognition and development. They strive increasingly to gain control of the environment that is necessary to ensure the satisfaction of these needs. This struggle cannot be cursed. It is primordial.”

Olevi<sup>35</sup> argues that war is a disruption of normal, desirable social interactions, a “dysfunctional” state of social relations. This view is shared by Michael Haas<sup>36</sup>, who defines war as norm-oriented behaviour that seeks to preserve or change the structure of a system through direct representation of demands by adversaries. International conflict, hence may pave way for constructive change when it has been resolved in a manner that leads to an improvement in the harmony or capabilities of a system. He further contends that the means for expressing war, however, can vary from institutionalized discussion through activist protestations, to violent physical acts that infringe the well being of warring parties. In international affairs, diplomacy constitutes the most non-violent form of conflict while war is the most violent.

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<sup>34</sup> Bouta Tsjeared & George Frerk, “Gender Conflict and Development” World Bank Washington, DC 2000 & 2005 p 138-139

<sup>35</sup> W. Levi, “On The Causes of War and the Conditions of Peace” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 4 (4), 411- 420, 1960

<sup>36</sup> “Sources of International Conflict” in Rosenau Netal (eds). *The Analysis of International Conflict*, New York, The Free Press, 1972.

## Literature on Women and Civil Conflict

Rebecca Grant<sup>37</sup> argues that history; philosophy, law and political theory rarely explored the implication of women's role in each branch of thought. The public realm of political action was effectively closed to women beginning with the Greeks. Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Rousseau, Hegel and others consciously assigned the citizens' role to men. The role of the female in society was seen as having little connection to the practice of politics.

Abdullah<sup>38</sup> argues that women are largely excluded from high level negotiations and diplomacy aimed at bringing an end to conflict; their gendered concerns are almost always entirely neglected, despite women's prominent participation in peace movements. For example, in the Dayton Ohio negotiations aimed at resolving the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, and the Somalia conflict, it was only through the pressure of the president of Ethiopia and the life and peace institute that Somali women were able to gain entry to a peace conference in Mogadishu and even then only as observers.

Obibi<sup>39</sup> on the other hand argues that the exclusion of women from high-level peace pressures results from their frequent exclusion from positions of decision-making in general but it is also as a result of the structure of international law and diplomacy with its emphasis on the abstract entity of the state. The effect of the structures with which the international community works has given legitimacy and increased power to military leaders who have no accountability to the community they are said to represent.

Ward<sup>40</sup> adds that throughout history women- based violence has been an integral component of armed conflict. In the last century, Cossacks raped Jewish women, during the 1919 war in Russia. The Japanese army sexually enslaved and raped thousands of Korean, Indonesian,

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<sup>37</sup> Rebecca Grant, "The Quagmire of Gender and International Security" in V Spike Peterson (ed) *Gendered States. Feminists (re, Visions of International Relations Theory* cynne Rienner Publishers; Boulder, 1992.

<sup>38</sup> Abdullah Ibrahim (eds), *Between Democracy and Terror, The Sierra Leone Civil War*, South Africa (UNISA press 1999), p 13.

<sup>39</sup> Obibi "Involving women in Developing Early Warning Mechanism" *Africa Woman Issue No. 10* London.

<sup>40</sup> Ward "If not now, when? Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Refugee, Internally Displaced and Post-Conflict Settings- [www.rhrc.org](http://www.rhrc.org)

Chinese and Filipino “comfort women”, during World War II. Many Bengali Women were raped by Pakistani soldiers during the 1971 Bangladesh wars of secession. These “comfort women” were held in “military comfort houses”. Japanese soldiers had these women to “stabilize their psychology”, encouraging their spirit and protect them from venereal infections.”

Ward<sup>41</sup> further contends that sexual violence may be systematic for the purposes of advancing ethnic cleansing, expressing hatred for the enemy, or supplying combatants with sexual services. In Bosnia, for example, public rapes of women and girls preceded the flight or expulsion of entire Muslim populations from their towns or villages. Strategies of ethnic cleansing included forced impregnation of women in the presence of the military and family members.

Issa<sup>42</sup> notes that conflicts have psychological, physical and material impacts on the lives of women. For many women, seeing their children sometimes forcefully constricted into the army by the government (and or by militia) subsequently perishing or coming back as handicapped invalids, is a shocking experience.

Fitzgerald<sup>43</sup> records that sexual abuse and violence constitute a daily reality for Sudanese refugees in Northern Kenya, particularly women and girls. In Kakuma, Sudanese girls and women are known to be abducted for the purpose of forced marriage in their country of origin.

When writing about the Sudanese conflict and its impact on women’s roles Pol<sup>44</sup> argues that traditionally, it is the men who herded cattle, managed livestock, cleared fields, prepares land and cut poles for building huts. They are the ones who made decisions the community level and it is traditionally their task to guarantee the safety of the community. The reality of the war

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<sup>41</sup> “Women in War; A View from Ethiopia “ in Women

<sup>42</sup> Issa, “Women in War: A view from Ethiopia”. In Women, Violent Conflict and peace-building; Global Perspectives, International Alert, London, 1999

<sup>43</sup> Mary Anne Fitzgerald. “We Keep Silent Until We Die.” Refugees 2, 115 (1999)

<sup>44</sup> Mirji Pol: Women, War and Peace in southern Sudan, Uppsala Life and Peace Institute: 1998 P. 45

has forced women to assume new responsibilities and to go beyond traditionally defined limits, as Cecilia states.

“My husband had his own activities in the house. Now he has left and I remain here with children. I now have to perform all the activities of both husband and a wife. But men could travel to other places while I cannot, for I have to breastfeed the children; take care of the young children. Therefore, I will only perform the activities in and around the house. The activities of men in the rural areas are heavy cultivation and preparing the new fields. She also goes to the forest to get the poles for building her house. Women cut the grass and run the household they also go to the office. But in rural areas, there are no offices or possibility of education for the children.”

Widow inheritance, where a woman of the deceased “marries” the brother-in-law s is practiced among the many southern ethnic groups. The levir’s task is to take care of the widow, her children and to make sure more children are born in his bother’s name. A current problem with this tradition is that so many men die, that those remaining cannot take care of all the wives of their late brothers.

In many cases it is not even known where the brother of the late husband resides. And it can be traced; often he is not able to bring clothes or food for the women and her children or to help her with cultivation of the land. The woman might be driven out of her house, a formerly unthinkable situation; Women have to take care of themselves, still looking for ways to conceive.<sup>45</sup> Here is an effect of war, where, men are robbed of the duty of taking care of their late brother’s wife and the widows take care of themselves. Poi quoted<sup>46</sup>.

“My husband died on the frontline when he was 25 years old. There were two wives, the other one and I. I spent five months with the brother of my husband, and then he chased me away. He said, “There are no means for feeding the child and you,” so he divorced us. He was old and already had six wives with seventeen children. He made the decision alone without consulting the elders. My parents were very far away so they could not be consulted. After the divorce, my parents came and found that the decision was already made. They did not go to consult the man again. I went to live with them. I am now staying alone in the compound of my parents. I will remain in this house, looking for any man or young whom I can live with.”

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<sup>45</sup> Poi op cit PP 45-46

<sup>46</sup> Ibid

From the above, it is evident that the war has affected the decision-making structures in the society. Elders especially, are being robbed of the duty of reconciliation as would be expected of them in times of peace. We also see the women taking it upon themselves to look for other men who would give them children who will be born in their late husband's home. It can therefore be argued that the war has affected women relations which combines women roles and women identities in the traditional peaceful set-up, women do not look for men to give them children after the death of their husbands. The war has also affected women's relationship as argued out by Palmer and Zwi<sup>47</sup>. During the war, some women found that leaving their partners actually improved their prospects. One displaced Sudanese who had left her partner stated that: -

“Women with husbands don't have any business. Those without husbands are able to manage. It is usually good to have a husband but at this time of war husbands have no role.”

Western Equatorial Regions and Lakes are considered stable in contrast with other parts of Southern Sudan, which are either conflict prone or potentially insecure. It is in these areas of comparative tranquillity that aid agencies have implemented limited development programmes by supporting the construction of schools and clinic and introduction of agricultural and income generating projects. Another evidence of change in women roles is in this narration conforms to Fitzgerald's study as noted:

‘The war has changed things for us. Before we were confined to the house, we would not be sitting at a sewing machine or baking bread or running a restaurant in the market place. In the old Sudan only men did tailoring. No one would believe that women could do that thing’.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Palmer and Zwi. *Women Health and Humanitarian aid in Conflict*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers : 1998

<sup>48</sup> Ibid

## Theoretical Framework

This study has used a structural violence approach which captures the interaction between war and women. Burton<sup>49</sup> views conflict as a social phenomenon that can either progress to a peaceful end or degenerate into a destructive situation. He posits that conflict is a biological need and a conduit to reach social change that can ensure personal development in terms of welfare, security, justice and opportunities. He argues that if conflict is suppressed it will render society static; hence, it must neither be disapproved nor feared but accepted as a normal phenomenon.

According to Galtung<sup>50</sup> structural violence refers to any constraint on human potential caused by the structures in the society. Structural violence exists in those conditions which human beings are unable to realize their full potential; where their somatic and mental realizations are below the potential realization. Unequal access to resources, political power, education, health care and legal standing are forms of structural violence embedded in social structures which cause direct violence.

Curle<sup>51</sup> further argues that societies can be in either conditions of peace, or of war, or in neither. He calls this condition “unpeaceful” because despite the absence of physical manifestations of violence, peace is absent because the relations in those societies are organized in such a way that the potential for development of some members are impeded by socio-politico-economic and psychological factors. Because conflict occurs as a result of the disequilibrium and inequalities that are manifested in the structures in the society, and since this is made possible by the relations and interactions between groups in society, conflict can only be resolved if these groups are involved in the reforming processes.

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<sup>49</sup> Burton JW (1972) *World Society*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 137-138.

<sup>50</sup> Galtung “Violence, Peace and Peace Research” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol.3, 1969, pp.167-191 and Galtung. “Cultural Violence”. *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol.127.199. pp. 291-305.

<sup>51</sup> A Curle (1971):*Making Peace*, London, Tavistock Publication.

Winter and Leighton<sup>52</sup> propose that the very structures in society that breed structural violence could be used to encourage and empower citizens to develop systematic ways to mitigate and reduce its effects.

The theoretical framework adopted here will be useful in the research based on the concepts it postulates. First the issue of structural violence will be investigated in the case study of Sudan through analysis of the social structures of governance and culture that subject both men and women to a disadvantage relative to men. Secondly the gender perspective dominant in the social relationships will be investigated to reveal what are the roles and responsibilities of men and women in the society. Therefore women server double disadvantage in conflict situations. On one hand the political institutions subject certain sections of people to marginalisation and these sections of the society further subject women to segregation. Women become the marginalized of the marginalised.

## **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses guided the study:

1. Civil war leads to change in the women's roles in the Sudan.
2. Sudanese civil war has empowered women economically.
3. Socio-cultural factors enhance the participation of women in development of the Sudan.

## **Methodology**

This study made use of both primary and secondary data.

Secondary data will be available from published works and research papers. Primary data will be available through interviews with scholars in the field of conflicts research and those who

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<sup>52</sup> D. Winter and L.Dana "Structural Violence: Introduction"  
<http://www.people.Whitman.edu/~leightde/svintro.htm>



have been involved directly or indirectly in the conflicts and peace processes. The analysis of both sources of information will be collected to make effective policy and recommendations.

### **Primary Data**

This entailed interviewing mainly the urban Sudanese refugees in Kenya. For the urban refugees, those in Nairobi were interviewed. It proved expensive and impractical to interview all the Sudanese ethnic groups, This study therefore utilized purposive sampling method to draw a sample from five major tribes namely the Dinka, Nuer, Azande, Shilluk and Nuba.

Nachmias and Nachmias explains that purposive sampling, occasionally referred to as judgement sampling, in which researchers select sampling units subjectively in an attempt to obtain a sample that appears to be representative of the population. In other words, the chance that a particular sampling unit will be selected for the sample depends on the subjective judgment of the researcher. The sample size for this study was 200 women. Questionnaires were used in data collection. SPSS was used in data analysis.

### **1.9.2 Secondary Data**

These were published and unpublished materials, which included: books, periodicals, electronic journals (provided by the University of Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library), Newspaper articles, encyclopaedias, magazines.

### 1.9.3

#### Chapter Outline

- Chapter 1: It consists of this project proposal and it forms the background to the study.
- Chapter 2: Relationship between women and civil conflicts
- Chapter 3: Historical background to the Sudan Civil Conflicts
- Chapter 4: The effects of Sudan Civil Conflicts on Women
- Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

## CHAPTER TWO

### RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WOMEN AND CIVIL CONFLICTS

#### Introduction

This chapter considers the concepts of women, its roots especially as it relates to civil war. Etienne argues that the question of gender is increasingly gaining currency in the social sciences as gender is now considered a viable analytical category of social phenomena. This is because of the changing perceptions of society over time and the need to explain power relations and the material conditions of both sexes in the process of history<sup>1</sup>.

Humanity seems to be challenging the biased world-view within which social processes were previously conceived and interpreted in purely patriarchal terms. Patriarchal ideology dominated almost all aspects of social, political and economic life of societies. This partly explains the rise of the feminist movement globally, attempting to redefine social relations and the historical concepts used in research. The feminist perception postulates that women also were active agents of change in the various aspects of life<sup>2</sup>.

The essential, factor of discussion on gender brings to the fore the issue of feminism. Dinnerstein<sup>3</sup> takes this perspective and argues that whereas many feminists are not easily put under one label, the difference between them is important for thinking about gender.

The idea of gender relations is clearly discussed by Aptel-Marglin<sup>4</sup> who states that most theoretical advances of gender have been formulated on the basis of classical times and contemporary studies of women in the western civilization particularly north-west Europe and U.S.A. He considers the following episteme, that is, gender and feminism.

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<sup>1</sup> Etienne, M. and Eleanor, L. (1980), *Women and Colonization* Praeger, New York.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Dinnerstein what Does Feminism mean? In Attarris and Y King (eds) *Rocking the ship of state: Towards a Feminist Peace Politics*. Boulder. Colorado. Westview press: 1989.

<sup>4</sup> Aptel-Marglin, Frederique and Stephen Marglin (eds) (1990) *Culture and Resistance*. Clarendon, press oxford.

Stephanie's<sup>5</sup> view is that feminism can be described as a genuine belief in and call for gender struggle in order to change women's inequality or exploitation or oppression, however, any generalization about women's problems globally is made more complex by the difference within feminism, within and between states.

The first wave of feminism was concerned suffrage with women's legal and civil rights including their right to education. A number of schools were active in other politics as socialists or anti-colonial nationalists or pacifists<sup>6</sup>. A second wave of feminists had very different politics that affected their knowledge of sexual differences with men. During the 1970s and 1980s, these positions were often summed up under debates of radical, liberal and socialist feminists for example from women in development. (WID) to women and environment development (WED)<sup>7</sup> According to Aptel-Marglin<sup>8</sup>, radical feminists regard women's subordination as universally taking different forms at different times. Some argued that women are a sex-class, systematically and everywhere subject to men's sex right or their claims for access to their bodies, children and labour. Violence against women is argued by informants as a way of keeping women "in their place".

Liberal feminists are equality feminists seeking an end to women's exclusion from under representation in the office, employment and power. They seek women's equal protection in the military, including in combat, for they see women's dependence on men as compromising their claims to full citizenship which is usually understood to include fighting for one's country<sup>9</sup>. Socialist feminists put together class and gender realizing that a class analysis alone omits much that women experience. It cannot explain why women are the ones responsible for reproductive and family labour<sup>10</sup>, why women are over represented among the poor or why

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<sup>5</sup> Stephanie Ur dang (1989) and Still they Dance Women, War, and the Struggle for Change in Mozambique Earths can Publications Ltd. London monthly review press pp. (21).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Doden, Barbara (1991) the women Beneath the skin Havard University press pp. 30

<sup>8</sup> Aptel - Marglin Frederique and Stephen Marglin (eds) (1990) Dominating Knowledge Development Culture and Resistance Clarendon press oxford.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

gender inequalities, often reinforced by violence against women, continue even where women are integrated into the workplace.

Cultural feminists regard women as different from men, more nurturing and peaceable. Some cultural feminists are accused of essentialism which represents women's values so reinforcing the gender stereotypes that underpin women's oppression. Others regard women's values more as learned skills, as women are virtually always those responsible for the care of children. For health and community care they argued that men too could learn to nurture<sup>11</sup>.

Okoth<sup>12</sup> notes that post-modern feminists have added to the growing recognition of differences between women. The manner in which gender politics is articulated and played out varies widely across the different types of state. Different feminists have different views on gender relations and how to change them so that they do not routinely count against women. The conversations that sometimes conflict between this feminism enable us to understand better gender relations and sexual differences. The second-wave feminist intervention made a distinction between sex and gender a human is born male or female gender was seen as a social construction, that is, what it means to be male or female in any particular place or time<sup>13</sup>

Okoth<sup>14</sup> further notes that the distinction between sex and gender enables the explanation of different meanings of gender. Gender is a personal identity experienced by a man/woman in different ways: social identity – what do others expect of a man/ woman? Power relations – why are women as a social category, virtually always under represented in relations of power? Gender is political. It is contested by men and women who regularly subvert, challenge or bolster gender differences at home or in other places, be they feminists who seek women's liberation, or anti-feminists who seek to take back what women have won through struggle. Gender as performance suggests ways that we select and negotiate our ways via social

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<sup>11</sup> Aptel, M. F, (1992) "Women's Blood Challenging the Discourse of Development's in the Ecologist, Vol. 22

<sup>12</sup> Okoth, (2000). Gender Issues in International relations during the Era of Globalization in Okoth G.P. (ed), Africa at the Beginning of the First Century, Nairobi University Press.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Okoth Op cit p 397

responsibilities and expectations. Gender as a process reminds us that gender never just is, but rather, that much work goes into its reproduction.

In writing on gender dynamics in Africa, Mazlish<sup>15</sup> argues that gender in Africa is deeply rooted in larger superstructures such as history, Islam (religion), multilingualism, social organization, political organization and economic status. These powerful superstructures feed into each other and intertwine to form a complex system which generates gender identity, and shapes the ideology, worldview, beliefs and values of women and men, thus reflecting their essence perspective and local specifications. Any change in gender dynamics is bound to be rooted in these superstructures.

Wadda<sup>16</sup> argues that gender shapes the lives of all people in all societies and it influences all aspects of people's lives, including the social roles they play, the rewards they get and the power authority they command in society. Depending on the culture in which the male and female live, there are stereotypical definitions of roles and expectations attached to each sex. In turn, such stereotypes influence the different attributes, beliefs, behaviours and characteristics of the individual of a particular sex.

Writing about gender division of labour, Nussbaum<sup>17</sup> looks at two positions. A position assigns to both males and females the same general normative list of functions but suggests that males and females should exercise these functions in different spheres of life such as men in the public sphere and women at home. The later argues that the list of functions even at a high level of generality should be different for men, citizenship and rational autonomy, for women, family, love and care.

The informer is compatible with a serious interest in equity and in gender justice. It says that males and females have the same basic needs for capability development and should get what they need. It is determined to ensure that both get to the higher (developed) level of capability

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<sup>15</sup> Mazlish, B (1991) *The Breakdown of Connections and Modern Development*, Vol. 19, No. 1

<sup>16</sup> Wadda "Gender Rewards and Fertility Behavior in Sub-Saharan Africa" In Ruth Mukama (ed) *Challenges to the social sciences in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* Proceeds of the International Conference Held at the International Conference Centre. Kampala; 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> October 2000.

<sup>17</sup> Nussbaum *Sex and Social Justice*. New York. Oxford University Press: 1999 p.52

with respect to all the central functions. It simply holds that this can and perhaps should be done in separate spheres<sup>18</sup>. This argument has deep roots in early feminist thought and it is to this history that I shall now turn our attention to.

### **Feminism, Pacifism and Wars**

Martin<sup>19</sup> argues that much feminist scholarship before the flowering of first wave feminism had based their argument on universal principles. Women, they argued, were entitled to equal rights on the basis of the principles underlying the French Revolution and English liberal thought, which denied the validity of traditional inequalities and implied a general equality of rights for all humanity. By the last third of the nineteenth century, however, these universal principles had lost their force. Concurrently, the argument that men and women enjoyed separate spheres related to their essential natures had assumed a hegemonic character, especially among the middle classes from which the first wave feminism drew the bulk of its support.

The wave of feminism therefore could not challenge this argument directly. They accepted the hegemonic ideology, but extended it to its fullest implications, and thereby exceeds it. Instead of arguing for women's rights on the basis of the universal human rights, first wave feminists argued that women were entitled to vote and to act in the public sphere in general, in spite of womanly virtues they would bring to such activity. Among these virtues, feminists considered the bearing and nurturing of children to be foremost and many believed that this stake in the creations of life include a corollary tendency to pacifism<sup>20</sup>.

When war broke out in 1914, some feminists assumed that women would or at least should oppose the war because of their vested interest in the creation of life. Other feminists, while



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<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> Martin, Emily (1987), *The woman in the Body*. Beacon press, Boston

<sup>20</sup> Kruse and Sowerwine *Feminism and Pacifism. Women's Sphere in Peace and War*" in Grieve and Burns(eds) *Australian Women in new Feminist Perspectives*, Melbourne. Oxford University

not opposing the war effort in progress, nevertheless saw a special role for women in the prevention of future wars<sup>21</sup>.

Among the middle classes, however, development of a private or home sphere for women, in which the middle classes might appear to live like nobles, was already one of the key features of bourgeois ideology in the first half of the nineteenth century and by the last third of the century, the ideal of separate spheres of men and women, had become a hegemonic ideology. This was well articulated by Leila Ahmed in "Of Queens Garden".

"What was created was the fusion between the issues of women, their oppression, and the cultures of other men. Who is eminently the door, the creator, the discoverer, the defender, but the woman's power is for rule, not for battle and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement, and decision. The man, in his rough work and open world, must encounter all peril and trial. But he guards the woman from all this, within his house as ruled by her need enter no danger, no temptation, no cause of error or offence. This is the true nature of home – it is the place of peace. This, then I believe, is the place of woman's true place and power".

Ahmed's formulation spread through the western world and remained a part of anti-feminist rhetoric into the twentieth century. In the US, for example, Representative Clark of Florida still argued in 1915, "I prefer to look to the American woman as she always has been occupying her proud estate as the queen of the American home". If women's influence was so positive why should it be restricted to the home? Was it not needed in the outside world? Ahmed himself had answered yes to this question although with some ambiguity: "The woman's duty, as a member of the commonwealth, is to assist in the ordering, in the comforting, and in the beautiful adornment of the state" Feminists responded by arguing that in order to fulfil this duty, women should have the vote<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Kruse and Sowerwine op ci p34.

<sup>22</sup> Ahmed Leila (1992) Women and Gender in Islam Yale University Press, New Haven



In introducing the adult suffrage Bill in the federal parliament, Sir William Lyne argued that;

“ The effect of the women taking an active interest in the political life of the community will be to purify it and, in addition, to cause a greater interest to be taken by all in public questions which affect the well-being of the community<sup>23</sup>”.

Etienne and Eleanor<sup>24</sup> noted that this use of the separate spheres argument to justify and extend the role of women enabled the first wave of feminists to transcend their sphere. Far from imprisoning them in the confines of the home, the inversion of the separate spheres ideology lay the basis not only for a mass movement for suffrage, but also for a new and enhanced self-respect, a prerequisite for the success of oppressed groups in obtaining equal power and status.

Etienne and Eleanor<sup>25</sup> further state that the idea that women, through their role as mothers had an inherent commitment to the creation of life formed part of the argument in inventing the ideology of separate spheres. Implicit and sometimes explicit in this argument was a corollary commitment to peace. Ahmed himself had made his very point in “Of Queen’s Garden: “Men by their nature are prone to fight; they will fight for any cause. It is for you to choose their cause for them, and to forbid them when there is no cause”.

Etienne and Eleanor<sup>26</sup> remind us that long before this, the Saint-Simonian feminists had argued;

“Here they (women) are placed in possession of the religious and social life from which they were excluded under the reign of war and brute force! But who else throughout the common ages, stained with blood, rust and tears have won man over to peace and love, if it is not woman?”

As the first wave of feminism developed, this sentiment developed with it. Mani- Lata wrote. Let us do our utmost to hasten the day when the wishes of the mothers shall have their due

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<sup>23</sup> Etienne M and Eleanor L op.cit.p46

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

weight in public affairs, knowing that by so doing we hasten the day when wars shall be no more<sup>27</sup>

During the century of relative peace before 1914 the link between feminism and pacifism was most often left implicit. Once war broke out, however, feminists throughout the world lost no time in arguing that women's inherent commitment to the creation of life would have helped prevent war had they had their due share of public responsibility. Touring America in December 1914, when America was still neutral, the militant English suffragist Emmeline Pethick Lawrence argued: "The failure of the male statecraft in Europe is complete. It was vital to the interests of the human race itself that the mother half of humanity should now be admitted to articulate citizenship". Jane Addams took up the argument writing early in 1915, "As women we are the custodians of the life of the ages and we will no longer consent to its reckless destruction"<sup>28</sup>

At the urging of English and European feminists Adams, together with Carrie Chapman Catt, convened a congress in Washington, which founded the Women's Peace Army (WPA) on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1915. In February 1915, Aletta Jacobs, a leading Dutch feminist, invited Addams and other members of the WPA to an international peace congress of women to be held in the Hague in April. The congress sat from 28<sup>th</sup> April to 1<sup>st</sup> May 1915, with 1136 delegates from twelve countries. It founded the International committee of women for permanent peace, which was to become the Women's League for peace and freedom.

From the outset, the link between feminism and pacifism was explicit. To be a delegate, one had only to accept that international disputes should be settled by pacific means and that the parliamentary franchise should be extended to women as French delegates put it in to the congress (they were unable to attend), "It is because they have children that women are the armed enemies of war."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Mani, Lata (1989) Contentious Traditions, the Debate on Sati in Colonial India, in Kumkumsangari & Sudesh vaid (eds) Recasting Women: Essay in Colonial History. Kali for Women, New Delhi.

<sup>28</sup> Kruse and Sower Wine op.cit.p.46

<sup>29</sup> Mary Van Lieushout (1996) A Woman's World Beyond the Headlines Attic Press and Oxfam Duslin.

“The fundamental principle of feminism is the wish to create, while destroying war, a better and just humanity”. This idea dominated the congress. One of its key resolutions was for “The enfranchisement of women” which reads:

“Since the combined influence of the women of all countries is one of the strongest forces for the prevention of war and since women can only have full responsibility and effective influence when they have equal political rights with men, this international congress of women demands their potential enfranchisement”<sup>30</sup>.

The relationship between women pacifism was a constant theme of the Australian’s sisterhood of international peace; In August 1915, the sisterhood asked, “Who can be more entitled to speak against war than women? Throughout history, it was women who were the innocent victims of war suffering “slavery, privation, death, loss of husbands, brothers, sons, and other nameless horrors”. By their very biology, women were life creators, not life destroyers. They do not bear arms, but at the cost of great pain, and often death, they bear children and through long years of patient toil, nurse and tend and protect their young till they reach the years of manhood<sup>31</sup>. The sisterhood emphasized the different roles of men and women in society asking:

“Have you considered how women spend their youth, their strength and their hearts blood in the world with beautiful children and how men use their finest inventive power in making means to send these young lives to destruction?”

Women they argued were naturally affected by wars. According to the sisterhood, women’s biological role as creators of life and their social role as nurturers and protectors of the life they created established an intrinsic relationship between women and war.

The women’s peace army (WPA) was formed on 8<sup>th</sup> July 1915, as an anti-war group. Vida Goldstein and her friend Cecilia John led it. During the anti-conscription campaigns of 1916 and 1917, the Peace Army stressed motherhood as the natural antithesis of compulsory military

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<sup>30</sup> Kruse and Sower Wine op.cit.p.50

<sup>31</sup> Ibid

services. "I didn't raise my son to be soldier. I brought him up to be my pride and joy anybody dares to put a musket on his shoulder, to kill some other mother's darling boy?"

The sisterhood saw the correct path to peace not in public defence of Government policy, but through education to mould a peaceful future. In August 1915, the organization's newspapers "peace words" carried an editorial concluding that:

"Women cannot join armies, but they can stake a blow at the causes of war. Study economic, political, racial, moral and religious roots of war, and educate themselves and their children and public opinion now for the day when this present mad, fratricidal struggle is ended".

The WPA was much more provocative. Its newspapers, is outspokenly critical of the war and was often censored under the provisions of the war precautions act as the peace army held many public meetings. After the war was over the justification for the WPA disappeared. It was the sisterhood of international peace that became the Australian section of the women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). The WLPF no longer presumed that women were inherently opposed to war but rather sought to be an organization for women who were opposed to war, having transcended the separate spheres argument. It now functioned on the same basis as and in parallel with men and men's organizations<sup>32</sup>

## **Women and War**

In writing about gender construction in and through war, Hoglan<sup>33</sup> argues through three themes namely; labour division, complementary gender identity and dichotomous thinking with regard to the labour division. After biological reproduction, war is other the arena where division of labour along gender lines have been the most obvious. This has also led to the assumption that this division is absolute and natural, as it seems to be connected to the biological sexes.

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<sup>32</sup> Kruse and Sower Wine op.cit.p.57

<sup>33</sup> Hogland "Gender and War" in New Routes – Journal of Peace Research and Action, VOL. 6 No. 3.2001, Uppsala. Life and Peace Institute. p.6

The division of labour in war is rooted in two basic assumptions. First, that there is a clear line between “combatant” and “non-combatant”; and second, that geographically there is a real place called “the front line”. The notion of “combatant” and “non-combatant” plays a central role in the construction of masculinity and femininity. Military education is often characterized by denial, suppression and devaluation of what is culturally regarded as “feminine” characteristics, such as empathy, sympathy and gentleness<sup>34</sup>.

Holland further observes that the military systems seem to be dependent on certain ideas of masculinity and femininity. Gender identity in war is shaped out of whether one takes on one of the two complementary roles, as combatant or non-combatant; the protector or the protected; being home or at the front. She contends that the notion of protector and protected in war must be considered a myth. In the wars of today, with weapons of mass destruction, which leave no clear line between combatants and non-combatants, everyone seems to be unprotected<sup>35</sup>

At the heart of the gender construction in war is the old laws, built upon the chivalric code in which the knight is supposed to protect women. The chivalric conventions of warfare still work to preserve the gender construction in war. They give rise to modern notions warfare where the gender division of labour and identity construction is central. The soldier is by definition male, whose duty it is to fight honourably against enemies of similar civic and gender status.

At the very core of the above reasoning lies an important part of the western tradition and philosophy namely a dichotomous and binary thinking in which everything is supposed to be divided into “A” and “not A”. This logic holds that superiority justifies subordination, concerning, for example, race, class gender and species. A dualism is built around dichotomy rather than continuity, exclusion rather than inclusion, and expressed in binary pairs as public / private, war / peace, front / home and combatant / non-combatant. In these pairs the second concept is not only subordinated to but also in service of the first. The logic of domination has

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid

<sup>35</sup> Ibid

contributed to, and supported and maintained, patriarchy and its system of structural dominance, of which the war system is one important part.

If these dichotomies are revealed one of the pillars of war is dismissed. It could give rise to a reinterpretation and redefinition of gender roles in war. Warfare in today's post-modern world is beginning to put these spheres into question. Women take part in wars as combatants today, and technically advanced weapons have eliminated the division of home and front and civilian and combatant. Post-modern wars have changed much of our previous understanding of both war and peace and the role gender plays. Beverly Allen writes:<sup>36</sup>

“In this war where there is no “front” and death finds you in the breadlines, waterline and markets, gender roles are being radically redefined. Chores that in a patriarchal gender division of labour are traditionally, assigned to women i.e. chores having to do with domestic work and reproduction have taken on traditional masculine values associated with heroism, risk taking boldness and courage.”

Pol<sup>37</sup> supports this argument and quoting Sudanese women for peace, reports that in the Southern Sudan context, the increased participation of women in public discussion is the most remarkable development in the last couple of years. He writes:

When we went with the women to Ngabakok Bhar-el-Ghazal, after the workshop in Loki, we were there for two weeks. We could see that the women were able to call the elders, the community leaders and the Government authorities. We helped them organize it, but actually it was they who controlled the meeting. There were about 75 women. The women went who were praised so much by the men. That was also a new thing when we proceeded to the left. There was also a huge crowd. It was even bigger than the one in Ngabakok. The woman chairperson said she had never talked to people like that, standing in front of them. Also, there was a high table, supposed to be for the SPLA and the commissioner. But they said, no. These

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<sup>36</sup> Hogland op. Cit.

<sup>37</sup> Pol: Women, War and Peace in Southern Sudan. Uppsala. Life and Peace Institute: 1998

women have to be here, they will sit and we will listen to them". They praised the women by saying "The little life we have in this area it is because of the women if you see us with clothes, it was the women who provided them. If we have salt, sugar or maybe soap it is the women who brought it. Hogland<sup>38</sup> concludes that in post-modern wars, there is no front, or to put it in another way, the front is everywhere. The combatants are everyone and not one is any longer protected from violence through being a civilian, independent or by gender.

This argument is supported by evidence gathered from Sudan as reported by Pol<sup>39</sup> who observes that in war, men are losing more than just their cattle and possessions. Military faction leaders or international aid agencies now take political or legal decisions. The man is no longer the one to guarantee the safety of his family or clan. Nor can he take care of all the wives of his brothers who die in war, with the loss of responsibility; they also lose their dignity. Moreover, many men have had their share of traumatic experiences.

Byrne<sup>40</sup> notes that both men and women are victims of war – whether directly as war fatalities or casualties, or through the effect of dislocation on their livelihoods and social networks. However, neither men nor women are merely passive victims of conflict. They are also actors in supporting or opposing violence and in trying to survive the effects of wars. This argument is a contradiction to the previous denial of women's agency in war.

In the case of the current civil war in the Sudan, structural violence is evident and affecting both the male and female gender. The war has, for example, disrupted livelihoods, populations have been displaced, and others have fled the country and are currently living as refugees in different parts of the world Kenya included living as a refugee or as internally displaced persons

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<sup>38</sup> Hogland op. Cit. p.8

<sup>39</sup> Pol: op. Cit. p.33

<sup>40</sup> Byrne "Towards a Gendered Understanding of conflict IDS Bulletin, 1996,27(3)pp.: 31-34

has meant that the men and women affected by the war are not able to realize their full potential and this constitutes structural violence.

Those living in urban areas are not fully integrated in the society while those in the refugee camps basically live on what the UNHCR and other aid agencies can offer them. I have explained that as a result of the Sudanese conflict, women are now actively participating in the community affairs such as addressing gatherings geared towards peace building. This points towards changes in women roles. The next chapter I focuss on is a historical account of the Sudanese civil war before moving to the critical analysis on how the war has affected women roles in Chapter Four.



# CHAPTER THREE

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE SUDANESE CIVIL CONFLICTS

### Introduction

This chapter is going to discuss the background of the current Sudanese civil war that broke out in 1982. It will provide an analysis of events on the ground that culminated in the violent outbreak of the civil war. It will also provide an analysis of the change of regimes and their impact on the peace processes that have previously tackled the problem. It will further entail an analysis of the actors and the interest within Sudan. The chapter will isolate specific consequences of the conflict on women. It will provide an insight into women's participation in the war and their continuous role in the peace processes. Statistics will be used to compare the rates at which women participate in the war *vis a vis* the men. The chapter shall conclude by observing the critical position women occupy in the society when it is in conflict.

### The Current Civil War in the Sudan

It is commonly argued that the current civil war, in January 1983, Southern troops of the 105<sup>th</sup> Battalion refused orders to abandon their weapons and be transferred north. They feared they would be sent to Iraq to join another Sudanese contingent fighting in that country's war against Iran and leave the South vulnerable to an all-northern unit.<sup>1</sup> After negotiations failed, Nimeiri ordered an attack on the insubordinate soldiers in May 1983.

The Southern unit fled, taking weapon and equipment and inspiring a succession of desertions and Mutinies in the South throughout the year. The Mutineers found sanctuary in Ethiopia, where they united to form the SPLA.

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<sup>1</sup> Lesch: The Sudan Contested National Identities, Bloomington: 1998 pp.49

Alier<sup>2</sup> pointed out that on 5<sup>th</sup> June 1983, Nimeiri issued “Republican order Number one” abrogating the Addis Agreement and returning regional power to the central Government. The Republican order explicitly destroyed the south’s autonomy and carved it into three powerless administrative provinces. It transferred the South’s financial powers to the Central Government and declared Arabic, not English the region’s official language. The order abandoned direct secret ballot elections for the Southern Regional Assembly and dissolved its power to veto central Government law. It also cancelled the sections of the Addis Agreement that guaranteed local control of the armed forces in the South and transferred this responsibility to the Central Government<sup>3</sup>.

In addition to dramatically re-centralizing political and economic power, Nimeiri officially transformed Sudan into an Islamic state, declaring in September 1983 that Sharia or Islamic law “be the sole guiding force behind the law of the Sudan.” Though one- third of the population was non Muslim, Islamic penal code was imposed on the entire country<sup>4</sup>.

Southerners were<sup>5</sup> infuriated by abrogation of the Addis Agreement, and violent protest soon followed. The Addis Ababa Agreement addressed various issues that included nationality and culture, economic inequality, the physical security of the nation and the individual citizen and democratic rights and freedom.<sup>6</sup>

The Addis Ababa Agreement also provided for cultural and political autonomy for the south. It provided for the development and promotion of cultures including regional languages. Powers assigned to the regional legislature allowed it to make laws based on traditional law and custom. This provision allowed the Southerners to determine which laws would be compatible to their values.

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<sup>2</sup> Johnson and Prunier *The Foundation and Expansion of Sudan people Liberation Army in Daly and Sikainga* (eds) civil war in the Sudan. New York. pp. 124.

<sup>3</sup> Alier op.cit.pp.225

<sup>4</sup> International Crisis Group op.cit.pp.14

<sup>5</sup> Alier op.cit.pp.224

<sup>6</sup> The Addis Ababa Agreement on the Problem of South Sudan, (1972).

The Agreement also allowed for establishment of an independently regional civil service, police and prison forces.<sup>7</sup> This clause recognized that the needs of the Southern people would only be addressed by the participation of Southerners in the civil service. It would also provide a deeper sense of security when the policing is conducted by the Southerners.

The document also specified issues that appertain to regional financial relationship between the South and the Central government was defined.<sup>8</sup> The central government was only to foresee transfer of funds for established services from the National Treasury. This would allow the South plan for its budget and revenue with no interference from the central government.

The Agreement allowed for a freely elected legislative body charged with the responsibility of legislation and supervision of the regional executive.<sup>9</sup> The provision also allowed for a regional executive organ whose head is elected by the Regional Assembly and cannot be dismissed unless with a three quarters majority. This was meant to strengthen the authority of the Southern leaders in their own region and ensure decisions made by the Regional Assembly would be binding to all leaders.

Finally the Agreement provided in the end of its provisions the integration of the Anya Nya elements into the National Army.<sup>10</sup> The reorganization was aimed at ensuring territorial integrity of the country, the place of the South in the armed forces and the security of the individuals.

The Addis Ababa Agreement settled the most critical issues for the South. However on June 5<sup>th</sup> 1983, the President issued a decree dissolving the institutions of the Regional Assembly and the High Executive Council.<sup>11</sup> This decree created three regions in the South instead of the Single Southern Region. The Three Regions included Bahr El Ghazal, Equatorial and Upper Nile. This was a precursor that the Central Government was no longer interested in to see the Southern region united and stable. The decree affected the public and private service sectors.

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<sup>7</sup> Addis Ababa Agreement, (1972), Chap. V.

<sup>8</sup> Addis Ababa Agreement, (1972), Chap. VIII

<sup>9</sup> Addis Ababa Agreement, (1972), Chap. V & VI

<sup>10</sup> Addis Ababa Agreement, (1972), Chap. IX

<sup>11</sup> Alier, A., Op Cit, Pp. 275.

The transfer and displacement of the people from one region to the other destabilized the people's social and family lives.

Besides dividing the South into three regions, President Nimeiri who had earlier agreed with the National Front to make efforts of reconciliation, decided to review some aspects of the 1973 national constitution. The most critical article was Article 16 that gave Christianity and traditional religions a place alongside Islam.<sup>12</sup> This had to be done concurrently with the review of the Addis Ababa accord regarded as a sell out to the people of the South. Nimeiri was impressed that he would get full support from Northern Political Forces by abrogating the Addis Ababa Agreement, which in their view weakened national sovereignty. And if Nimeiri would introduce an Islamic constitution he would regain the following of the bulk North. This view of NF required Nimeiri to review the role of religion in the society and certain powers relating to cultures. This in essence aroused discontent among the Southern Sudanese. Therefore the national reconciliation of 1977 was a factor in abrogating the Addis Ababa Agreement.

Another factor which contributed heavily to this abrogation was the border issue of 1980.<sup>13</sup> The government officials in Khartoum attempted to transfer the rich oil agricultural and grazing lands of Upper Nile and Bahr el Ghazal to Northern Provinces just by redrawing the map. The changes sparked off riots in the South. President Nimeiri quickly responded by appointing a commission to investigate and review the relevant legal corpus and make recommendations. The commission recommended the retention of boundaries as they were fixed in 1956. Despite the recommendation the area of Kafi Kengi was not retransferred to the South. The discovery of another oil field at Unity Area near the boundary of Bentiu sparked a controversy when the government maintained that it is in the North while it was in the South.

Southerners mobilized around the SPLA and John Garang emerged as its leader. Unlike the Anya-nya, the SPLA defined its objectives more broadly than Southern autonomy, arguing that

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid Pp. 276

<sup>13</sup> Ibid Pp. 258

all of Sudan needed to transform into a multi- racial, multi religious and multi ethnic democratic state.

The success and overwhelming popularity of the SPLA in its first years is a testament to the scope of Southern grievances. Once again Sudan's Government was changed by military coup, with Lieutenant General Swar al- Dhahad Ousting Nimeiri in 1985, and once again there was heating impetus towards peace. Popular pressure brought the SPLA and an alliance of professional and trade unions and political partners, including the Umma party, together for peace talks. In 1986 they agreed to the Koka Dam Deceleration that called for a peace process spearheaded by a National Constitutional conference<sup>14</sup>.

However, the Declaration was unable to resolve the contentious issue of Sharia which was left to a new incoming civilian government to be headed by Sadiq Al- Mahdi political and military turmoil persisted for several years as Successive Coalition governments headed by Mahdi were dissolved due to disagreements over economic, social and peace initiatives<sup>15</sup>

### **The 1989 Bashir Coup and its Aftermath**

By June 1989, however, conditions favoured peace. The SPLA controlled almost the entire south and was exerting considerable military pressure on the government. The army calculated that it was in its best interest to cut loses and negotiate. John Garang recognized the SPLA would never win and that his strong tactical position would be best used to achieve favourable terms in negotiation.<sup>16</sup> Burr and Collins<sup>17</sup> observe that when Mahdi swiftly met its preconditions for a constitutional conference, the SPLA announced a cease- fire and reacted positively to the expulsion of hard-line Natural Islamic front elements from the cabinet. Mahdi began to refer to the SPLA as an "armed movement "rather than "terrorists".

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<sup>14</sup> International Crisis

<sup>15</sup> Garang, *The call for Democracy in Sudan*, pp. 40, 43-6

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

<sup>17</sup> Burr and Collins: *Requiem for the Sudan*, Boulder: 1995 pp.157

A Human Rights watch report<sup>42</sup> records that, on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1989 Brigadier General Omar Hassan Ahmad al- Bashir seized power in a coup *d'etat* and immediately cancelled all prior agreements, including the proposed Constitutional Conference. Bashir also acted quickly to consolidate his power and destroy the political position, which he chaired to serve as a cabinet. It revoked the transitional constitution of 1985, abolished the parliament, banned political parties, detained all political party leaders and closed the newspapers.

The International Crisis group<sup>18</sup> argues that the union, professional associations and political parties faced arbitrary arrest and disappeared in “ghost houses” and prisons where they were tortured or killed. Despite rhetorically embracing calls for peace Bashir demonstrated little interest in serious negotiations. Two sessions in Addis Ababa in August 1989 and in Nairobi December 1989 failed with Islamic law again a key sticking point. SPLA demands to revoke Sharia were anathema to the crackdown on opposition parties and non-governmental groups silenced some of the most forceful peace advocates.

David Turton<sup>19</sup> observes that Bashir, who had served in the South, promised new resources for the military and declared soldiers to be fighting as martyrs for the imposition of God’s law. He increasingly referred to pan-Arab and Islamic values when talking about the war in hopes of gaining support from Arab countries. Iraq soon sent arms and the government revived its military agreement with Tripoli- bringing in Libya armaments and oil. As the Gulf war took its toll on the assistance Iraq could provide, Bashir turned to Iran. The SPLA, questioning president Bashir’s commitment to talks, also stepped up military efforts and forged ties with the National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

The NIF government perceived Garang’s refusal to negotiate without strict preconditions as indicative of a commitment to resolve the conflict on the battlefield. The government army vowed “not to give an inch of the soil of their homeland” and government officials rushed

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<sup>18</sup> Human rights watch; Behind The Red Line. Political Repression in Sudan: New York: 1996 pp.169

<sup>19</sup> International Crisis: Group op.cit.pp.17

abroad to request funds to win back “Arab” towns captured by “Africans” and “infidels”. Garang and the SPLA did not recognize Bashir as President because the military coup had ousted a democratically elected leader and they denounced the Junta as “running dogs of Islamic fundamentalism” Government officials dismissed Garang as a communist and an agent of Ethiopia. From 1989 to 1992, security forces crushed several NDA and civil society uprising in Khartoum, leaving the Government to develop its policies on the civil war, Sharia and foreign relations largely free from domestic political constraints.<sup>20</sup>

Johnson and Prunier<sup>21</sup> argue that the military success of the SPLA in its seven years was significant but it soon endured setbacks. In May 1991, the collapse of the Mengistu regime in Ethiopia deprived its main operating base, its primary military and financial supplier and most of its military momentum. The new provisional Ethiopia government, composed of various rebel groups backed by the Sudanese government, was hostile. The SPLA evacuated its military camps, and 200,000 Sudanese refugees were forced back into harm’s way on the battlefield of southern Sudan. In May 1991, the Sudanese air force bombed Sudanese refugees as they fled their camps in Ethiopia<sup>22</sup>.

Jok and Hutchinson<sup>23</sup> Observe that although the forced departure from Ethiopia placed tremendous strain on the SPLA, and Bashir expected the rebels to concede Garang held fast. Several SPLA military readers, however, began to seriously question Garang’s leadership. A major split erupted within the SPLA over the perceived lack of broad – based participation in its leadership.

The issue also had an ethnic dimension as the splinter group SPLA – United led by Riak Macher, took most of the Nuer ethnic component within it. There was a history of tension

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<sup>20</sup> David Turton, Mursi political identity & Warfare: The Survival of an Idea and Serge A. Tornay, more chances on the fringe of the state?. The growing power of the Nyangatoni a border people of the Lower omo valley, Ethiopia (1970-1992), both in Fukui & markakis (eds) Ethnicity & conflict in The Horn of Africa London/Athens OH, 1991.

<sup>21</sup> Johnson and Prunier. The Foundation and Expansion of the Sudan people’s Liberation Army “in day 1 and Sikainga (eds) civil war in the Sudan, York; 1993 pp.138

<sup>22</sup> See for example multi-Donor Technical Mission on Refugees and Returnees, Report on mission to Western Region Sudanese Refugee camps, February 1991.

<sup>23</sup> Burr and Collins op.cit.pp.297

between the Nuer and the Dinka ethnic groups, the dominant groups in the SPLA and the government sought to exacerbate the rift by providing aid and encouraging SPLA – United to attack its former compatriots within months, nearly 70 percent of the Bor and Dinka ethnic groups in the southern upper Nile region had been displaced, with thousands of civilians killed or wounded by the SPLA – United.<sup>24</sup> Nuer communities felt the devastating repercussions from revenge raids by Garang's SPLA. This Intra-southern fighting continued throughout much of the 1990s.

With bloodletting preoccupying the south, the Government felt a military victory was tantalizingly closed. Iran's president, Rafsanjani, visited Khartoum in December 1991 and declared the civil war a Jihad and signed military protocols, including one promising to pay US 300 Million in Chinese military material<sup>25</sup>. The new weapons allowed the army to mount a four front offensive in February 1992, and by mid-year the SPLA was on the defensive.<sup>26</sup>

Joh and Hutchinson<sup>51</sup> are of the view that the bloodshed and the SPLA's deadline led to a proliferation of third-party mediation attempts. Talks convened in Abuja, Nigeria from 26 May to 4<sup>th</sup> June 1992 with the Government and both SPLA and the SPLA– United attended. The Government insisted that SPLA–United have its own delegation in an effort to play the rebel factions against another; the talks were doomed. The Government came prepared to make no concessions because of its military success. The SPLA was in a weak bargaining position.<sup>27</sup>

In 1994 Risk changed the name of his movement from SPLA-United to the Southern Sudan Independence movement (SIM). Unable to secure weapons abroad, he increasingly turned to Khartoum to maintain his fight against Garang. Consequently, the fighting between Dinka and Nuer intensified. In April 1996, Risk and other former SPLA officers and politicians

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<sup>24</sup> Jok and Hutchison "Sudan's prolonged second civil war and The Militarization of Nuer and Dinka Ethnic Identities" *African studies Review*. September 1999 pp.130

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> Jok and Hutchinson 1999 op.cit.p.1230



negotiated a "Peace Charter" with the Government. A year later it was transformed into a formal "peace agreement" that offered vague promises that "a regional referendum on Southern Sudanese Independence would take place after an Interim period" of four years in exchange for Risk's cooperation in merging his remaining forces within the National army.<sup>28</sup>

Despite the bitter Dinka-Nuer divisions in the South throughout the mid-1990s, the SPLA increased contacts with the NDA, in a partnership based on a shared antipathy for the NIF Government. This relationship was for strange bedfellows. In the late 1980s, several of the allies had been adversaries, specifically when Sadiq-al-Mahdi was prosecuted by the SPLA. But Bashir, cracked down on all opposition and introduction of Jihad forced an Alliance of necessity.

The international crisis group<sup>29</sup> documents that commitments were made to overthrow the Government. Though general principles were easily agreed, the details of an interim Government and a constitution produced fierce debate and threatened to disband the loose alliance.

The SPLA feared that Northern parties had no interest in the South and were using the SPLA for its military strength and would retain Islamic law and revert to past behaviour once they overthrew Bashir. The Northern parties were skeptical of the SPLA's commitment to a united Sudan. Some feared the SPLA would ultimately sign an agreement with Government that allowed for a separated south controlled by the SPLA while, conceding the North to the NIF<sup>30</sup> Mosely's<sup>31</sup> view is that throughout the mid - 1990s, the NDA sought a formula to reconcile the divergent visions of its secularists and its religious - based political threat. Nonetheless, it provided the SPLA with important Northern and Southern allies its disastrous schism. In

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> International Crisis Group op.cit.pp.19

<sup>30</sup> Ibid

<sup>31</sup> Mosely (1998) pp.190

March 1995, the Sudanese Government bombed Uganda territory, which prompted president Yoweri Museveni to break diplomatic relations and increase support for the SPLA.

Sudan's meddling in Eritrea and Ethiopia alienated those regimes, which consequently began to help the rebels. The US gave no direct assistance but provided the SPLA with moral and political support. Garang's 1995 visit to the US instilled him with confidence that the rebel group was respected by the US government which was an important endorsement for any rebel group constantly in search of legitimacy, reports the international crisis group<sup>32</sup>

There was only a nominal change when Sudan's Government transformed itself in 1993 from a military to a civilian one. Bashir held elections for the first time in March 1996, although they were widely boycotted by the NDA political parties while other opposition groups were deemed illegitimate by most international observers. Turabi was elected unopposed speaker of the National Assembly.

The entrenchment of NIF influence constrained the regime's policy opinions to a degree. Bashir pursued the Jihad with a vengeance, declaring, and "the basic Islamic agenda of the regime will not change Islam is the corner stone of our policy"<sup>33</sup>

This was a time of intense isolation for the governments support for Iraq during the civil war, the extreme Islamist agenda and a policy of harbouring terrorists, including Osama Bin Laden, all alienated many former allies. Eritrea became the defacto headquarters of Islam. After, President Issaiah Afewerki accused Khartoum of supporting Eritrean Islamic Jihad Rebels. Further, the International crisis Group<sup>34</sup> records that several North African states broke diplomatic ties over allegations of Sudanese support for Insurgents. Bashir's backing of Islamic groups in Ethiopia generated a rift between two countries that had been on close terms in the early 1990s. The turning point came in June 1995 with an assassination attempt against Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak in Ethiopia. Prime Minister Meles Zenawe accused Sudan

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<sup>32</sup> International Crisis Group op.cit.pp.20

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

<sup>34</sup> International Crisis Group.pp.20

of providing logistical support and sanctuary to the perpetrators. In May 1996, the UN Security council imposed economic Sanctions.

Sudan has had an uneasy, often hostile, relationship with the US since Bashir took power. Washington backed UN sanctions, placed Sudan on its list of state sponsor's of terrorism, and imposed stringent unilateral sanctions. The US congress has been sympathetic to the cause of Southern Sudanese, especially as key constituent groups have mobilized against religious discrimination and other human rights abuses in the country. During the Clinton administration, secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, met twice with Garang, and US political support for SPLA was widely put erroneously, believed to be coupled with finance and logistical support<sup>35</sup>

In writing about Sudan's isolation, Mosely<sup>36</sup> alludes that Khartoum remained able to find countries willing to sell it weapons. Iran continued to provide military and economic support throughout the mid-1990s, and Iraq experts and warplanes have been in Sudan. Bashir visited China in 1995 to secure further arms deals as well as to increase trade relations. In addition, France, which has oil interests to safeguard, has been politically sympathetic and has provided an extra layer of cover for Khartoum's extensive arms purchase.

Mosely<sup>37</sup> further observes that in 1995, the SPLA mounted its first major offensive since its expulsion from Ethiopia and won a series of victories over the ensuing two years. In July 1997, under heavy military and sustained international pressure, the government finally agreed to negotiate on the basis of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) declaration of principles.

According to the international crisis group<sup>38</sup>, the environment of political repression and authoritarian rule continued throughout the 1990s. Late in the decade, a combination of military pressure and international isolation induced the government to institute cosmetic

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid

<sup>36</sup> International Crisis Group op.cit.pp 20

<sup>37</sup> Mosely "The Sudan: Militancy and Isolation" In Redman (ed) The middle East and the peace process: The Impact of Oslo Accords" 6 Gainesville: 1998 pp.335

<sup>38</sup> International Crisis Group op.cit.pp 21

political and Human Rights reforms that led many in the international community to conclude that fundamental change was coming. In May 1998, the Government adopted a new constitution, which promised basic liberties such as freedom of religion, freedom of association and self-determination for southern Sudan. However, these reforms were implemented in a very limited, manipulative and politically controlled fashion.

A US state department country report on Human Rights<sup>39</sup> records that in December 1999, president Bashir declared a new state of emergency, dismissed Turabi as speaker of parliament and dissolved that body only two days before it was to vote on a bill – crafted by Turabi – designed to reduce presidential powers.

The international crisis group<sup>40</sup> remarks that in the following two years, the government took sweeping measures to regain total control of the state machinery and political activity, including extending the state of emergency, justified by alleged threats to the stability of the regime, amending the national security act allowed extra judicial detention for indefinite periods without charge or trial, undertaking national mobilization, including rounding up young recruits for the front and utilizing all avenues of funding from Islamist sources throughout the middle east and beyond by claiming that Islam was under assault, amending the press law to introduce operational constraint, amending the political association act to further restrict competition and fund raising options for political Groups, thus further narrowing the space for political organizing, banning public demonstration and rallies, making even private meetings subject to prosecution on charges of state. Subversion, expanding presidential power, authorizing Bashir to appoint all Governors, state ministers and departmental heads and since September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, cracking down on independent civil society organizations in order to intimidate that sector into reducing its support for political activities the measures collectively

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<sup>39</sup> [www.State.gov-US](http://www.State.gov-US) State Department Country Report on Human Rights. Sudan 1999

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

have had the desired chilling effect on the political activity of significant regime opponents, particularly Jurabi and NDA elements in Khartoum. Civil society organizations, independent press and non-threatening political parties that the regime allows to register have limited freedom.

### **Current Battle Lines**

Though there are many actors in the current civil war in the Sudan, we can identify five major ones identified by the international group<sup>41</sup>. In its recent publication, these are the Government, the SPLA, and the Umma party, Turabi's popular National Congress and the National Democratic Alliance. The Government in Khartoum is composed of an Islamic political movement, the National Islamic Front, by General Omar Bashir. Militarily, it is opposed by the SPLA, the dominant rebel group, led by colonel John Garang politically; the NDA, an opposition coalition that includes a wide array of Northern parties and the SPLA; and the Umma party, the largest political party in Sudan, which dropped out of the coalition in 2000, oppose it. While the war follows broad lines of Geography, religion and ethnicity, these factors are far from absolute and it is important not to over-generalize the civil war's dynamics. Both the Government and SPLA appear unwilling to continue current political and military strategies and have demonstrated little commitment to a serious peace process.<sup>42</sup>

While the prospects for peace are discouraging, some changes taking place within the Government could provide a small window of opportunity for negotiations. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia argued: "Ideologically and politically the form of fundamentalism that was ascendant from 1989 to 1996 in Khartoum is defeated. However, Islamic values are still there, and will be a political factor for a long time but the violent, messianic, export-oriented Islamism has dwindled significantly and has become inward – looking."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid

<sup>42</sup> Ibid

<sup>43</sup> Fitzgerald, *Throwing The Impact of War On Southern Sudanese Women*. Nairobi, UNIFEM AND UNICEF: 2002 p.120.

The love of the oil rush is as powerful within Sudan as it has been for the International companies that have flocked to the country. Both the government and Northern opposition see significant economic potential in oil exports. A process is already emerging by which elements of the three main parties, in the NIF, the Umma and the Democratic Unionist Party are gradually emerging. It could produce a more moderate power bloc in Sudan than would then reach out to Southerners. However, greater interest among both the government and Northern opposition parties in exploiting the oil fields would not remove the fundamental tensions with Southern Sudan,<sup>44</sup>

More recently, human rights violations have forcedly expelled people from their homes in areas where foreign oil companies have exploration and extraction rights. The hardest hit location are in western upper Nile, the site of three oil concession operated by consortiums, drilling at Heglin and in partnership with the Malaysian state owned Petronas Bhd, Canada's Talisman energy and the Sudanese Government's Sudapet. Ludin oil AB of Sweden is the leading partner for the oil field at that jathi. By February 2001, the number of displaced in these areas increased from 29,230 to more than 35,500 in the space of a year<sup>45</sup>.

### **Women's Participation in the War**

The general assumption would be that only men fought in this war. However, Fitzgerald<sup>46</sup> argues that to stereotype women as peacemakers is misleading just as it would be wrong to say that all men want to pursue war.

Women have signed up to fight while others help behind the lines. During the SPLA assault on Gogrial town, Bahr el Ghazzel, in June 2000, local women who brought cooked food and milk to the trenches from as far as 60 kilometres away sustained injuries. They often-risked bullets

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<sup>44</sup> Bakri Zeinabel Bashir "The crisis in the Sudanese women's Movements" In Wieringa (ed) *subversive Women- Historical Experiences of Gender and Resistance*, London, Zed books Ltd; 1995

<sup>45</sup> UNIFEM. *Sudan Between Peace and war, Internally Displaced Women in Khartoum and South and West Kordofan* p.26

<sup>46</sup> UNIFEM op.cit.p.27

and mortars to reach the soldiers. This support emboldened the fighters to such an extent that they overran the town sooner than expected. Writing on the 1985 uprising and its aftermath, Bakri<sup>47</sup> argues that women's participation during this period essentially covered two different areas: Women as part of professional unions took part in meetings and preparations for the general strike. Several women trade unionists were arrested. Several of them, led by housewives, finally, as part of the traditional family structure, women allowed secret meeting in their homes, and helped to protect the people attending the meetings.

These arguments were also supported from oral interviews held between the researcher and respected Sudanese authors, journalist and women organization leaders (whose names are not disclosed for security reasons), who argued that even among the Northern Arabic women, there have been a big portion of those who have helped to promote war and have been trained in the army and actually fought. Some have suffered as victims.

Women have played prominent roles in aggravating the conflict as reported by a UNIFEM report<sup>48</sup> about women participation in the popular defence force. The popular defence in Sudan focuses on training citizens in civil and military defence, awakening their military spirit, extolling traditions and introducing discipline so as to enhance the performances of the armed and other regular forces in their duties. The tasks of the popular defence forces are to assist the armed forces, to participate in the defence of the country and help in areas of disasters and catastrophes. Regarding the training of women, Brigadier Elabbase, the popular defence commander in chief, said, "The law does not discriminate between men and women, so it has become a basic core of the popular defence forces to militarize the entire Sudanese nation" hence, camps were opened for training women.

The main training camp is at Khawla Bint el Azwar in Khartoum state. The former coordinator of the women's sector Ms Sumia el Faki, said: "Being involved in popular defense forces made responsible people in the country realize that women are capable of carrying arms, just like

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid

<sup>48</sup> UNIFEM op.cit.p.18

men". The two key institutions used by the military to promote this role were the General Union of Sudanese women and the working women's league<sup>49</sup>. Here again we see a shift in gender roles whereby women start bearing arms and actually participating in the fighting as opposed to the previous situation whereby only men were believed to have the capability of bearing arms. This captures well the idea of women being actors rather than victims in armed conflict<sup>50</sup>

This idea is well illustrated by the role of the Hakama as described thus: -

The Hakama is a woman who composes and sings innovative songs that emphasize and transmit the society's beliefs, norms, and value systems. The Hakama is not only innovative in composing songs, but she also is influenced and respected by both men and women and by tribal chiefs. She leads a normal life like other women in rural societies or Kordofan and Darfur, yet it is very easy to identify her in special circumstances. For instance, in internal or intertribal war, the Hakama usually leads a group of women cheering for the men who are fighting. The Hakama herself will lead the cheering group with her face uncovered, denoting "unaccustomed Habit", and the fighters will bow to her, telling her of their readiness for war. This is known among the Baggara tribe as tanabor, a demonstration of power. In this occasion, the Hakama sings to encourage men to show their bravery to the enemy. Here, the Hakama of the Nuba Mountains, Boran Rural council of Kadogli, cheers on her tribe's fighters by comparing their power with that of the Krognno tribe, which is in SPLA territory.<sup>51</sup>

Men of Krongo are brave and never tear popular defence. Abu Goor (a brave man) of Krongo by his gun kills thousand of popular defensemen who are riding their camels, but our men,

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<sup>49</sup> New Sudan Women Federation. *Overcoming Gender Conflice Bias; The case of New Sudan Women and Girls.* Nairobi, Kenya Lithe:2001

<sup>50</sup> Ibid

<sup>51</sup> Ibid



whenever they hear the voice of the camels they run away. They are not as brave as Krongo men are.

To sum up, the Hakama bears a measure of responsibility for wars waged between tribes. By her singing, she incites the men of her tribe to launch war against others. She is the propagandist of the tribe<sup>52</sup>. This, therefore, discounts our second hypothesis, which states that women are a socio-cultural factor to enhance the participation in the development of Sudan.

The Tables below were generated from primary data collected by the researcher from the Sudanese refugees in Nairobi. It shows that both men and women have actively participated in the war.

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<sup>52</sup> UNIFEM op cit p. 16

**Table 3.1: Roles Played by Men in the War**

<b>Roles</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Fought in the war before escaping to Kenya	30	40
Supported those in the frontline e.g. financially, morally, materially by sending clothes or food items,	15	20
Fought the war intellectually e.g. by reporting and creating awareness to the International community about the war in Sudan, correcting and disseminating information about human rights abuses by the rebel groups	10	13
Fought within the Government of Sudan		
Fought in the war as child soldiers before escaping to Kenya, as child soldiers, mobilized communities to join the war by for example singing songs in praise of the rebel groups soldiers	10	13
No Role	11	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100</b>

As shown in Table 3.1, a majority of 40 per cent of the men interviewed had participated in the actual fighting back in Sudan before escaping to Kenya. 13 per cent of the young men had fought as child soldiers before escaping to Kenya. However, a sizeable number, 14 per cent of the young men responded they had played no role at all in the war. Other men, 13 per cent have fought the war indirectly either by supporting those in the frontline financially or otherwise as well as in collecting and disseminating what about the war in the Sudan mainly through publications such as those by a south Sudan post".

**Table: 3.2 Roles Played by Women in the War**

<b>Roles</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Fought in the Frontline	10	9
Supported those fighting in the frontline, e.g. by cooking for the soldiers, taking care of the wounded and sick, building houses in the bush	30	24
Political involvement e.g. broadcasting in SPLA radio, holding offices in the rebel movements	20	16
Participate in the writing of position papers to be forwarded to the on – going peace talks	24	19
No Role	40	32
Total	124	100

Table 3.2 represents the responses from both the old and young women. Most of the young women (32 per cent) answered that they played a role in the war, 9 per cent of the old women answered they had actually fought in the frontline, 19 per cent have participated in the peace talks albeit indirectly through writing position papers while 16 per cent have been politically involved in the war by for example broadcasting in the SPLM radio to support further of women in the activities of SPLM, we draw data compiled by New Sudan women federation<sup>53</sup> which records that the first incident of the war of Bor gave birth to the SPLM/A in 1983. Women immediately joined the military and started training, and the Girls Battalion was formed. In July 1985, six women were madame Rebecca de Mabior. Dr. Sitouna Osman, Mary Daniel Achol William decided to step-up women's contribution towards the liberation. The women formed associations with the objective of helping the need by distributing food,

<sup>53</sup> New Sudan Women Federation, *Overcoming Gender Conflict Bias: The Case of New Sudan Women and Girls* Nairobi Kenya Litho: 2001.

running a clinic and a feeding centre for malnourished children and caring for the war wounded. In addition, the women also ran an adult literacy class.

The report further notes the following women's contributions in the SPLM: in 1994 for the first time, two women entered into the executive body of the SPLM, one as Secretary for women and child welfare and another as deputy for religious affairs. In mid – 1999 a female commissioner was appointed in the executive body of the SPLM. Other notable appointments during 1999 included the appointment of a female country commissioner and one Sudanese relief and Rehabilitation Association country secretary to employ administrator, respectively.

This chapter has traced the historical background of the current civil war, which as shown above goes back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. We conclude by noting that in the Sudanese armed conflict, both men and women have actively participated either by promoting the war or in seeking peace. The war has also led to massive loss of life and property both of which effect men and women negatively as entire livelihoods have been disrupted.

A quick return to peace would bring relief to many a suffering Sudanese. In the next chapter, will examine specifically how the civil war has affected women.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### EFFECT OF THE SUDANESE CIVIL WAR ON WOMEN

#### **Introduction**

Having looked at the concepts of women and conflict and having dug deep into the Sudanese conflict itself, it is now necessary to combine these issues and critically analyze how the conflict has influenced gender roles. In essence, this chapter aims at giving an in-depth understanding of the totality of the roles and responsibilities of men and women whether as victims or perpetrators in the conflict.

In doing so, focus is given on the women's roles in the Sudanese traditional set-up, with the basic assumption being that it was a peaceful setting. To capture this theme, the chapter focuses on the changed women's roles among the urban and camped refugees in Kenya who represent the population outside the war zone but are products of the war, and even the internally displaced persons in Sudan. While there may be other contributing factors to changes in gender roles such as the process of culture change, the situations that war creates allow for rapid changes in gender roles. This chapter focusses on indications of change and not necessarily on the magnitude of change in women's roles.

#### **Women's Roles in the Traditional Set-up and the Current Situation**

Groups studied were divided into urban refugees, camped refugees, the internally displaced persons in the Sudan and those remaining in the conflict zones. In this context, urban refugees refer to those refugees residing in urban areas (mainly Nairobi); camped refugees are those in refugee camps (mainly Kakuma) while internally displaced persons are those persons who are residing inside Sudan but outside their original habitats as a result of the current conflict.

## **Urban refugees**

The respondents were asked to provide an activity profile for both genders in the traditional set-up and in the current set-up to try to establish what men and women were expected to do traditionally and what is it that they are doing now that is new.

The following Tables indicate the responses from those interviewed. For ease of coding all the responses from the different tribes, populations were divided into general categories of finer differences among the various tribes to be interviewed. This is true in the case of construction work, where in some groups of the Dinka, women were traditionally expected to do the thatching while in others e.g. Nuer, thatching was men's work.

**Table 4.1: Traditional roles for men**

Roles	Frequency	Percent
Providing for the family e.g. generation of income for the family by engaging in business	114	57
Making decisions about the family for example who and when his sons or daughters should marry.	27	13.5
Milking, Hunting, Fishing and gathering termites	17	8.5
Construction of houses such as roofing, cutting the grass, poles and erecting the structure	17	8.5
Participation in matters affecting the community for example solving intertribal disputes	14	7
Teaching the boys about the values, traditions, customs and the social expectation from them	7	3.5
Cultivation	4	2
Total	200	100

**Observation**

It is noted from Table 4.1 that a high percentage of the respondents thought that traditionally, it was the man's duty to provide for the family and to make decisions about the family. When asked about what they, the respondents, meant by providing for the family, they answered that the man was expected to be the breadwinner or bring income to the family.

Making decisions about the family also included allocating resources such as cattle among the wives or sharing the cattle received as bride price among the relatives. This was especially the case among the Dinka. The low percentage of men expected to cultivate. This was so because the only duty that is exclusively for men in matters of cultivation has to do with clearing

bushes on the land while women participated in other activities associated with cultivation such as digging, planting (see Table 4.2).

**Table 4.2: Traditional roles for women**

<b>Roles</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Household chores such as taking care of the children, clearing the house and clothes, cooking etc	74	37
Digging, weeding, harvesting, group fishing	63	31.5
Construction work such as carrying the roofing grass, poles and mudding	10	5
Pounding and grinding grains	36	18
Teaching girls about the traditions, values, norms and what the community expects of them	9	4.5
Milking	8	4
Total	200	100

Of all the respondents interviewed, (37 per cent) had the opinion that women were expected to do household chores (31.5 per cent) of the respondents said women do digging, weeding, harvesting and group fishing; (5 per cent) said women do construction work, mostly transporting the construction materials such as grass and poles; (18 per cent) said that women pound and grind grains; (4.5 per cent) answered that women instruct girls on tradition ways, while (4 per cent) said that women participate in milking.



## Observations

The fact that (37 per cent) respondents, Table 4.2, associated women with household chores confirms our argument in chapter two that women expected to perform their duties in the private sphere while the fact that no respondent answered that women could participate in the community affairs such as solving inter-tribal disputes confirms the argument that the public sphere was traditionally a preserve for the men.

**Table 4.3: Traditional roles for young men**

<b>Roles</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Participate in communal dances	64	32
Take care of the cattle such as herding, Taking cattle to the cattle camps during the dry season	80	40
Participate in traditional sporting activities such as wrestling	14	7
Serve as messengers in the community	6	3
Milking	14	7
Assist the fathers in all their duties	22	11
Total	200	100

Of those interviewed (Table 4.3) about the role of young men, the opinions were that: 64 (32 per cent) participated in communal dances, 80 (40 per cent) took care of the cattle, 14 (7 per cent) participated in traditional sporting activities, 6 (3 per cent) indicated serving as messengers, 14 (7 per cent) milked, while 22 (11 per cent) assisted fathers in their duties.

**Table 4.4** New roles for women

<b>Roles</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Participating in conferences and workshops on issues affecting the community such as peace awareness, women empowerment and others	50	40
Providing for the family through income generating activities such as tailoring, selling of cookeries and others	20	16
Socializing the boys i.e. playing the father figure for the boys	20	16
Making decisions about the family for example which school the children should attend, heading their families for those whose husbands are dead or absent, or even being consulted by their husbands when a decision is being made.	34	28
Total	124	100

Though this question was asked separately to the young and the old women, for ease of coding, the answers were put together. Most of the young women cited participating in youth conferences aimed at advocating for the girl child education, on unity and reconciliation and on HIV/AIDS awareness as a new role for them and argued that they attributed this to the fact that they are in Nairobi as a result of the war. Some of the girls interviewed reported that they go to Sudan and address community meetings to sensitize them on the importance of girl child education and this is taken as an entirely new role because traditionally and in times of peace girls would not be expected to address community gatherings.

Among the elderly women, they felt that they are taking over roles previously assigned to men such as heading families, providing for the families and they felt this was overburdening them and the majority complained of high stress levels. Some of those interviewed had gone as far as Europe and the US to sensitize the international community about the conflict situation in the Sudan. These conferences had meant that these women were away from their homes for many days or several weeks. They stated that traditionally in Sudan, women would not be allowed to go away from the home for such long periods of time and to them, this indicated a great change in the roles for women. On the other hand, some women thought this was causing strenuous marriage relations especially those who lived with their husbands in Nairobi as the husbands were uncomfortable with their continued absence from homes and therefore this has an effect on the gender relations.

**Table 4.5: New Roles for Men**

<b>Roles</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Household chores such as, washing clothes, dishes and caring for the children	10	13
Does not think the roles for men have changed	20	26
Participating in conferences on peace building, unity and reconciliation, HIV/AIDS awareness, advocating for girl child education etc.	14	18
Engage in business to generate income	18	24
Decide on when and who to marry	14	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.5 represent answers from both the old and young men. Most of the men felt that the roles for men have not changed at all. The fact that young men can now decide on who and

when to marry reflects a shift in gender roles as traditionally and in times of peace, this was the duty of the old men of who were separated from their parents. They now engage in business to generate income for their upkeep and this reflects a change in gender roles as the role of provision was for men.

### **Observation**

There are contrasting figures on the new roles for men and women. While the women were quick to point out that they are performing new roles, a majority of the men 20 (26 per cent) felt that their roles as men have not changed at all. From the interactions between the researcher and the respondents, it was clear that the issue of women taking over some of the duties that were previously reserved for men was causing a lot of stress between the men and women especially those who are married, hence affecting relations.

Most of the women, for example, indicated that the fact that they are now contributing to the income of the family was causing their husbands a sense of insecurity. The result has been that in some cases, especially where the wives could be learning their relationships. Another issue of concern to the women has to do with the increasing number of refugee women engaging in extra-marital affairs and alcohol drinking in bars. We also need to point out that the fact that most of the men interviewed argued that the duties of men have not changed, shows that men are yet to accept the dynamic nature of women roles.

### **Camped refugees (Kakuma refugee Camp)**

The Kakuma refugee camp was established in 1992 for approximately 16,000 Sudanese “lost boys” who left their refugees in Ethiopia following the fall of the Mengistu government in 1991. Accompanied by about 500 caretakers, they found their way into Northern Kenya. The camp is located some 127 km from Sudan and 50 km from Uganda. Other refugees transferred to Kakuma after the closure of coastal camps in 1994, joined the Sudanese” Lost Boys”, and the camp became home to eleven different nationalities and forty ethnic groups. The total camp

population as of April 2002 stood at 88,282. The majority of them are Sudanese (81%), followed by Somalis (14%), and Ethiopians (3%). Others are Ugandans, Eritreans, Congolese, Rwandese and Burundians. According to gender disaggregated data provided, there are 33,393 families registered, of which 34,157 are women and 53,710 are men.

From a study carried out in June 2002<sup>1</sup> it can be argued that some Sudanese women have been involved in settling intertribal disputes related to water availability and distribution. This argument is arrived at by taking into account the fact that Sudanese refugees are the majority in Kakuma refugee camp. Kamungi and Silva<sup>2</sup> observe that water availability and distribution create tensions amongst refugees, particularly between the conflicts when they arise at the tap stands. They were given T-shirts by Lutheran World Federation, marked “Women Support Group” that make them easily identified by refugees and help to facilitate their intervention. We can therefore see another example where women are participating in the public sphere (in this case community affairs) as opposed to them operating in the private sphere.

Kamungi and Silva<sup>3</sup> also observe that WEP recognizes that while women are beset with hunger and poverty, they are also key to the solution to those challenges. By placing food in the hands of women, there is a greater chance of it reaching its intended and rightful beneficiaries their families. Men often sell it, give to the favoured wives or mistresses, or use it as leverage in local power politics. Income in the hands of women, therefore, is seen to contribute more significantly to the household food security and child nutrition. Analyzed critically, this reveals a change in gender role whereby women are taking charge in the provision of their families they are taking on the role of breadwinner.

On the issue of dependency rate in the camp, it is stated that remittances from relatives and friends is a well established social network within Kakuma camp, supported mainly by Sudanese (Dinka and Nuer) who are resettled to the USA and Canada. They send money to their peers or family who remained in the camp. Such remittances are used to initiate small

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<sup>1</sup> See Kamungi and Silva Op cit p. 30

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

businesses such as bicycles sales and repair, transport companies, or to maintain the social network inside the camp through payment of bride price and supporting the families related by marriages.<sup>4</sup>

On income generating activities (IGA), although again the authors do not specify on the nationality of the women, they observe that women are mostly involved in small-scale business. The majority of the beneficiaries of the IGA projects and micro-credit schemes supported by the agencies are women.<sup>5</sup> From this we deduce that the Sudanese women refugee must be among those engaging in business activities contrary to the past situation whereby only men engaged in business activities. This is a further indication of changes in gender role.

### **A Comparative Analysis between the Urban and Camped Refugees**

One similarity is the issue of un-acceptance of women “who prosper beyond men” Kamungi and Silva<sup>6</sup>, for example, note that there is no evidence of any restriction for women to open a business. However, if widowed or divorced, the women are likely to face the resistance from the community if her business flourishes and she becomes too wealthy. This is comparable to the case whereby the urban working women complained of their husbands not being comfortable with their rise in the career ladder.

### **Effect of war on both men and women**

Having established that the Sudanese conflict has led to a reversal in gender roles, with women and men performing roles that they traditionally did not, the next section seeks to examine which effects the conflicts have had on both men and women. This is to either prove or disapprove out third hypothesis that states “armed conflict leads

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<sup>4</sup> Kamungi and Silva op cit p. 50

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Kamungi and Silva op cit p. 58

to more suffering for women than for men". Thereafter, examination of the changes in gender roles among the internally displaced persons as well as those remaining in the conflict zones is done.

### **Effects of the War on Men**

Questions were directed to all the respondents on whether men or women of whichever age bracket and 20 (10 per cent) that war has robbed men's lifetime opportunities such as education employment opportunities as those fighting in the frontline have to commit all their time to the war, 40 (20 per cent) felt that the war has led to separation of the fighters from their families. Psychological trauma was cited as an effect by the majority 80 (40 per cent) of the respondents while 60 (30 per cent) responded that the war has made men to lose their property. Among other issues pointed out were human rights abuses such as torture. For example, it was stated that the government militia abduct men from the south, tie them to the back of a moving vehicle and pull them until they die; others stated the same militia also crush the testicles of the soldiers from the rebel groups and also abducting child soldiers and taking them to serve as slaves in the north. It was reported that men from the south are denied the right to freedom of movement since they are a much-needed source of manpower to fight in the liberation struggle. When these men visit the north, they also face arbitrary arrest on the basis of suspicion that they are spying on the government on behalf of the rebel groups. Needless to say, many men die in the battlefield. This question was aimed to demonstrate that men also suffer as victims in times of civil war.

**Table 4.6: Effects of the War on Men**

<b>Effects</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Loss of opportunities such as educational opportunities and others	20	10
Separation from family	40	20
Psychological trauma	80	40
Loss of property and possessions	60	30
Total	200	100

### **Effects of the War on Women**

In addition to our earlier findings on the sufferings that women heads of families are having to endure due to their increased multiple roles among other causes, the New Sudan Women Federation<sup>7</sup> records that, women lack freedom of any form, they suffer from fear and distress. In fact, they cannot avoid psychological and physical suffering. Women suffer the death of family members and due to lack of transport facilities they are forced to undertake perilous journeys in search of basic necessities. For instance, anti- personnel mines, which they encounter while fetching firewood and food ingredients, maim many women. They also have to shield their children from bombshells, but they too are victims of hunger and lack access to fresh food and water. They fight over water points against wild animals and war enemies.

Looking at this data analytically shows that it is very difficult to measure which gender suffers more than the other in the circumstances of armed conflict. This study concludes that the suffering that both men and women undergo is one of a degree and not a kind and therefore disapproves the third hypothesis, which states that women suffer more than men in armed conflict. What constitutes “more suffering” is the question that those who propagate the

<sup>7</sup> New Sudan Women Federation op. cit. p. 27



argument need to answer. Until that is done, this study takes the position that in situations of war one cannot argue that women suffer more than men or vice versa.

### **Changed Gender Roles among the Internally Displaced Persons in Sudan**

The data in this section was drawn from secondary sources since the researcher faced constraints that would not allow for field visits to Sudan. An examination of existing writings by Fitzgerald and UNIFEM confirms our findings that Sudanese conflict has led to changes in gender roles.

Fitzgerald<sup>8</sup> notes that Sudanese throughout the South have adopted mobility as a coping mechanism; however, it is a strategy of last resort. Abandoning home, cattle, fields and fishing grounds is an admission that all other coping mechanisms have failed. The current estimates of about 4 million gives Sudan the largest number of internally displaced people in the world.

A report by UNIFEM<sup>9</sup> indicates that as war continues, people in great numbers continue to migrate to the capital. The swelling community places strains on the fragile existing resources of the city. Women have had to adopt new strategies to cope with their lives as the urban displaced. Children constitute 52.9% of camp population. The female-headed household is a noticeable phenomenon in the camps. Among 5911 households surveyed in Jebel Aulia, 52% are female headed; 32.8% of the 8907 households surveyed in Elsasalam Omduman are female headed. This is another example of how the war has affected gender roles with women heading households contrary to the previous expectation of men being considered as the sole family-heads.

The UNIFEM<sup>10</sup> survey revealed that 90% of displaced women, whether heads of their households or not, are engaged in income-generating activities, mainly selling tea, food and spices. In addition, elder women grind 'dura' in the 'dura' market to survive. One of the respondents living in Elssalam camp, 60 year old Halima Adam, supports her five orphaned

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<sup>8</sup> Fitzgerald op cit p. 54

<sup>9</sup> UNIFEM op cit p. 30

<sup>10</sup> UNIFEM op cit p. 31

grandsons. This is contrary to the ideal situation whereby grandparents would not be expected to take care of their grandchildren; instead the opposite should be the case.

UNIFEM<sup>11</sup> adds that many children are economically active as child labourers. Male children sell plastic bags or water, or they shine shoes or work as waiters. Either they work after school or they drop out of school to work as many hours as possible. Female children are involved in domestic activities in the city and come to the camps during the weekends. Another survival mechanism that some of the young displaced women in Hay El Barak adopt is prostitution. This has not only affected the roles of the children but is also contrary to the stipulations of International Law whereby the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) guarantees every child to have his or her rights to survival, growth and development. Protected- child labour, no doubt, interferes with all these rights. The risk of contracting HIV/AIDS when these children engage in prostitution cannot be overemphasized.

Women in Kodofan have now shifted from beer making to working in the construction industry. Women working to construct houses in the displaced camps are signs of change in gender roles. It has been revealed that before the outbreak of war, men, particularly the Dinka, were the ones who would decide whether to sell an animal or slaughter it. But after the war, women make such decisions. In war zones, women mentioned that the Sultan would ask households to offer food, cloth and such items to the fighters. Now with the increasing number of female – headed households in the society, women decide for themselves whether to offer such donations.<sup>12</sup>

### **Change in women roles among the population remaining in the conflict zones**

The data in this section was also obtained from secondary sources. In writing about the effects of the war on men and women, Andanje<sup>13</sup> notes that household food security in southern Sudan

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<sup>11</sup> UNIFEM op cit p. 32

<sup>12</sup> UNIFEM op .cit p. 45

<sup>13</sup> Andanje, The Conflict in Sudan and Why Women are Affected Differently than Men, Strengths and Weaknesses of Humanitarian Interventions. Third Presentation. [www.needhjaelp.dk.usr.noedhjaelp](http://www.needhjaelp.dk.usr.noedhjaelp)

is largely on subsistence food production of cereal crops and collection of wild foods. Both men and women do the digging, but women carry out the weeding, harvesting and collection of wild foods. Men fish and look after livestock. But in case of war, these women roles change at times women roles may change as female-headed households may engage in fishing and taking care of cattle over and above the woman's other responsibilities of production, reproduction and social obligations. Men might take up food preparation, although in Sudan, there are cultural taboos hindering men from doing certain "female" things to maintain pride and dignity.

The shift in women's role is reported by Fitzgerald<sup>14</sup> who writes that in Bahr el Ghazal, where conflict is most frequent, the percentage shrinks to 25%. Men are either under arms, have been killed in battle, or have left the south for training or in search of money. A woman whose husband is absent or dead discovers she is capable of performing his task around the compound. As she is now responsible for the children, she seeks to replace his income-earning ability by learning his skills. And in so doing, she cries out to be literate and numerate.

With regard to the roles of children, a UNIFEM<sup>15</sup> report notes that looting and destruction of livestock following war has freed boys from their traditional role of herding and taking care of domestic animals at cattle camps.

UNICEF<sup>16</sup> continues that among the Dinka and Nuer tribes of Southern Sudan, cattle are very highly valued. They constitute the wealth of the community. The annual cattle camp sees girls of the village walk many miles to bring all the cattle- cows, goats and sheep to the river. Adults are normally not present at these camps as they stay behind in the villages to start planting as soon as the rains begin. During these times, children are especially vulnerable to attack, with raiders killing or stealing the cattle and killing or abductions are common occurrences. Militias abduct children and press them to servitude. Children are traditionally active and contributing members of Dinka and Nuer society in southern Sudan. In addition to managing the cattle

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<sup>14</sup> Fitzgerald op cit p. 13

<sup>15</sup> UNICEF op cit p. 60

<sup>16</sup> UNICEF op cit p. 66

camps, they also help adults grow food, fetch fuel and water. One of the reasons why children are enlisted as soldiers is the prevailing attitude that children do and should participate in the life of the community. This participation is often achieved at the cost of their other rights especially their right to education. This study deduces that children's participation in the liberation struggle as soldiers is an indication of changes in women roles, which is directly caused by the conflict.

In conclusion it is noted that the war in Sudan has led to changes in women roles for all the groups considered in this study. These are the urban refugees in Nairobi, the camped refugees in Kakuma the internally displaced persons in Sudan and those remaining in the war zone, both men and women all have been severely affected by the war and instability is part of their daily lives.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents conclusions on the whole study. It also offers recommendations both at the policy level as well as on issues for further research. At the end we indicate the limitations that we faced during the course of the study.

#### **Conclusions**

This study has analysed the effect of civil war on women by focusing on the Sudanese conflict between 1983 to 2005. It has emerged that although the war between the north and south has political, economic, and social roots, its origin lies in the southerners' sense of injustice, oppression and inequality in development and in division of power and resources. This war has destroyed lives, schools, hospitals and infrastructure hence leading to disintegration and impoverishment. Accompanying all these are rapid changes in women's roles.

Structural violence was used as the theoretical framework. It referred to any constraint on human potential caused by structures in the society. The concept of structural violence therefore helped us capture those dimensions of social relations that create differences in the positioning of men and women in society. It is through gender relations that men are given a greater capacity than women to mobilize a variety of cultural roles and material resources in pursuit of their own interests. These social structures, processes and relations give rise to women's disadvantaged position. This in turn means that women are not able to realize their full potential and when they attempt to, it is met with resistance. This study has already alluded to instances when women have faced resistance whenever they have been deemed economically inferior than their male counterparts.

The experiences in Sudanese conflict have highlighted the fact that the violence is not a preserve of men. We have, for example, demonstrate how Hakama, being a woman encourages men to go on fighting, that some women from the North have colluded with authorities in

Khartoum to promote the war; while others in the south, in collaboration with rebel leaders, have fought in the frontline as combatants. This therefore undermines the traditional concept of purity, which regards women as victims of conflict. We recommend that peace education should therefore be given to both men and women.

## **Recommendations**

This study makes recommendations for policy issues and for further research.

## **Policy Issues**

Assessment of need in situations of armed conflict should include information about the different roles, needs, perceptions and capacities of both men and women. Attention to the social context of a conflict situation will be important in making appropriate decisions as to what and how services should be provided.

Monitoring and evaluation of programmes could routinely include the perspective of women and men to ensure that they are appropriate and sensitive to the needs of both gender. Existing structures that encourage support and contribute to the organization of women and men within communities affected by the armed conflict should be given all the needed support such as financial or capacity building among other support. In the case of Sudan, examples of such organizations include the many indigenous Sudanese NGOs such as Sudanese Women Association in Nairobi (SWAN), which assist women in securing loans so as to start Intergovernmental Authorities (IGAs) due to their new roles as family breadwinners; South Sudanese Youth United for Reconciliation and Unity and Peace (SSYRUP), which mainly builds capacity for youth to take on leadership roles in advocating for girl child education among other communal issues; Sudanese Women Voices for Peace (SWVP) and all secretariats for SPLM e.g. the SPLM secretariats of education and health, just to mention a few.

This study found out that many Sudanese are now placing a very high premium on girl child education; it is therefore recommended that donors and the international community at large should provide more funds to ensure this goal is achieved. In the course of research, it was established that most serving as teachers in Sudan are untrained or do not have high school level education. This means that more funds should be made available to make it possible for in-service training for teachers and to ensure smooth implementation of the programmes on education. Efforts to establish teachers training colleges should be supported as well as recruitment of more teachers.

Women must be well represented in legal, administrative and other decision-making systems to ensure that they are part of the processes that formulates policy for civil society and to ensure equal access to equal benefits and resources across the board. In the course of research, for example, there was a lot of foul cry from the women due to their disproportionate representation in the on-going Sudanese peace talks in Kenya.

The study found out that there are more widows as a result of the armed conflict. One way to safeguard the welfare of widows is to establish independent property rights for women within marriage with so many female-headed households. It is important that a woman's right to ownership is codified in the emerging legal system as the peace process continues and that local chiefs and elders are made aware of the legislation.

All the actors in the conflict should be encouraged to implement educational programmes consistent with the principles and premises embodied in the report of the international Commission on Education. Specific attention to be given to actions that promote tolerance of diversity, gender sensitivity, alternatives to violent methods of conflicts resolution, which includes peace education at all levels especially in primary schools, where lifelong attitudes to conflict resolution is taking shape.

## **Issues for further research**

Gender as an area of research and action should be understood as belonging to men and studies of masculinity, as well as to women and feminist studies. As it is now, there is a great misconception of what gender really is and in most cases it is associated with women only, which is not the case. It is important to widen the analysis of gender in conflict from the notion that “women are the victims” while “men are the perpetrators” to take on the complexities of the ways in which women and men, girls and boys, respond to situations of war.

At present, there is very little known about the gendered impact of conflict on the roles, attitudes and needs of the people in situations of armed conflict. NGOs, donors and academic institutions should commit themselves to supporting such a project in an ongoing way.



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